

Global Future

Number 2, 2008

A WORLD VISION JOURNAL OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

THIS EDITION

Neglected emergencies: forgotten but not gone



FEATURING

Michèle Lebrun

European Commission for
Humanitarian Aid (ECHO)

Sadako Ogata

Japan International
Cooperation Agency

Ian Smillie

The Diamond
Development Initiative

Ben Wisner

The London School
of Economics and
Oberlin College

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Letter

from a reader

Michael Vimal Pillai

Dear Madam,

Hello!

We thank you again for granting us reprint permission for the article "A call to prioritise children in the global HIV and AIDS response" which supported our venture and enabled us to produce a good reference book.

We look forward to a continued association with you.

On behalf of the ICAFI University Press,

Yours sincerely,

Michael Vimal Pillai
Consulting Editor
IBS, Ahmedabad, INDIA

what next?

in number 3, 2008

The food crisis

The global food price crisis is changing the development landscape. People living in poverty spend 60–80% of their income on food. The spiralling cost of staple foods radically alters their ability to meet basic nutritional requirements and to keep hold of their assets.

*The current crisis points to the failure of the global community to address the pre-existing hunger crisis; 862 million people were hungry **before** prices went up. Of particular concern is the impact on children.*

While the short-term impacts of the food crisis are stark, the long-term effects threaten to jeopardise the development of the world's poorest countries and confront the international community with the imperative of decisive action.

*This edition of **Global Future** examines the numerous drivers of the current crisis – not least the effects of climate change, the diversion of food crops to bio-fuels, chronic under-investment in agriculture and small-scale production, unfair international trade rules and flawed development frameworks and agreements.*

front cover image: A mother watches over her child at an internally displaced persons' camp to which 300 Ethiopian citizens fled after being displaced from their homes in Kenya, where they had sought refugee status.

photo: John Kabubu/World Vision

facing page background image: In Swaziland, Gogo Nyoni cries when relating how her fields were affected by the heatwave which eventually led to severe drought.

photo: Zanele Dlamini/World Vision

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SHINING THE SPOTLIGHT

When does an emergency slip into the realm of neglect? In this unfortunate decline, who is most affected? Can the humanitarian community really cope with all these emergencies, be they of human or natural origin, that seem to come at a fast and furious pace?

The humanitarian imperative demands that no-one be left neglected in an emergency, and it is incumbent on the humanitarian community, as well as on states, to do everything possible to rescue and restore every victim. At least that's the notion; the reality is quite different.

In responding to humanitarian emergencies, World Vision and other agencies seek to protect vulnerable people, provide emergency relief and ensure preparedness for future disasters. But does the response measure up when funding is not forthcoming, when political pressure limits access or military presence frustrates efforts, and when cultural and religious hurdles must be overcome to reach those in need? Possibly the answer is "yes, and no". Therefore, we must address the challenges of neglected emergencies squarely.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), a pivotal policy-setting mechanism in the international humanitarian community, has had a critical role in advocating for neglected emergencies both as a collective body and through its individual agencies. It reiterated the views expressed in the *Humanitarian response review*¹ that humanitarian organisations ought to develop stronger advocacy for forgotten or neglected needs, and that donor policies should be challenged on the basis of sound needs assessments.

World Vision and other international non-governmental organisations should not be quiet on this matter. This edition of *Global Future* seeks to bring this very important issue back into the limelight. It addresses the questions Ben Wisner raises in his article on when, why, how, and by whom emergencies are neglected. The reader may not find definitive solutions, but these questions will once more provoke thinking on the subject as it speaks to different audiences within the global community.

To the donor community, Ian Gray suggests that there is a pendulum-like response to fragile states experiencing emergencies, which negatively affects medium- to long-term solutions in the transition from emergency to development. Michèle Lebrun of the European Commission for Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) outlines that organisation's approach to identifying and responding to neglected emergencies. Ian Smillie highlights the high price of neglect in the case of Sierra Leone.

To those involved in protection, Emina Tudakovic and Ron Pouwels introduce a new international policy guide by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) aimed at protecting children at risk, further justified by the accounts of children in Haiti whose fates are made worse by the current food crisis. Not only do children suffer but women do also, as described in the article on Somalia where the prolonged crisis is compounded by cultural practices that marginalise women. The struggles of vulnerable groups in the midst of neglected emergencies are illustrated further in articles from Chechnya and from the urban centres of Jordan where poor Iraqis seek refuge.

To the wider community, veteran humanitarian Sadako Ogata questions whether the international community's efforts to "contain" and "pacify" emergencies, rather than seek long-term solutions, inflame vulnerable situations. Then there are those situations that have not been declared emergencies but nonetheless have a similarly or more profound impact on the lives of countless people, especially children, world-wide. Trihadi Saptoadi describes these grave situations as "silent emergencies" and raises the compelling question of why some forms of humanitarian crisis are not recognised as such.

Solutions, though not readily evident, must be sought by the international community. We hope that this edition presents a strong case for duty bearers and stakeholders alike to prevent emergencies from declining into the realms of the forgotten. ■

Ms Denise Allen is Senior Policy Adviser, Policy and Advocacy, World Vision International.

¹ C Adinolfi et al., *Humanitarian response review*, United Nations, 2005





WATCHING, BUT NOT SEEING?

Are many of us in the international community behaving as “bystanders”, watching but failing to respond to serious humanitarian suffering? asks Ben Wisner.

“The whole world is watching!” protesters chanted 40 years ago as Chicago police indiscriminately beat bystanders and war protesters alike at the United States Democratic Convention.¹ The reference was to world-wide television coverage of the event. Advances in communications technology since then now allow a billion people to witness outrages, atrocities and the aftermath of natural hazards. With such massive connectivity among humans and our institutions, why are some disasters neglected?

Why is so little attention given to the ongoing humanitarian disasters in Congo, Chechnya and Haiti while there are massive citizen movements focused on Darfur? Why did the international community pour vast resources into the Asian tsunami and Kashmir earthquake relief and recovery efforts, but much less for drought and threatened famine in Africa occurring at the same time?

A superficial answer is that the sheer magnitude of events that compete for attention makes choice and discrimination necessary. At any one time, ReliefWeb,² a major information clearing house for humanitarian emergencies, lists situations demanding immediate

and urgent attention in numerous countries. Media attention is focused on particular natural disasters, while others are occurring elsewhere. Meanwhile, the crisis of rising food prices is worsening the situation of people in Somalia, Afghanistan and the occupied Palestinian territories; those displaced by violence try to go home in Kenya; and civil war orphans are reported to be “forgotten” in Uganda.

Clearly, there is a tremendous amount of crisis in the world today, and the media, donors, diplomats and humanitarian agencies have to make choices. That is one answer, and it is not wrong. But it only displaces the question of how priorities are set. We still are left with the question of why **some** disasters get lots of attention while others receive less – or even none.

Disaster recovery, as a process, is very poorly understood

Before returning to the “why” question, it’s necessary to ask some others: What’s being neglected? By whom? And when?

WHAT’S NEGLECTED?

Without going into an academic discussion along the lines of “what is a disaster?”, a few common-sense distinctions need to be made.

Magnitude has something to do with the degree of attention and assistance given to a situation that demands more than local, sub-national or national resources and capacities. The Asian tsunami, Kashmir earthquake and Nargis cyclone clearly fall into that category. At the other extreme, researchers in Latin America have catalogued more than 19,000 **small and moderate events** affecting Colombia alone that took lives and destroyed assets and infrastructure between 1971 and 2002.³ International database EM-DAT⁴ recorded only 97 disasters in Colombia for that period. Few of these 19,000 small and moderate events made it into Colombia’s national press, let alone into world media.

There also seems to be a bias in the media toward the drama of sudden-onset disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, coastal



A woman wearing a dust mask clings protectively to her child on a street in Bam, Iran, where an earthquake that lasted less than two minutes claimed 42,000 lives in December 2003.

Photo: John Schenk/World Vision

storms and large rapidly rising flood waters. **Slow-onset** and pervasive disasters such as drought, desertification, coastal erosion and the collapse of fisheries are harder to follow from a journalistic point of view, but put the livelihoods and lives of millions at stake.

Civil war is a more dramatic story than the daily violence of organised crime that trafficks women and children. An outbreak of Ebola virus is more likely to get attention than chronic high mortality among women and children. And how much do we hear of the World Health Organization estimates that each year tens of thousands of people's lives are cut short because of urban air pollution?⁵

Thus the "what" question helps, but does not tell the whole story.

NEGLECTED BY WHOM?

Media aside, **donors** are another group that "prioritises" disasters. In the last few years there have been efforts to define common assistance criteria and standards under such terms as "good donorship", and some progress toward common evaluation of humanitarian action.⁶ However, government donors continue to make their decisions based on national interest, whether they say so or not.⁷

NEGLECTED WHEN?

Timing plays a big role in two ways. Several large and equally compelling humanitarian disasters taking place at the same time may result in one casting its shadow over the others. For example, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita placed the death and destruction of Guatemala's Hurricane Stan in second place in terms of attention it received.

Duration is the second temporal issue. The media and the public eventually tire of the "same" story. Donors and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are concerned with budget cycles, log frame results and exit strategies. Some humanitarian emergencies seem never-ending: violence, rape, displacement and disease in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the civil war in Colombia; the combination of violence, mis-rule, environmental degradation, poverty,

floods and landslides in Haiti. Some seem to recur every few years; others have no clear end point.

Recovery is a common word but, as a process, it is very poorly understood. When will New Orleans, or the city of Bam in Iran that suffered a huge earthquake in 2003, "recover"? In the sense of re-building, it's possible to identify a time scale. But full economic, environmental, cultural and psycho-social recovery takes longer, is variable and in some cases may never happen. The cameras and most of the aid workers have left a long time before any of this takes place.

WHY NEGLECTED?

We come back to the question, "why?". There is no one reason. There is some **self-interest** among NGOs at work, perhaps even some cherry-picking locations where it is easier to get attention for their good efforts and thus more support for it. Or more charitably, I might say that NGOs often find it easiest to work where they have people on the ground, some history or good partners. National interest is also at work to some degree.

If the full cost were understood, more attention would be paid to these events

That is not to say that the humanitarian ethic is a sham. It has existed since the Enlightenment in tension with political and economic self-interest. The current spate of publications about "disaster capitalism" do not deny the legitimacy of an ethic based on universality, humanity and neutrality, but show how such principles and their application navigate the neo-liberal world of self-interest and markets.

For their part, the media might cite **pragmatic barriers**, such as audience interest levels, or film crew access.

Other disasters are neglected because they are **misunderstood**. If donors, NGOs, the media and the public understood the full cost in social and economic terms of the small and moderate events that punctuate the lives of the poor and marginalised around the world, they surely would pay more attention to them. The term "climate refugee" is confusing and

dangerous in some ways. Yet people whose lives are chronically unstable because of the occurrence of many small and moderate hazard events are less likely to adapt to the effects of climate change; they may indeed become "climate refugees".

