

Network Paper 18

Beyond “Working in Conflict”:

**Understanding Conflict and
Building Peace**

Report of a three-day workshop
organised by



The UK Network
on Conflict, Development and Peace

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Jon Bennett and Mary Kayitesi-Blewitt

Contents

Page

Abstract

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Background	1
2.1	CODEP	3
2.2	The “Development in Conflict” workshop, November 1994	4
2.3	The First CODEP Workshop, September 1996	5
2.4	Trends in international aid	6
2.5	Working for relief and development in conflict situations	10
2.6	Donor responses to permanent emergency	10
2.7	Financial trends	11
2.8	New concerns	15
2.9	The political economy of war	16
3.	CODEP 1996 Workshop Report	21
3.1	Gender and conflict	21
3.2	Conflict analysis	21
3.3	Programming in conflict	32
3.4	Peace-building and reconciliation	39
4.	The Future of CODEP	47
Annex 1	List of Workshop Participants	49
Annex 2	Workshop Programme	52
	Suggested Further Reading	54
	Acronyms	57

Abstract

This Network Paper reports on a recent international meeting held to discuss the changing role of NGOs working in conflict-affected countries. The report comprises two parts. The first provides an overview of humanitarian assistance in conflict situations, with particular reference to the work of NGOs, the second is an account of the Workshop on understanding conflict and peace-building held by the UK Network on Conflict, Development and Peace (CODEP) in September 1996.

The paper discusses the comparative worsening of conditions for the increasing proportion of the world's population that is affected by conflict. This has been accompanied, it is argued, by a reduction in international aid, and by the inability of the United Nations and governments either to prevent or to call a halt to violence. There has also been an erosion of collective international responsibility for permanent political solutions to conflicts. NGOs in turn have been left with no clearly defined boundaries in relation to working in countries in conflict yet are increasingly seen by donors as having a role in governance.

The report also examines financial trends in aid and the profound changes that there have been in the allocation of funds: the reduction in international development funding, a greater proportion of which is spent by governments through Northern NGOs although the level of their public donations has declined, the quadrupling of funding spent on emergencies in the last decade, and the increase in official funding directly through Southern NGOs and into the Central and Eastern European countries and the Newly Independent States of the Soviet Union. The backdrop to these funding changes has been the near bankruptcy of the United Nations.

The report details the challenges and dilemmas presented to NGOs by working in conflict situations: such as whether NGOs should be mirroring existing power structures or offering alternatives, how to achieve a coherent efficient approach which reinforces local coping mechanisms, and the relationship, if any, that NGOs should have with national and international political processes. It charts some of the ways in which NGOs have explored approaches to working in conflict and how their own input may have an impact upon the conflict.

The report of the CODEP workshop itself is not a verbatim account of the proceedings but reflects the diversity of views and experience of the participants. The discussion focussed on three regions of Africa; the