Some disasters are **mis-classified**, or just not counted. One example is the illegal dumping of a whole cargo boat load of hazardous waste in the suburbs of Abidjan, Ivory Coast, in 2006.⁸ Thousands of people became ill. This was a huge disaster that nearly toppled the government. However, it was not seen as a "natural" or "technological" disaster (like the 1984 gas leak in Bhopal, India). There has been very little follow-up by media or development organisations. What has happened to the people who became ill? Are there chronic effects? Are they working? Are their families coping? Are their children in school? It is very likely that we will see more and more of this kind of hybrid disaster – combinations of the many effects of climate change, rapid urbanisation, organised criminality (and what else is illegal dumping?) and conflict.

Yes, the whole world is watching – or at least a very considerable and growing part of it is watching. But watching is not enough. Media, donors, NGOs and the public need to learn to focus and to understand the hidden connections among what conventionally have been called "accidents" or – even worse – "acts of God". ■

Dr Ben Wisner is Research Fellow in Environmental Studies at Oberlin College, United States, and in Development Studies at the London School of Economics, United Kingdom.

¹ D Farber, "1968", *The electronic encyclopedia of Chicago*, Chicago Historical Society, 2005, <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/500008.html>

² ReliefWeb, <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc100?OpenForm>

³ DesInventar, <http://www.desinventar.org/>

⁴ Emergency Events Database, <http://www.emdat.be/>

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ See the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), <http://www.alnap.org/>

⁷ See an excellent website devoted to disaster diplomacy <http://www.disasterdiplomacy.org/>

⁸ <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/02/world/africa/02ivory.html>



Children are always among those most at risk during emergencies – even more so in cases of neglected emergencies. United Nations Agencies institute policies and guidelines that reflect the commitment to protect children during emergencies and ensure that their rights and needs are not neglected.

The Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) adopted a *Conclusion on Children at Risk*¹ in October 2007.² The Conclusion provides operational guidance for states, UNHCR, and other relevant agencies and partners to enhance protection, address the immediate humanitarian needs of children in emergencies and ensure that solutions recognise children’s rights and needs.

FOUNDATION

The Conclusion sits in the context of the 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) and its two Optional Protocols, the 1993 UNHCR *Policy on Refugee Children* and the 1994 UNHCR *Guidelines on the Protection and Care of Refugee Children*. It also fits within the framework of UNHCR’s five global priorities on children, which address separation from families and care-givers; sexual exploitation, abuse and violence; military recruitment; education; and specific concerns for adolescents. The Conclusion has three sections:

- **The basic principles** for action are presented through thirteen “fundamentals” of child protection. These include state-promoted non-discriminatory child protection systems; actively promoted gender equality; equality in protection through efforts to mainstream age, gender and diversity; and recognition that children are active subjects of rights.
- **Early identification** of children who are at risk due to factors in the wider environment and individual circumstances, is critical. Of particular note are protracted displacement situations; children without parental care; cases of trafficking and sexual abuse; disruption of family and community support structures; mental or physical disabilities; HIV and AIDS; and detention.
- **Measures to address risk factors**, built on the principles of the CRC, provide further guidance on

determining the best interests of the child, which is a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. Procedures to determine the child’s best interests should operate within the framework of states’ child protection systems; include child participation without discrimination; involve decision makers with appropriate expertise; and balance all relevant factors in the assessment. In this way, the Conclusion works toward the search for durable solutions, such as voluntary repatriation, local integration and third-country resettlement.

ACCESS AND BEST INTERESTS

UNHCR is creating user-friendly information sheets on topics such as Best Interests Determination, safe school environments and child trafficking. For example, during voluntary repatriation, child-friendly information allows children to take part in decision-making regarding their return. In an innovative follow-up, UNHCR and World Vision have recently completed a plain-language pamphlet summarising the Conclusion.³ Meanwhile, a two-year project to develop guidance on child protection systems in emergencies has begun through funding from the European Commission.

As neglected emergencies pose a unique threat to children, and as children continue to be displaced, there is an ongoing need for awareness and implementation of the Conclusion’s provisions. By understanding protection, identifying risks and applying effective solutions, we can ensure that all children are adequately cared for, even during such times of threat to their lives and well-being. ■

Ms Emina Tudakovic is Rapporteur of the Executive Committee Bureau, and First Secretary at the Canadian Permanent Mission in Geneva. Mr Ron Pouwels is the Senior Adviser for Refugee Children, in the Community Development, Gender Equality and Children Section of the Division of International Protection Services at UNHCR.

This article is written in the personal capacity and opinions of each author and does not necessarily reflect the views of the Government of Canada nor of UNHCR.

¹ No. 107/LVIII – 2007

² Conclusions are non-binding pronouncements which contribute to the development and interpretation of international law as it relates to refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR.

³ See <http://www.globalempowerment.org/>

RECOGNISING AND PROTECTING THE MOST VULNERABLE

How can we identify risks and confidently provide protection to children in a crisis? Emina Tudakovic and Ron Pouwels outline UNHCR’s rights-based Executive Committee Conclusion on Children at Risk.



As part of two years of child protection during the tsunami response, Child-Friendly Spaces in the district of Ampara, Sri Lanka, allow children to take part in safe activities. Photo: Marianne Albina/World Vision



A CO-ORDINATED HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Regional and international players must actively participate and co-operate in humanitarian intervention, argues Sadako Ogata, and success can only be achieved through an incredibly delicate balancing act.



Recent global catastrophes highlight both the challenges and often extreme difficulties in trying to provide effective humanitarian assistance to the world's most vulnerable people in their most desperate moment of need.

Tens of thousands died at the height of Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar. Many more faced a similar fate unless help could reach them quickly. The tragedy was of such a magnitude that the international community stood immediately ready to help. But a wary central government initially balked at what it saw as a virtual "invasion" of aid workers. The victims continued to suffer.

The aftermath of the cyclone highlighted many of the basic conundrums of all humanitarian crises: What are the key components of a "successful" humanitarian operation? What are the respective roles of key players such as local and international governments and aid agencies, particularly when political considerations clash with pure humanitarian considerations? Why do some crises attract widespread intervention and others are seemingly ignored? And finally, what are the limits of humanitarian intervention?

DETERMINING FACTORS

The very scale of suffering can force local catastrophes onto the international agenda. That was the case in Myanmar. And in Rwanda, the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, was helping refugees as early as the 1960s, but it was not until the crisis exploded into the genocide of the 1990s that the world really took notice and intervened on a large scale.

The attitudes of major powers – their co-operation or, conversely, their rivalries – are often decisive in determining the outcome of humanitarian intervention. That is evident in the stalemate in Sudan's ongoing Darfur crisis. Last decade, the Balkan crisis was greatly exacerbated and probably prolonged due to Moscow's support for Serbia, Europe's attempts at humanitarian intervention and Washington's ambivalence to the problem in its early stages.

The complexity and long duration of a humanitarian crisis can also doom it to obscurity and lack of resolution. Hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees were eventually rescued in the aftermath of the first Gulf War, but a truly successful resolution to that festering problem has proved elusive and requires the active political participation and co-operation of both regional and international players.

Does the international public expect too much from humanitarian intervention? Probably.

Previous emergencies have taught us that the international community by itself does not have the staying power and commitment to resolve particularly complex and long crises. More often, a response works to "contain" and "pacify" an emergency rather than

solve the situation for the long term. Is that as much as this network of governments, aid agencies and non-governmental agencies can and will do?

CO-OPERATIVE INTERVENTION

Even when international intervention is agreed, success can only be achieved through an incredibly delicate balancing act between the various major players. In recent years many UN member states have embraced the concept of intervention if a national government cannot, or will not, protect its own population.

Recognising the vulnerability of such populations, my agency, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), now emphasises the concept of "human security", encouraging grassroots local communities to take a greater activist role in planning and participating in their own development process. This "bottom-up" policy focuses on individuals and complements our continuing work with governments.

Some critics suggested unilateral action to help Myanmar's stricken population, but such ideas are rarely useful and some degree of co-operation with governments is essential – even in the face of difficulty or resistance. In catastrophic circumstances similar to the Myanmar cyclone, for instance, JICA was able to co-operate with an interim government in Bangladesh to build cyclone-resistant shelters in that country.

By their very nature most governments want to control events, even humanitarian aid, and they often try to exert this control through advocating the concept of co-ordination. Strong and effective leadership is essential, but too much government "co-ordination" – which can easily translate into domination – must be avoided. Co-operation and co-ordination must be a two-way street. ■

Mrs Sadako Ogata is President of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). She was the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from 1991 until 2001.



FORGOTTEN EMERGENCY, FORGOTTEN RECOVERY? SIERRA LEONE SIX YEARS LATER

Reviewing the conflict and continuing humanitarian crisis in Sierra Leone, Ian Smillie considers why some emergencies have been, and continue to be, neglected.

Sierra Leone's rebel war, between 1991 and 2002, lasted twice as long as World War II, and destroyed tens of thousands of human lives. But for most of that period it was largely ignored. An examination of the donor response during those years and since highlights the dreadful consequences of neglect, and offers clues as to why some emergencies have been, and continue to be, neglected.

ALL THE SYMPTOMS OF A CRISIS

By 1995, the humanitarian situation in Sierra Leone was grim. The United Nations (UN) estimated that 330,000 refugees had crossed into Guinea and Liberia. In Freetown there were as many as 750,000 displaced people. A further million or more had moved into towns up-country, and 900,000 had registered for food aid. In all, 2.1 million people – half the population – had been forced to abandon their homes and livelihoods.¹

Yet by any standard, Sierra Leone was a “forgotten emergency” – forgotten by donors, the media, relief agencies and international peace-keepers.

In December 1995, the UN World Food Programme reported malnutrition reaching “frightening levels”. However the overall donor response remained pathetically small. In neighbouring Liberia, a country with only 60% of Sierra Leone's population, the 1995 consolidated UN appeal totalled US\$65 million, and more than 80% of the requirements were met. In Sierra Leone, a UN appeal for less than \$20 million was only half subscribed.

In 2000, following a failed peace agreement, 500 UN peace-keepers were kidnapped by rebels and, for a brief “CNN moment”, Sierra Leone was noticed. Finally, a phalanx of relief agencies arrived, along with 17,000 UNAMSIL² peace-keepers. It looked as though the peace might now hold, and that the investments Sierra Leone would need for its recovery were in hand.

THE HIGH PRICE OF NEGLECT

By the time it was over, the sudden and short-lived UNAMSIL exercise cost \$2.6 billion. The cost of bringing peace to Sierra Leone at this late stage outstripped all of the foreign assistance of the previous two decades. And it far exceeded the levels of aid that have been provided since, in the name of

consolidating the peace. The donor community – or at least the Security Council – finally acknowledged the need to extinguish a conflagration that it might have ended at a much lower cost half a decade earlier, but it seems to have learned nothing about the need to follow through.

The donor community seems to have learned nothing about the need to follow through

World Bank research has found that “Countries like Sierra Leone must receive well-planned assistance to promote economic growth and stable government that is capable of providing essential services, and, most importantly, to avoid slipping back into conflict.”³ And on the face of it, 2005 aid commitments to Sierra Leone looked reasonably generous, at \$336 million.⁴ However, this is not much assistance for a country that has ranked last or second last on the UN's Human Development Index for all of the last 15 years.

A 2005 OECD report on resourcing fragile states echoed the World Bank findings: “Thinking through the level of donor engagement in fragile states is urgent, given the destabilising consequences of neglect and volatile flows. Of equal importance is consideration of the collective impact and sequencing of development, diplomatic and security efforts in fragile states.”⁵

Nice words, but where Sierra Leone is concerned, mostly just words. In 2005, for example, the G8 announced a renewed commitment to support the “self-sustaining growth of Africa” and to end aid dependency, particularly through peace and stability.⁶ Yet levels of support to Sierra Leone, recovering from more than a decade of conflict, continue to lag behind other nations. For instance, when collectively Japan, Spain, Germany and Canada spent \$195 million in Senegal, they spent only \$15 million in Sierra Leone. And by 2005, the United States had reduced its disbursements to Sierra Leone by 50% in just two years, and was planning further cuts.

INVESTMENT, NOT AID

On top of this, half of that budget was devoted to food aid. Sierra Leone is a rice-producing country and, until the

late 1970s, it was self-sufficient. But with collapsing agriculture support programmes and the war, rice production fell. In 2005, Sierra Leone required 520,000 metric tonnes (MT) of milled rice, but produced just over half that amount. The deficit was made up in commercial imports – 160,000 MT costing \$50–55 million in scarce foreign exchange – and food aid of 66,850 MT.⁷ At the same time, the government's annual recurrent budget for the entire agricultural sector was only \$9 million.

Why spend so much on imported rice, when greater investment in agriculture could meet the country's need and provide work for tens of thousands of people? The answer lies in simple economics: Sierra Leonean rice cost 20–25% more than imported rice and could not, and still cannot, compete with international prices.

Presumably the answer, then, is to spend more on agricultural extension, infrastructure and research, in order to reduce the local cost of production. Apparently not where donors are concerned. Less than 7% of the African Development Bank's disbursements in 2005, and less than 1% of the European Commission commitment, was to the agricultural sector. And of the six major UN agencies operating in Sierra Leone, the Food and Agriculture Organization spent the least (only 1.9% of overall UN agency spending).

Commendably, of its non-food aid spending, the US devoted \$2 million to projects to increase agricultural productivity, and so was one of the larger donors to the agricultural sector. But, according to a 2006 study,⁸ subsidies to US rice farmers totalled \$1.3 billion in 2003, creating a major American export industry. American rice, which cost on average \$415/MT to produce, was being sold in poor countries at just \$274/MT. This made the US the world's third largest rice exporter.

Any suggestion that a poor country like Sierra Leone might follow the example of the US and Europe in subsidising its own farmers was long ago proscribed by a development orthodoxy that permits one rule for the rich and insists on another for the poor. As international

food crises loom large, the careless donor legacy looks set to give Sierra Leone yet another blow to the vitals.

A PROMISE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY

This is not meant to deprecate the good work of the many international organisations in Sierra Leone. It is meant to highlight the fact that it is not enough – not good enough, not smart enough, and not generous enough.

It is true that Sierra Leone does not fit the donor's concept of the ideal aid recipient. Perhaps evidence of better governance in the immediate post-war years would have attracted more foreign aid, but the historical lack of donor interest in Sierra Leone suggests that this would have been unlikely.

Will Sierra Leone's recovery be neglected too? Perhaps the current government, elected in 2007, will be able to deal with donor complaints, to attract more donors, to better co-ordinate their efforts, and to persuade them to support neglected areas like agriculture. And perhaps its steps toward self-sufficiency, independent of a donor community that has proven

to be so illogical and so unreliable over the years, will provide a model for other "forgotten" countries. ■

Mr Ian Smillie is co-author with Larry Minear of The Charity of Nations: Humanitarian action in a calculating world. He chairs the Diamond Development Initiative, a new organisation working to improve economic returns to Africa's 1.3 million artisanal diamond miners. In January 2008, he was the first witness at the war crimes trial of Charles Taylor, former President of Liberia.

¹ Figures compiled by the author during a 1996 visit to Sierra Leone.

² UNAMSIL: United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

³ <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/0,,contentMDK:21327197~pagePK:64165401~piPK:64165026~theSitePK:469382,00.html>

⁴ Donor statistics are derived from USAID and UN data.

⁵ OECD, *Monitoring resource flows to fragile states*, 2005 Report, Paris, 2005, p 1

⁶ United Nations, *Summit document on Africa*, G8 Gleaneagles Summit, 2005, p 2 http://data.unaids.org/Topics/UniversalAccess/PostG8_Gleaneagles_Africa_en.pdf

⁷ Statistics compiled by the author from interviews in-country over 2003–6.

⁸ Oxfam International, *Kicking down the door*, Oxfam Briefing Paper, April, 2005, http://www.oxfam.org/en/files/bp72_rice.pdf/download

Kumba Kuteh (centre, right) is reunited with a friend. Families and friends often were separated during the war in Sierra Leone and have spent years wondering whether loved ones are dead or alive. Shortly after this photograph was taken, Kumba, 28, learned that her uncle had recently died of a serious illness. She had been counting on her uncle to help her re-establish life in Sierra Leone. Photo: David Ward/World Vision





PRIORITISING EMERGENCIES AND PEOPLE WITHIN EMERGENCIES: THE EC'S APPROACH

How can a donor prioritise which emergencies – and which people within emergencies – require most urgent support? Michèle Lebrun explains ECHO's approach.



A young girl in a refugee camp in northern Cameroon. Thousands of people fled Chad's capital in early February 2008 after fierce fighting broke out between government and rebel forces.

Photo: Ann Birch/World Vision

Solidarity is at the core of European integration. Humanitarian aid is one of its concrete expressions. The European Union (EU) as a whole – Commission plus EU Member States – is the world's largest international humanitarian aid donor.¹ Through its Consensus on Humanitarian Aid,² the EU firmly commits to upholding and promoting the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

Applying these principles, the European Commission's humanitarian action is dictated by the needs and interests of victims, without any ethnic, national or religious consideration, without discrimination of any kind, without bias towards any particular side in a conflict, and without mixing humanitarian objectives with political, economic or military ones. More specifically, the mandate of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid service (ECHO) specifies helping those who are most vulnerable. The needs assessment is thus the objective foundation for the decision to grant aid. Moreover, to ensure an equitable approach, ECHO has a focus on protracted crises that get little attention from the media and where donor funds are insufficient to meet humanitarian needs.

A TWO-FOLD APPROACH

To frame its annual programming strategy, the Commission has developed a specific methodology for analysing general vulnerability and state of crisis at a comparative country level (the Global Needs Assessment – GNA), as well as the forgotten character of some humanitarian crises (the Forgotten Crises Assessment – FCA).

Given the length of time it takes to collect data and the fact that these are worked out at national level (not at the level of specific groups within countries), the GNA and FCA inevitably rely on indicators that are subject to historical and geographical constraints.

These tools do not indicate the scale of needs in absolute figures and cannot be used to decide budget allocation, since they do not take account of the number of people affected by the crisis, the local community's capacity to take up the aid, access, other donors, the ability of

partners to intervene effectively, and so on.

It is therefore essential to balance this "top-down" approach with a "bottom-up" approach. Analyses by on-the-spot experts identify humanitarian crisis pockets and provide detailed needs assessments that are recent and as comprehensive and objective as possible, to shape specific responses. ECHO's network of aid specialists in the field conduct these assessments in every humanitarian crisis, drawing on valuable operational expertise and linking closely to implementing partners.

Humanitarian aid is a concrete expression of European solidarity

The GNA and FCA tools, thus, do not seek to define in what form and on what scale the Commission should intervene. These tools are more modest, confined to identifying priority countries where humanitarian needs are likely to be the greatest or the most neglected, and where Commission aid appears to be most necessary.

Despite their shortcomings, however, the GNA and FCA tools are invaluable for ensuring impartial and independent humanitarian action based solely on the needs of the people affected. They offer a common alternative framework to ensure some consistency in allocating resources among various geographical zones. They also allow rapid *ex post*³ control of resource allocation to the most vulnerable, guaranteeing the transparency of the Commission's humanitarian action *vis-à-vis* both the European citizen and the aid recipient. ■

M's Michèle Lebrun is desk officer in the European Commission Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid.

¹ European Union, (press release) "Humanitarian aid: Frequently asked questions" (Reference: MEMO/07/238), 13 June 2007, see: <http://europa.eu/rapid/>

² Joint Statement by the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission, *The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid: The humanitarian challenge*, 2008, http://ec.europa.eu/echo/pdf_files/booklets/consensus_EN.pdf

³ "after the fact"



CAMPAIGNING FOR IRAQI REFUGEE CHILDREN: EASING THEIR HIDDEN BURDEN

Campaigns to raise awareness can grab the world's attention and compel the public and governments to act, argues Ashley Clements. The challenge is to keep up the momentum.

Time and again, it is the children who are hardest hit by war and disasters. When World Vision began responding to the Iraqi refugee crisis in early 2007, little had been written or spoken about the children who had joined the millions of displaced Iraqis across the Middle East. It quickly became evident that young Iraqis were silently shouldering much of the burden – and that this silence needed to be broken through awareness and action.

A HIDDEN CRISIS

As World Vision tracked the growing numbers of refugees and internally displaced people fleeing violence and turmoil in Iraq – estimated at the time of writing to be over 4.7 million,¹ and the largest, single refugee population world-wide² – we became aware that this was a very different kind of refugee crisis: one where the population was hidden from view.

Once-prosperous Iraqis were now taking refuge in urban slums across the region, forbidden to work, and hiding in their new homes for fear of deportation. Younger refugees were being denied access to an education, cooped up indoors

with no means of addressing the psychological burdens they carried from a war-torn Iraq. Children gave heart-wrenching accounts of seeing friends and loved ones killed in front of them, of being kidnapped and held for ransom by militias.

There were few obvious signs of the crisis that lay beneath the surface. It was far too easy for the media and key policy-makers to turn their backs on the children of Iraq.

TAILORING THE RESPONSE

The heavily politicised environment presented a new set of challenges for designing a World Vision response to this emergency: a hidden urban refugee population puts pressure on the society of host countries, and different actors have different agendas, but few of them take any interest in the youngest and smallest of those affected, the children.

We realised that two parallel processes had to be undertaken: one was the more traditional programmatic response and the other consisted of initiatives to carve out enough political space and funding for much-needed programmes. The approach decided upon was an integrated advocacy and programmatic emergency response, where media and policy influence were integral to the success of the intervention.

Right from the planning stages of the response, advocacy was looked to as a key component. Advocacy staff assisted in assessing and designing the operation, and programme specialists contributed their expertise to the formation of advocacy messaging and strategy. The result was an integrated response that targeted the key issues from both an operational and an advocacy perspective, thus maximising World Vision's potential impact.

World Vision has advocated for the children of Iraq and taken their voices to decision-makers, campaigning internationally for Iraqi children to be allowed into schools, for adequate funding of necessary services in host countries such as Jordan and Syria, and for psycho-social interventions targeting those in need of such support.

SMALL STEPS

The first milestone marking the success of global advocacy efforts came in 2007 when the Jordanian government announced up to 50,000 new classroom

places for Iraqi refugee children. A combination of political pressure and available funding made this possible. (Sadly, a number of factors still keep tens of thousands of Iraqi children out of school.)

International advocacy initiatives were successful in raising the Iraqi refugee crisis out of obscurity during 2007. Resettlement and donor funding were put squarely on the agenda in many countries – particularly in Europe – as a result of high-level conferences, lobbying, and media work by NGOs, humanitarian advocacy groups, and the UN. Yet the UN's 2008 Iraq Situation Supplementary Appeal is still largely unfunded, and there are signs that media and donor interest were short-lived.

Media and policy influence were integral to the success of the intervention

Despite some very real advances in the situation facing Iraqi refugees, there has been a reluctance by politicians to expend political capital on the crisis. Its highly complex and ever-changing nature, as well as the immense scale of needs, mean that the impact of international pressure on governments has not resulted in the level of changes that World Vision expected.

This grave refugee crisis is not one which will dissipate over a few months. The challenge is to centre attention over enough years to ensure that vulnerable young refugees do not drift into obscurity, living in the social margins of the region. Instead World Vision and others must continue to support the displaced children of Iraq by empowering them with a chance to contribute to those communities they now call home, or indeed to return to their homeland once the time is right, well-prepared to contribute to the rebuilding of Iraq. ■

Mr Ashley Jonathan Clements is World Vision's Regional Emergency Advocacy Adviser for the Middle East and Eastern Europe. For further queries contact Ms Tracey Hunter: Tracey_Hunter@wvi.org

¹ UNHCR Iraq website, <http://www.unhcr.org/iraq.html>

² International Organization for Migration, *Five years on, more people displaced than ever before*, Press Briefing Notes, 18 March 2008, <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/pbnAF/cache/offonce?entryId=16782>

Returning to what? The forgotten widows of Chechnya

CHECHNYA

““They say in the Caucasus that families are big and they can always be relied on for support,” says **Aza Chabieva**, a 38-year-old mother from Grozny. “It is now only me and my sisters left in the whole world.” She is sipping her tea in the kitchen of the World Vision medical centre in Ingushetia where many internally displaced persons (IDPs) come for help.

Aza lost her husband five years ago. She has two children – a 10-year-old daughter, Amina, and a six-year-old son, Adam – and looks after other children at the temporary accommodation centre where she and her two sisters now live.

Aza’s story is like those of thousands of women of Chechnya who have lost their husbands, fathers and brothers in the last fifteen years and have had to find a way to survive.

WOMEN AMONG THE MOST VULNERABLE

The politics of Chechnya are complex and entrenched in a long history. Independence movements have existed for the past 200 years, since the Russian empire established its presence in the Caucasus. But the most destructive and recent campaigns took place in 1994–1996 and 1999–2002 when more than 600,000 people had to flee their homes.¹ Many villages and small towns, as well as Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, were destroyed by bombings and artillery attacks.

There has since been a constant military presence in the region. There are still attacks on government buildings and a general climate of insecurity in the neighbouring republics of Ingushetia and Dagestan.

Many people have returned to Chechnya to re-build their homes but others, like Aza, live in temporary accommodation centres and hostels where facilities are damp, subject to inadequate sanitation, and have unreliable water, gas and electricity supplies.

Among the most vulnerable groups are single mothers and widows. **Shamil Tangiev**, who works for human rights non-governmental organisation Memorial, in Ingushetia and Chechnya, says that they have women who live in temporary accommodation centres coming to their office every day. The government wants to close the centres, but many women will not leave – they have nowhere to go.

“Their relatives often cannot help them. The government gave apartments to some of them, but there are other people already living there. If these women leave temporary accommodation centres, they will be living in the street,” Shamil says.

Years after the conflict, the problem of internally displaced persons in Chechnya and neighbouring Ingushetia has acquired a new dimension: there are people, many of them single mothers, who just cannot go home.

AN EDUCATED WOMAN WHO HAS LOST EVERYTHING

Aza was born in Ingushetia and moved to Grozny with her older sister when she was 15. In the mid-1980s, when Aza started college, Grozny was a flourishing city with beautiful green parks and modern architecture – the centre of culture and education in the North Caucasus.

Aza is a well-educated woman, first graduating from a professional college to become a builder and later studying to become an art teacher in 1991. Three years later, the armed conflict started in Chechnya.

In 1995 she met her husband Aslan. The new family rented a small apartment in Grozny, which is where their daughter Amina was born. When the second Chechen war started in 1999, Aza took her two-year-old daughter and left Grozny. Aslan stayed behind to try to pick up what was left of their belongings. By December that year, when some people



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“it is now only me and my sisters left in the whole world”

started to go back to Chechnya, Aza decided to return to try to find her husband. It was very difficult to cross the border between Ingushetia and Chechnya at that time. The Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations was running buses to take people in or out, and Aza was sitting in the front seat with her daughter when she saw her husband crossing a checkpoint.

“I screamed to the driver to let me out, took my little daughter and jumped right out of the bus. There was no more reason to go back to Grozny.”

Once reunited, the family, including Aza’s two sisters and her mother, lived in the tented camp in Ingushetia. Aslan found a position as a bailiff at the Ministry of Justice but, in 2003, he was in a car with a ministry official’s son when they were kidnapped by a gang of armed militants. Police have never found them.

When Aza’s mother was diagnosed with cancer she had to sell the only property they ever had – a small plot of land – to pay the medical bills. But this did not save her and she died in 2004. Now Aza’s family consists of just her, her two sisters and the children. Aslan’s family refuses to help them.

Many women lost everything in the conflict, and even though compensation schemes were introduced by the government, they are inadequate: those with partially destroyed housing, with properties that have passed through numerous hands² and whose ownership has been contested, and those who lived in rented apartments before the conflict, are not eligible for compensation. In other cases, the home was owned by the husband or his family – who are now either gone or don’t want to help. These women are left to eke out a living with the few resources they have.

Without compensation or support to build a home, Aza and her family cannot return to Chechnya.

A society’s failure to care for marginalised groups leads to a sense of hopelessness. Aza does not want her children to grow up in Chechnya. “There is no future for them there. They do not have a childhood, nothing.” The conflict they saw, the fear, the extreme poverty and the loss of their father deeply affects the children in ways one does not always see.

“Amina used to be one of the best pupils in her class. Now she is missing classes,” Aza says. “I can spend many hours with other children but I am afraid that when I come home I may lose patience with my own kids.”” ■

Reported and photographed by Ms Maria Nazarenko, Project Manager, Community Mobilisation and Integration, World Vision Russian Federation

¹ Internally Displaced Monitoring Centre Report, figures provided by Memorial, 10 October 2006

² IDMC Report, 13 August 2007

Photos

Right – Aza Chabieva

Left – Aza and her children



life

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Women and girls overlooked in humanitarian emergencies

SOMALIA

“In humanitarian emergencies, particular groups suffer more than others from physical violence, displacement, disease and hunger. These people are abandoned, mistreated or ignored, and very often die unnoticed. Simply put, they are neglected.

Somalia’s prolonged instability has had a negative impact on every sector of development. War, further aggravated by natural disasters such as prolonged droughts, seriously affects the entire population, but the situation of women and children has especially worsened. Women and girls are further neglected in this crisis simply due to their gender.

THE FORGOTTEN FEW

Women who are left at home as their husbands, sons and brothers go to war are the forgotten few. They make a very important contribution to the work force and ably fend for their families, yet their voices are relegated to, and confined within,

the walls of the home. They lack information on where to access services, who to contact for help or how to get their children to school.

Often, women who remain at home are targeted by marauding militias and are vulnerable to sexual abuse. This has contributed to an exodus of able women with their children to neighbouring countries in search of shelter and protection, especially for their girl children.

One Somali woman who is now living in Kenya says: “The reason I left home is to protect my two

“I took nothing with us – we could not carry it, I had to carry the kids”

daughters who were a target of rape. My husband – who should have protected us – died, and there is no government to protect us.”

Somalia is a patriarchal society where men are the decision-makers at both the household and public levels. Women in Somalia have little or no control over family and community resources. Men, on the other hand, are mandated to protect and to have authority over women in order to preserve these social values, and to gain social status when their wives’ qualities are recognised and praised. Other traditional practices, like polygamy and early marriage, are commonly practised – indeed, are acclaimed as signs of wealth and high social status.

Somalia has one of the lowest literacy levels in the world at 17%,¹ with a girls’ school enrolment rate of 36.1% at lower primary and 33.2% at higher primary level.² The disparity is associated with the low value parents place on girls’ education compared to boys’, and with other cultural practices. Early marriage denies the girl an opportunity to access education, leads to early pregnancy, and may lead to complications of pregnancy (such as fistula) and early divorce. In addition, women and girls suffer significant domestic and social violence. During humanitarian emergency response, tackling issues of education and gender-based violence tends to be outweighed by the critical distribution of food and other supplies.

Photos

Left – Families carry bags full of non-food items such as blankets, jerry cans, soap, cups, plastic basins, mosquito nets and cooking pots to internally displaced people living in camps

Photo: Paul Bettings/World Vision

Right – Somali girls

Photo: John Kismir/World Vision

Top right – Saynap feeds her children and grandchildren in a camp for internally displaced people

Photo: Paul Bettings/World Vision

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EXACERBATING THE SUFFERING

In the internally displaced camps, women and children normally are the majority. Although it is now standard practice internationally for only women and children to receive food aid distributions, it is less clear what happens to food once it reaches household level: some men sell the food to get money for khat (miraa), a narcotic that is chewed.

Saynap is 42 years old and fled from Mogadishu with six children: four of her own and two grandchildren. She decided to leave Mogadishu after her son was killed in severe fighting. She now lives in a camp for internally displaced people just outside Baidoa, in Somalia.

"That day was terrible, there was shooting everywhere," Saynap recalls. "I lost my son and my grandchildren were orphaned. The children were so afraid and that's when I decided to leave."

"I took nothing with us – we could not carry it, I had to carry the kids."

When asked what she wants for her children, Saynap says, "My biggest worry is just how to get food for the children; I don't even know if I am going to get anything for them tomorrow."

The war in Somalia has aggravated the gender concerns. Previously unheard-of practices have become prevalent. In towns, it is said, men no longer feel responsible as family bread-winners, since women have demonstrated that they are capable. War widows, who were previously taken care of by their late husbands' clans, may now remain without resources. Rape, which was very rare in traditional societies, has occurred frequently during the war, with fighters targeting women, recognising that they are a vulnerable group. There have been cases where parents, learning of the rape of their daughter, accept compensation of one camel from the perpetrator in order to keep the matter quiet.

INCLUSION, RECOGNITION

Even in the best of times, the family, the clan or the government have not provided for the needs and rights of Somali women and girls. Civil conflict has destroyed the limited existing educational resources and opportunities available to women and girls, who now have even fewer opportunities than their mothers' generation.



Interventions that promote peace building, women's rights and gender equality are much needed, to improve living conditions for girls and women, and thus the entire community. World Vision is embarking on intentional planning which includes gathering information from the marginalised and neglected during emergency assessments, to ensure that their specific needs are included in any response.

Women and girls must be involved when others are advocating for their rights in the face of cultural barriers and inadequate government policies. Women will need to be included in peace negotiations at different levels, they also will need their skills developed so that they are able to meet their basic needs wherever they are. For them to learn to re-build safe lives they need leadership directions and the ability to make decisions. They cannot achieve this without financial resources and therefore need to partner with key stakeholders to facilitate this process effectively."¹ ■

Reported by Ms Anastacia Olembo, Gender Advisor for World Vision's Africa Regional Office

¹ UNICEF, 2004/5 Survey of Primary Schools in Somalia

² UNICEF, 2002/3 Survey of Primary Schools in Somalia



life

UND THE GLOBE

Marginalised children need urgent protection

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

“Perhaps more than in any other country on the African continent, the issues that radically and adversely affect the lives of thousands of children manifest themselves in the extreme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). There aren’t many countries in the world where thousands of children fall within one or more of the following categories: child soldiers, street children, child “sorcerers”, child labourers, child sex slaves, internally displaced children and child refugees. And these burdens are in addition to the most urgent emergency in this under-reported crisis: children account for almost half of all deaths from the indirect consequences of conflict in the DRC.¹

War leaves children orphaned, displaced and disowned. The protection, safety, security and overall well-being of children can be properly ensured only when appropriate mechanisms are in place. In the DRC, protection of minors has deteriorated all the way to the community level where traditional institutions, such as family, are becoming violators of human rights. A culture of impunity demands urgent attention to ensure the protection of children – sooner rather than later.

CAST OUT

Patrick Ibudu, 16, lives in Kikimi, a semi-rural locality near the city of Kinshasa. Kikimi covers 113 square kilometres and has an estimated population of 21,360, of which the majority are natives of Bas-Congo.² In this predominantly matriarchal culture, whereby children belong to the mother’s line, some traditional practices have a negative impact on children’s rights.

“I remembered that my mother was pregnant,” says Patrick, “but soon after we saw the baby, Merveille, we were not allowed to see my mother.” Patrick’s father later told them that their mother had died. “Although we were so young, I still remember that we really missed our mother.”

The ongoing conflict in the DRC is reported to claim as many as 45,000 lives a month³ and obstructs the education and security of children. Patrick’s father is a soldier and is working in a remote area. He used to visit his family once a month, but was sometimes away for two to three months at a time.

When Patrick’s mother died, his life changed dramatically. Being the eldest of the family, he was responsible for his sister Pauline, nine, and brother Bennie, six, under his grandparents’ care. As Merveille was too young, she was taken to live with relatives and returned when she was two years old. “I was 13 years old when Merveille came back,” recalls Patrick.

But Patrick’s grandparents were unable to provide food for the children, and Merveille’s health deteriorated. “Merveille suffered a lot when she came back home. We used to eat only every second day. Two months later, Merveille died. She died in my arms. I remember that at the time I didn’t even realise that my young sister was dead,” Patrick says, almost crying.

Many children in the DRC are abandoned either because the war has separated them from their families or because they have been accused of witchcraft. Patrick’s grandmother accused his sister Pauline of being a witch and of killing Merveille. The children were treated as slaves and had no rights. Patrick recalls that one day, on his return from farming with his grandfather, he was not allowed back into the home. His grandmother chased him away.

“I spent my nights outside, without anything to cover me or to eat,” Patrick says. He slept in front of the house and was very anxious about his young sister’s situation. Then he discovered that Pauline was imprisoned for almost a month in a sealed tank without any food and water. “The next time I saw Pauline, I could not believe it – she was like a piece

Photos

Left – Patrick (centre) with friends, on his way back home after school

Right – Pauline enjoys her studies

Background – A vegetable garden created and maintained by women supported by World Vision



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of string and was starving. I started feeding Pauline and Bennie secretly, until one day we decided to run away from home.”

This perplexing phenomenon of children and witchcraft may be unique to the DRC. Much ambiguity surrounds what exactly leads parents and community members to accuse their children of witchcraft. Could it represent an attempt to make “transcendent” sense of the otherwise meaningless, intractable suffering and neglect affecting DRC society? Further research is needed to grasp not only the origins, but the extent of exploitation and violence against children accused of witchcraft, and how to help them.

What is clear, however, is what happens once the accusation is made: at the very least, the child is marginalised in the community or, in the worst-case scenario, is cast out of the community altogether. Countless children who are accused of witchcraft are left out on the streets to fend for themselves. Children who are disowned by their families are forced to find any kind of work and many end up in mines, especially diamond mines. These children are often killed or receive very little pay.⁴ Thus, one form of abuse feeds directly off another.

JUSTICE REFORM AND JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN

Patrick, Pauline and Bennie are now living in a Catholic centre where they are cared for. World Vision, through the Kikimi Area Development Programme, has assisted the centre with supplies including shoes, clothes and books, as well as food supplements.

Patrick attends secondary school and wishes to be a mechanic, while Pauline and Bennie attend a nearby primary school. Patrick likes going to school and he is determined to succeed. But this time is very challenging for him.

“During the parents’ visits, I always stay alone and wait until the parents have gone before I join my friends. I wish my father could visit me, but he is not there. This is a reality and I need to accept that, and focus on my study.”

The school principal describes Patrick as a kind boy, with many friends. “When you look at him, you don’t realise that he has been rejected by his own family! We know that this is a new environment, but he has adapted very quickly.”

Patrick is now ready to share his experience with other children facing the same reality. “I would like to encourage those who are facing the same situation – being abandoned by parents – not to feel sorry for themselves, but to stand tall and hope. We must struggle,” he says, “but there are always people to help us on our way. The answer is not to become a street kid – the solution is **not** on the street!”

“I wish my father could visit me, but he is not there”

In the aftermath of war, not only human lives but social systems are left in ruins. Reforming the DRC’s judicial system, for example, is an important part of repairing the damage caused by war and moving towards a peaceful future.⁵ While many see judicial reform as within the realm of legal institutions, a subset of judicial reform (often referred to as justice reform) includes protecting and improving the humanitarian reality of the local population.⁶ ■

Reported and photographed by Ms Vianney Dong, Communications, Advocacy and Public Relations Manager, World Vision DRC

Background information compiled by Mr Paul Mikov and Ms Laurelea Banks, World Vision International

¹ International Rescue Committee, *Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: An ongoing crisis*, p 14, http://www.theirc.org/resources/2007/2006-7_congomortalitysurvey.pdf

² Kikimi Assessment done in 2006 by World Vision

³ International Rescue Committee, <http://www.theirc.org/special-report/congo-forgotten-crisis.html>

⁴ IRIN news release, “DRC: Diamonds, children & witchcraft”, 2006

⁵ Judicial reform in the DRC currently includes a TRC and bringing in the International Criminal Court (ICC). Both mechanisms are currently suffering from major impediments and are therefore primarily ineffective. For more information see T K Kamwimbi, “The DRC elections, reconciliation, and justice”, news release, 2006 and P McCold et al., *An introduction to restorative peacebuilding*, Briefing paper #1, 2007.

⁶ For more on justice reform, see Inter-American Development Bank, *IDB experience in justice reform: Lessons learned and elements for policy formulation*, 2001, <http://www.iadb.org/sds/doc/sgc-IDBExperiences-E.pdf>

life

UND THE GLOBE

Hunger and despair in Haiti

HAITI

“At this point in time I don’t think things are going to change. When I was a child it was the same; we ate only once a day. We never, never ate three times a day. That’s why when my daughter is hungry and cries I feel like crying too, because I have nothing to give her. I just bathe her and we fall asleep.”

Analita Pierre, 21-year-old mother of two in Central Plateau, Haiti

“Haiti is considered the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.¹ With almost nine million inhabitants, it has been immersed in hunger and despair for the past three decades. According to the latest United Nations Human development report, 65% of the population lives in conditions of poverty.²

A number of factors have caused Haiti to fall off the world’s radar – the crisis is largely unreported by global media, is under-funded, and there is a lack of political will to focus on a

solution. There is also confusion about the complexity and scale of suffering.

The children of Haiti’s poor – that is, the majority of Haitian children – can be considered a “neglected emergency” in their own right.

Growing children are always hungry as their rapidly growing bodies and minds depend on nutrition, but here there is never enough to satisfy their needs. Food insecurity is closely linked to child mortality and there is a high probability that around one quarter of all children won’t make it to 40 years old.³

The current global social unrest around rising food prices is not comparable to the cry of Haitians for survival. While world-wide protest focuses on having to spend more on food, Haitians have nothing left to survive on. According to the UN, 46% of the total Haitian population is malnourished.⁴ In this last year alone, the price of basic foods has risen up to 32%.⁵ If half a kilogram of rice could be bought for 49 US cents in January 2008, by July Haitians were paying 61 cents for it. In the case of maize the increase was even greater. Poultry and fish are scant, and beef is unattainable.

SURVIVING HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION

Igénie Charles is 39 and looks exhausted. She has nine children, the youngest barely nine days old. She helps her husband on the field and prepares charcoal to sell. She barely has time to take care of her children. Her 14-year-old daughter prepares dinner; she boils two plantains and splits a small corn cob among her three younger siblings: Lovenaiika, two, Rolnaiika, three, and James Lee, four.

Food insecurity in Haiti has deep roots, difficult to counteract. On the one hand, farm lands are insufficient and have become infertile due to sustained deforestation that has eroded the soil. On the other hand, the constant crisis and political instability together with poor public administration have undermined local production and the economy. Nowadays, most of what Haiti consumes is imported. The existing agricultural activity is scant and lacks adequate infrastructure and investment. On top of this, nature has taken its toll on the island; the storm in 2004 left over 700 dead in the poorest areas.

Igénie Charles has benefited from food distribution programmes but, according to her, “The situation is the same with programmes or without them. What we need is irrigation. The food we get is good, but there will never be enough.”



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“the food we get is good but there will never be enough”

Dr Rony Pierre, a USAID pediatrician stationed in the Port de Paix area, says, “We can’t ignore these programmes’ contribution, but we must also acknowledge that such food was distributed as ‘complementary nourishment’ under the assumption that the families involved would provide the counterpart. The truth is that in many of these cases that food was the main sustenance of those families.” According to Dr Pierre, Haitian children under five years old fall short of the recommended caloric intake by 25–50%.

World Vision Haiti’s National Director, **Mr Wesley Charles**, says the problem needs to be seen from two perspectives: the short-term view to feed the hungry, and the long-term vision linked mainly to agricultural re-activation and local production along with investment in productive infrastructure – primarily irrigation – and credit programmes for farmers.

FOOD A FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT, NOT JUST A COMMODITY

World Vision Haiti implements a food security programme in two of the poorest rural areas of the country, benefiting 80% of the population in those areas. The programme relieves needs and tries to mitigate and prevent a larger crisis through four strategies: food distribution, health monitoring, dietary education and the re-activation of agriculture.

Once a month, pregnant and lactating women receive 22 kilograms of wheat, eight kilograms of vegetable stew and six litres of oil. Those who have children between six and 23 months old receive an additional 18 kilograms of a powdered wheat, soy and bean mixture.

Through the programme, mothers learn about diet. Their health, as well as their children’s health, is monitored by community workers in co-ordination with the health centre. Vitamins and parasite removers are distributed to counteract disease.

Besides all this, farmers and mothers are taught about fertilisation, irrigation and re-forestation techniques to increase the production of corn, beans, vegetables and bananas.

Photos

Left – Igénie Charles, who benefited from food distribution programmes, says, “What we need is irrigation.”

Right – Igénie’s children



Yonie René, a 23-year-old programme beneficiary, has enough vegetables in the small plot behind her house to feed her 18-month-old son, and sometimes even has enough to sell. She also learned to prepare a nutritious and delicious shake with the cereals she receives from the programme, mixed with milk, cinnamon and sugar. “The programme is a great help because with the money we get we can buy other things, like beef and milk.” ”

Reported and photographed by Ms Yadira Pacheco, Communications Co-ordinator, World Vision Peru

¹ UNDP, Human development report 2007/2008, Table 3, p 231

² *ibid.*, Table 3, p 239

³ *ibid.*

⁴ UNDP, *op. cit.*, Table 7, p 268

⁵ Estimate based on the report of the Haitian Ministry of Finance, *Prix des produits de première nécessité 2002–2007*, 23 June 2008, <http://www.mefhaiti.gouv.ht>

life

UND THE GLOBE



SILENT EMERGENCIES: INDONESIA'S WORST NIGHTMARES

Why are some forms of humanitarian crisis not recognised, even when the scale of human suffering clearly constitutes an emergency? asks Trihadi Saptoadi.

Slow-onset crises, such as chronic malnutrition and disease, are far less likely than dramatic, sensational crises to arouse strong international reaction. But such neglected emergencies, though deceptively silent, demand our response: for their cumulative death toll, economic impacts, and the way they render poor people far more vulnerable to future threats.¹

Indonesia, a country with 230 million people, has made headlines world-wide with some of its disasters. The Aceh tsunami in December 2004, among the world's largest-ever natural disasters, killed over 150,000 people. Tremors in Nias, Jogjakarta and other places between 2005 and 2007 killed several thousands. The world's highest death toll from avian influenza – over 100 people – has been in Indonesia. These emergencies have stirred up the world's concern, and attracted media coverage and relief responses. Support for tsunami relief amounted to US\$6 billion very quickly in Aceh alone.²

These devastating disasters are indeed very serious and have affected many lives. But there are worse nightmares. Beyond the headlines, Indonesia is facing far more serious battles which have claimed a much larger number of victims for longer. Are these emergencies “hidden” because they might prove too hard to resolve?

HEALTH CRISIS

The greatest threats to Indonesian lives are tuberculosis (TB), water-borne diseases like diarrhea which escalate infant and under-five mortality, vector-borne diseases, and poverty-inflicted malnutrition and starvation.

TB is among the toughest problems to solve; in 2006, over 88,000 Indonesians died from the disease,³ making Indonesia the world's third-worst affected country after India and China.⁴ The government has launched massive campaigns and direct interventions, including free-of-charge medication, but the number of victims has not decreased much each year. The fight is far from over: the World Health Organization estimated over 534,000 new TB cases in 2006.⁵

Nor has there been an effective way to reduce diarrhea and other water-borne diseases. Under-five mortality is another serious problem despite mass

immunisations: 151,000 children under five perished in 2006.⁶

And every year, thousands of people die from vector-borne diseases, such as malaria and dengue fever. There are signs that we are fighting a losing battle, with hospitals and clinics in many cities crowded with malaria and dengue fever patients.

Following years of efforts to improve ante-natal, obstetric and neo-natal care, Indonesia's infant mortality rate (IMR) has significantly decreased to 26 deaths per 1000 live births in 2006,⁷ compared to 38 in 1999.⁸ But this still means an unacceptably high number of babies died during childbirth out of some 4.43 million births in 2006.⁹ Neighbouring Thailand and Malaysia, for example, have been able to slash their IMR to seven and 10, respectively, in 2006;¹⁰ while Singapore has among the world's smallest IMR – two.¹¹

Indonesia has approximately 2,500 pediatricians to serve 45 million children (under 18):¹² a ratio of only one to 18,000. And the bitter fact is that most of the pediatricians live in big cities, while much of the need is in least developed and remote areas like Papua, Kalimantan, or the islands of Maluku or East Nusa Tenggara.

Besides the poor capacity and quality of health services, the high IMR and under-five mortality are caused by lack of understanding of nutrition and dire poverty. Over 100 million people, or almost 50% of Indonesia's population, live on less than US\$2 a day.¹³ For millions of families, the grave poverty cripples their capacity to provide adequate and nutritious food for their children. The Food and Agriculture Organization estimated in 2006 that around 13 million Indonesians suffered from acute shortage of food intake; half of them are children.

OTHER “LOW-GRADE” EMERGENCIES

Many small-scale disasters, such as floods, earthquakes and drought that leads to severe food shortage, are among the silent emergencies that media fail to bring to the surface. Ineffective local government management and reckless exploitation of natural resources have led to such adversity.



World Vision's Mudah-Murah-Mumpuni (or “Easy-Inexpensive-Complete”) programme aimed to improve children's nutrition in Rote district, East Nusa Tenggara province of Indonesia, through training parents and providing complementary food.

Photo: World Vision

Finally, this multi-ethnic and multi-belief country is very prone to grave communal conflicts. Even if these frictions do not claim many lives, they cause great misery to the community, particularly children.

RECOGNITION AND ACTION

Perhaps, then, silent crises require approaches from several directions. Over the last few years in Indonesia, the government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), local communities and other parties have achieved landmark improvements in cohesiveness and security, in the fight against poverty and disease, and in IMR and under-five mortality.

World Vision, for example, managed to slash malaria infection in scores of villages in East Nusa Tenggara and West Kalimantan with massive distribution and usage of impregnated mosquito nets, and by advocating for a clean environment. Our programmes fight poverty through community empowerment, and have facilitated a better quality of living for hundreds of thousands of people.

It is tempting to compare all the successes to the sheer size of the problems, and feel that the achievements are not enough. The government, NGOs and the community need to work harder and further synergise their capacities to significantly reduce the burden of these silent emergencies. For this, they also must find a way to convince the international community, which responded so remarkably to the 2004 tsunami, to boost its support for these less dramatic but even more deadly nightmares. ■

Mr Trihadi Saptoadi is National Director of World Vision Indonesia.

¹ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *World disasters report 2006: Neglected crises*, 2006, p 21, http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/news/nol/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/14_12_06_disasters.pdf ² E James, *Clean or corrupt: Tsunami aid in Aceh*, Asia Pacific School of Economics and Government, Australian National University, 2006, http://www.crawford.anu.edu.au/degrees/pogodiscussion_papers/PDP06-04.pdf ³ World Health Organization, *Global Tuberculosis control – WHO report 2008*, p 262, http://www.who.int/tb/publications/global_report/2008/pdf/annex3_sea.pdf ⁴ *ibid.*, p 113, http://www.who.int/tb/publications/global_report/2008/pdf/ridn.pdf ⁵ *ibid.*, p 262, http://www.who.int/tb/publications/global_report/2008/pdf/annex3_sea.pdf ⁶ UNICEF, *State of the world's children 2008*, p 115, <http://www.unicef.org/sowc08/docs/sowc08.pdf> ⁷ *ibid.* ⁸ UNICEF, *State of the world's children 2001*, p 79, http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/pub_sowc01_en.pdf ⁹ UNICEF, *State of the world's children 2008*, p 115, <http://www.unicef.org/sowc08/docs/sowc08.pdf> ¹⁰ *ibid.*, pp 115–116 ¹¹ *ibid.* ¹² Reported by Indonesia's *Kompas* newspaper, 26 June 2008, see <http://www.kompas.com> ¹³ V Alatas, "How many poor in Indonesia?", *Tempo* magazine, no. 20/VII/Jan 16–22, 2007, see: <http://indopov.org/poverty.html>

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- ▶ **"Neglected crises: Partial response perpetuates suffering"** (B Wisner, A Lavell and J Walter in *World disaster report*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, 2006) <http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/wdr2006/summaries.asp>
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- ▶ **ReliefWeb** website <http://www.reliefweb.int>
- ▶ **The shock doctrine: The rise of disaster capitalism** (N Klein, Metropolitan Books, New York, 2007)
- ▶ **World disaster report 2006: Focus on neglected crises** (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, 2006) <http://www.ifrc.org/publicat/wdr2006>
- ▶ **World Vision Iraqi refugees campaign** website <http://www.iraqichildrentrapped.org>

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the 2008 World Vision Award for Innovation in Advocacy

congratulations Patricio Cuevas, World Vision Lebanon

The World Vision Award for Innovation in Advocacy recognises the hard work and commitment of World Vision staff engaged in advocacy.

Since arriving in Lebanon in late 2006, Patricio Cuevas' determination and efforts to end violence against children have put World Vision at the forefront of advocacy and child protection efforts. The Anti-Corporal Punishment Project, led by Patricio, is a three-year initiative that includes drafting the new law on child protection, research on corporal punishment in schools and training educational staff.

The award prize will fund an advocacy and lobbying campaign to support a new law to prevent violence against children. This will include forums to promote debate and dialogue on the new law and engage government officials, members of Parliament, the media and other civil society organisations. These forums will culminate in a national forum which will use the United Nations study on violence against children as the basis of its work.



Patricio with children during the Anti-Corporal Punishment Campaign



Addressing issues of justice through innovation, inspiration and perseverance



MEDIA, BIAS AND THE COVERAGE OF INTERNATIONAL DISASTERS

Susan Moeller examines why some crises are more "newsworthy" than others when there are so many for the media to choose from.

Over the last several years the world has had a surfeit of disasters. Everywhere one turned there were new photographs of bodies lined up so relatives could come and claim them.

But not all of the crises have equally commanded the attention of the world and its cameras. Some disasters have had the bad luck to occur at a moment when a more telegenic disaster was already capturing global attention.

And some crises of unimaginable proportions still go unreported; the number of [people] threatened or killed is not a solid predictor of coverage. Other global disasters are in such a state of stasis that the media have effectively ignored their numbing devastation.

THE APPEAL OF SELF-EVIDENT, APOLITICAL SOLUTIONS

For the media, the [Asian] tsunami clearly fell into the "Act of God" category. Eric Burns, host of Fox News Channel's *Fox News Watch*, a weekly half-hour programme that "covers the coverage", observed that "it was a story that had no political controversy attached to it. The media could give it a lot of time without anybody being too critical."¹ The apolitical nature of the tsunami meant that donors everywhere could give without feeling that they were furthering a political agenda.

Newsrooms have difficulties making long-running humanitarian crises remain fresh. As Mark Jones, editor of Reuters

AlertNet, a news network created to feature humanitarian issues, remarked, "If I tried to sell you the story of Congo, you might say it could wait until tomorrow, or the next day, or the next decade."² And tight budgets and logistical problems with visas and travel itineraries also discourage news editors from even assigning reporters to cover these drawn-out stories.

Natural disasters, such as the tsunami, lend themselves better to short news packages because there is a presumption that it is evident what happened and what is needed. Resolution of the tsunami, for example, seemed clear-cut: Send money and in-kind aid to rebuild the homes and infrastructure of the devastated regions. Long-running crises in the regions struck by the tsunami, such as the fighting in Banda Aceh and Sri Lanka, were either de-coupled from the disaster, or their importance was minimised.

For journalists, it is an article of faith that the needs and the solutions for disasters that are ongoing – nations caught in wars or famines, such as the Congo or Niger – or for chronic emergencies such as AIDS and TB are less obvious than those for natural disasters. Crises in stasis are more complex to cover, and often far more dangerous. In addition, it is not easy for their audience to see how they can contribute to a positive and permanent resolution of such thorny and tragic situations.

From the beginning, tsunami appeals were overwhelmed with donations, while solicitations for chronic crises are typically ignored even with substantial marketing by humanitarian organisations.

The relief community knows well the direct connection between media attention and donations, especially for neglected crises. There is a phenomenon of "image multiplication". Pictures make all the difference. And running 1-800 numbers for relief organisations on the crawl across the bottom of the TV screen prompts people to give, too.

When [Jan] Egeland [former United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Co-ordinator] appeared in December 2005 on the *The Charlie Rose Show* for the one-year anniversary of



An international media circus swarms the "Humility Gate" entrance to Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity on Christmas Eve 2005. Photo: David Ward/World Vision

the tsunami, he spoke about the role media play in disaster relief:

We asked for \$1 billion in the tsunami. We got 90% in no time... In northern Pakistan, we asked for only half of that, \$550 million, and we have less than half of that three months into the effort... if the media had followed it as much, if we had had as many tourists there and as many video clips to run on CNN and BBC and so on around the clock, as we did at that time, we might have had the same kind of a response. But... [t]here are no images of how people died, how people struggled in the rubble. And we got much less.³

The lack of media attention to Niger, Egeland argued, was also the cause for the lack of donor response there: "We saw it was coming up as an emergency. My people on the ground appealed December of last year [2004] for money. We didn't get anything. We... appealed again in March [2005], in April. Then in May, it was really bad. And I told in big press conferences that now, soon, children will start dying. Still didn't get money. And then the *BBC World Television* did its images, and then suddenly we got more in ten days than we had in the previous ten months."

OPTIONS FOR BETTER COVERAGE

Most mainstream – especially television – media are locked into the business model they have; establishing dozens of country bureaus or even many regional bureaus is not seen as financially feasible. Media have to scale up for coverage of a major event, and in the hours after the event breaks, deadline pressure operates against any specific training of those mobilised to go.

The networks' abandonment of foreign news has created opportunities and reasons for both public media, most notably public radio, and foreign news sources, most notably the BBC, to bring global news to an American audience. It also has prompted NGOs, long frustrated by the mainstream media's peripatetic coverage that doesn't match the objectives of the relief agencies themselves, to move to become their own media outlets. World Vision, a leader in the relief business, is

sophisticated in the creation of media packages to keep aid flowing after the mainstream media have turned their attention elsewhere. "Within days of the tsunami," noted *Nightline* reporter Chris Bury, "World Vision [US] had its own camera crews on the way to the scene. Its own production teams package and update the material to give donors a stake in the relief efforts."⁴

The targeted audience... receives news, therefore, not from the mainstream media, but from another "news" source – an NGO with its own clear agenda, but also with a greater commitment both to a geographic area and to the issues of development and humanitarian relief than the media could ever make.

There are some intriguing attempts by international organisations, relief agencies, NGOs and the philanthropic community to create technologically innovative internet experiments where information on crises can get out, can be shared and can be contextualised. Prominent among them is the Reuters Foundation's *AlertNet*, ... [which] has a network of more than 300 contributing humanitarian organisations and allows those contributors to post news from crisis zones directly to the site.

"I'd like to challenge journalists to think again about other ways to report humanitarian crises," said Mark Jones, editor of *AlertNet*.⁵ "A study conducted by the Columbia School of Journalism found that journalists reporting on crises need more background facts, tips on breaking stories, and information on relief agencies.... You can't report that another 4,000 died in northern Uganda last month – that's not news," argued Jones; "what we're looking for is not a news scoop, but a contextual scoop."⁶

Similar to *AlertNet* is a site created by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): *ReliefWeb*, a "global hub for time-critical humanitarian information" that also emphasises the coverage of "forgotten emergencies".⁷

These entrepreneurial, problem-oriented ventures are emerging to compensate for the professional disinclination and the structural inability of most mainstream media to consider that alongside their essential task of delivering the "product" of "news" could be – or should be – the delivery

of operational information essential for reconstruction, humanitarian and development efforts. As a result – and made possible through the internet and digital and satellite technologies – mainstream media no longer have a near monopoly on the dissemination of international information. ■

Dr Susan Moeller is Director of the International Center for Media and the Public Agenda and Associate Professor of Media and International Affairs in the Philip Merrill College of Journalism, both at the University of Maryland, USA.

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² B Flanagan, "Media: Don't let disaster get in the way of a real story: The media sometimes makes bad judgments on humanitarian crises. But help is at hand", *Observer*, 18 December 2005

³ *The Charlie Rose Show*, which airs on PBS affiliates throughout the United States.

⁴ *Nightline*, which airs on ABC in the United States.

⁵ B Flanagan, *op. cit.*

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc100?OpenForm>, and <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/hlp.nsf/db900ByKey/AboutReliefWeb?OpenDocument>

Do you know?



- ▶ The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 2006 World disaster report outlined a typology for neglected emergencies (NE) which were **unreported, unfunded, uncounted, secondary, secret, awkward, and/or misunderstood**.
- ▶ Among humanitarian organisations, the countries that are widely regarded to have NE populations are:
 - in Latin America/Caribbean: Haiti and Colombia
 - in Asia: Nepal, India (Kashmir) and Myanmar
 - in Africa: the DRC, Northern Uganda, Sudan/ Darfur, West Africa, Somalia, Ivory Coast, Algeria/ Western Sahara and Liberia
 - in Europe and Russia: Chechnya
- ▶ In 2006 the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) developed a typology for NE which were **under-funded, had low visibility and media coverage, suffered a lack of political will, and had low humanitarian capacity**.



FRAGILE STATES AND NEGLECTED EMERGENCIES

What are the operational and funding restrictions that hamper the effectiveness of non-governmental organisations in neglected emergencies? Ian Gray explains.

The key contributor to whether an emergency becomes chronic and neglected is the fragility of the state.

In order to reduce poverty, a state needs to be able to deliver the safety and security of its citizens, functioning public institutions and services, and sound economic management. State fragility not only exacerbates suffering in times of acute humanitarian need, but also increases the likelihood of emergencies becoming neglected because they are awkward or complex to deal with, especially if their root causes are chronic and pervasive. In order to address this, donors need to summon up the political will to address the underlying causes of fragility, whilst providing more sustainable solutions to addressing the symptoms.

Fragile states have become a major focus for donors and others in the humanitarian and development community over the past five years. In

many poor countries, the tax base is insufficient and the state's capabilities weak, so there is a heavy reliance on aid to support core functions. How does donor policy affect the ability of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the main deliverer of basic services for the poor in fragile states affected by conflict (FSACs), to ensure that emergencies do not sink into neglect?

A number of donors, including the UK's Department for International Development (DfID), identified this problem of aid dependency and switched their development funding to a mechanism called Direct Budgetary Support. This approach has been in place for around five years for many countries whose Poverty Reduction Strategies DfID assists.

But what if a state is unwilling or unable to carry out its core functions? The traditional donor approach has been to by-pass the state altogether and fund the United Nations and NGOs to deliver basic services using humanitarian budget lines.

Fragile state policy, particularly that coming through the OECD Fragile States Group,¹ has focused on how to best support states emerging from conflict. This has mainly been in the form of Multi-Donor Trust Funds and Transitional Results Matrices,² aimed at relieving the burden of donor engagement for the state, whilst providing a "coherent" aid package. The overall design of such funding mechanisms should mirror existing or developing state policies for service sectors (such as health) and the method of implementation the state would use if it had the capacity to do so.

These positive steps have resulted in a broader, more coherent approach. However, there is still a lack of donor understanding of the role of civil society as the primary delivery mechanism, and funding timeframes remain woefully short (for example, the last Basic Services Fund³ round in Sudan was for 18 months).

IMPACT OF DONOR FUNDING

Generally finance comes in the form of grants for less than one year and are based on humanitarian need. Donors such as the European Commission Humanitarian Aid (ECHO), for instance, have supported basic services in countries such as Somalia for more

than 10 years using six- to 12-month funding cycles. Volatility of funding for services in fragile states afflicts the planning and implementation of service deliverers (usually NGOs) with short-termism, hampering effective management of their supply chain and retention of key staff. It ultimately weakens relationships with the communities, as delivery of services can be patchy, and since funding is often for particular sectors, communities' development needs are rarely assessed holistically, and the services are frequently delivered in a myopic fashion, diluting their ultimate impact.

In fragile states, humanitarian funding and implementation suffer from short-termism

Emergencies that do not appear to have "straightforward" solutions are less attractive to many international media and donors. States are most prone to fall back into conflict in the first five years following hostilities, and often take at least another 10 years to function effectively.⁴

Donors also struggle with disparity of information between those delivering services on the ground and those making funding decisions in the humanitarian capitals. Clearly, a bigger-picture approach is needed to emergencies that risk slipping into protracted neglect and human insecurity.

CAN'T PRIVATE FUNDS BE RAISED?

Private donations are the other major source of funding. However, gaining funds for such contexts is exceptionally difficult, primarily due to the psychology behind private individual charitable giving.

Research has shown that most private donors are driven in their philanthropic decision-making by what cognitive psychologists call "system one" thinking, which is a highly intuitive and emotional approach. Motivation for such giving usually comes from an unconscious bias towards seemingly solvable, personally identifiable problems. Empathy for man-made, conflict-related chronic emergencies

is not so common. Fewer people base their philanthropic decisions on “system two” thinking, which is conscious and rational. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to raise money for vastly complex, seemingly intractable problems faced by people living in FSACs.⁵

SO WHAT IS THE SOLUTION?

There are no “quick win” solutions. However, if the donor community funded the long-term integrated programming of NGOs – which seek to balance service delivery with building the capacity of states, societies and markets to be pro-poor and pro-vulnerable – we could see substantial changes for the poor in FSACs and help prevent some emergencies from descending into a cycle of neglect.

World Vision has decided to “practise what it preaches” by trialling this approach in three fragile contexts to date, carrying out holistic in-depth assessments that have led to multi-year programming, which has attracted significant funding

commitments. Unfortunately some of this funding is still short-term. However, this experience does highlight the value of good quality assessment data from fragile contexts where donors traditionally have had difficulties.

NOTE OF CAUTION

For NGOs working in FSACs, advocating for more development-oriented funding mechanisms comes with a health warning: the issue of “humanitarian space”. The very concept of humanitarian space is being heavily contested in some quarters, and is most strained at the juncture of programming in fragile contexts.

If NGOs decide to translate fragile states policy into programme design, they are essentially buying into the “state building” project. What does this mean for the impartiality and independence of the NGO? This is of particular consequence for neglected emergencies in fragile states, where the levels of vulnerability and hazard mean that NGOs often need to carry out emergency relief alongside their longer-term developmental

work. This conundrum needs to be addressed in both NGO and donor thinking on fragile states policy and in the current “coherency” and “whole of government” approach. ■

Mr Ian Gray is Head of Humanitarian and Emergency Affairs for World Vision United Kingdom.

¹ See: www.oecd.org/dac/fragilestates

² For operational guidelines on Transitional Results Matrices see <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTLICUS/Resources/TRM.pdf> accessed 20.05.08

³ The Basic Services Fund for Southern Sudan was launched by DfID in January 2006, to assist the Government of Southern Sudan in providing basic services, via non-government actors, to the most under-served populations. See <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/News/files/sudancrisis/sudan-health.asp>

⁴ See P Collier, *Post-conflict recovery: How should policies be distinctive?*, Centre for the Study of African Economies, Department of Economics, Oxford University, 2007, <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~econpc/research/pdfs/PostConflict-Recovery.pdf>, and P Collier, A Hoeffler & M Soderbom in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Peace Keeping Operations and the World Bank, *Post-conflict risks*, Centre for the Study of African Economies, Department of Economics, Oxford University, 2006, <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~econpc/research/pdfs/Post-Conflict-Risks.pdf>

⁵ For a more in-depth look at funding for chronic problems, see K Epstein, “Fundraising and markets”, *Stanford social innovation review*, Spring 2006, Leland Stanford Jr University, pp 48–57

At a peace prayer gathering in Odek, Uganda – home town to Lord’s Resistance Army leader Joseph Kony – signs calling for peace and reconciliation line the front of the crowd listening to major religious and political leaders.
Photo: Jon Warren/World Vision



the Back Pages

...spiritually speaking

“I WILL NOT FORGET YOU”

All people are made in the image of God yet we also carry the brokenness of humanity. No person should be forgotten or denied the dignity that God accords to all human beings.

Science and technology have advanced so much that it is now possible to keep any piece of information on the radar screen for as long as desired. Events can be beamed around the world as they are taking place. Indeed, the world has become a global village and even remote villages are being linked up with mobile rural telephony. Despite these huge steps, major catastrophes around the world are being neglected. From the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to Somalia and Sri Lanka, major humanitarian emergencies have simply been forgotten.

Over the past three months I have made three trips to the DRC and I cannot but think about the huge challenges that the country is facing, particularly in the east where thousands (including children and women) are subjected to extremely dehumanising conditions. Yet little is heard about this in many arenas of the international community.

I recall the outpouring of international relief into areas affected by the 2004 Asian tsunami. It has been estimated that aid, per person, to the affected areas exceeded 100 times the amount that went to the DRC the same year. While the devastating tsunami claimed over 200,000 lives, the DRC has suffered 5.4 million conflict-related deaths in the past decade.¹

Why are people in places like the DRC forgotten? As I reflect on this question, my attention is drawn to the nature of God. In the book of Isaiah,² when the people complained that the Lord had forsaken them, God promised that even though a mother may forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion for the child of her womb, “I will not forget you” – and God promised full restoration.

The not-so-spectacular event

While the world is often moved to action by the spectacular, God does not always operate in that fashion. This brings to mind the story of Elijah who, when his life was threatened,

ran and hid, and God appeared to him.³ Elijah expected to see God in a great and powerful wind, an earthquake or fire – all spectacular events – but God was not there. It was in a gentle whisper that God appeared to him.

In the whisper, God commissioned him for greater assignments. Oftentimes we miss great opportunities to minister because events are no longer making headline news; we rush to the latest big event that catches everybody’s attention while leaving behind a place where we really can make a difference in the lives of people.

The will to not walk away

It is not unknown that governments and institutions have failed to respond to human disasters because they lack the political will to take action, fearing the fall-out of such action with their constituencies.

The parable of the Good Samaritan shows that such an attitude is not new.⁴ Here is a man who not only provided immediate humanitarian assistance to a victim of armed attack but also deemed it fit to provide adequate resources to ensure that the victim fully recovered. Prior to the Samaritan arriving at the scene, two religious leaders – who, by the nature of their calling, should have shown compassion – failed to do so. As a matter of fact, they abandoned the victim to his fate until the Samaritan (a man from a different ethnic group to the victim’s own) provided help.

Today, we are beginning to see help coming to some of the neglected emergencies from unexpected sources where those first called upon to provide such help have turned their faces away. For instance, China is investing heavily in many parts of the developing world, particularly Africa, sometimes filling an aid vacuum left by Western nations.

Children and women are most affected in any emergency. Those who suffer have not caused the disaster, yet victims are sometimes blamed. Jesus spurned this way of



World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and their communities world-wide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.

As followers of Jesus, World Vision is dedicated to working with the world's most vulnerable people. World Vision serves all people regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender:

Children are often most vulnerable to the effects of poverty. World Vision works with each partner community to ensure that children are able to enjoy improved nutrition, health and education. Where children live in especially difficult circumstances, surviving on the streets, suffering in exploitative labour, or exposed to the abuse and trauma of conflict, World Vision works to restore hope and to bring justice.

World Vision recognises that poverty is not inevitable. Our Mission Statement calls us to challenge those unjust structures that constrain the poor in a world of false priorities, gross inequalities and distorted values. World Vision desires that all people be able to reach their God-given potential, and thus works for a world that no longer tolerates poverty.

back cover image:

Women of the community of San Ignacio in San Marcos, Guatemala, were grateful to receive kits for baby care from World Vision Canada in co-operation with the Canadian International Development Agency.
photographer:
Evelyn Lopez/World Vision

interpreting tragic events: he asked, “Do you think that these Galileans [who had endured a tragedy] were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? ... Or those 18 who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them – do you think they were more guilty than all others living in Jerusalem?”⁵ Blaming victims of major humanitarian disasters or their governments for their fate cannot absolve from condemnation anyone who could help but fails to do so.

The world today has become so intricately interwoven that no part can claim immunity from the events that happen in a far corner of the world. Militants’ activities that prevent the pumping of crude oil from the Niger Delta in Nigeria can affect the commodity in the international market, and the consumer price in a place like Melbourne, Australia. Beyond economic self-interest, we could consider the long-term psychological impacts – on ourselves and, not least, on our children – of living with the awareness that so many others are suffering and that their suffering is unresolved over years, even decades.

We must not fail to act to bring an end to the suffering of many innocent people in those places that have become better known as the “forgotten emergencies”. Our world today needs many more “Good Samaritans” who would put their prejudices aside and do what is needed for a broken world. It is time we moved away from only the spectacular and dealt decisively with those emergencies that simply will not go away. The world will be a better place for all if we decide to act now. ■

Dr Omo Olupona is Southern Africa Area Director for the World Vision Africa Regional Office.

¹ International Rescue Committee, *Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: An ongoing crisis*, p ii http://www.theirc.org/resources/2007/2006-7_congomortalitysurvey.pdf

² Isaiah 49:15

³ 1 Kings 19:9–18

⁴ Luke 10:25–37

⁵ Luke 13:2, 4

Bible references and quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible: New International Version*, Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1978



Regional Offices

Africa

PO Box 50816
Karen Road, off Ngong Road
Karen, Nairobi
Kenya
Tel. 254.20.883.652 Fax 254.20.883.942

Asia and Pacific

555 SSP Tower, 19th floor Unit A & B
Sukhumvit 63 (Soi Ekamai)
Klongton-Nua, Wattana
Bangkok 10110
Thailand
Tel. 66.2.391.6155 Fax 66.2.381.1976

Latin America and Caribbean

Apartado 133-2300 Curridabat
Torres del Campo
Edificio I, Piso I
Barrio Tournón
San José
Costa Rica
Tel. 506.257.5151 Fax 506.257.5151

Middle East and Eastern Europe

PO Box 28979
2084 Nicosia
Cyprus
Tel. 357.22.870.277 Fax 357.22.870.204

Partnership Offices

800 West Chestnut Avenue
Monrovia, CA 91016-3198
USA
Tel. 1.626.303.8811 Fax 1.626.301.7786

International Liaison Office

6 chemin de la Tourelle
1209 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel. 41.22.798.4183 Fax 41.22.798.6547

European Union Liaison Office

33 avenue Livingstone
1000 Brussels
Belgium
Tel. 32.2.230.1621 Fax 32.2.280.3426

United Nations Liaison Office

216 East 49th Street, 4th Floor
New York, NY 10017
USA
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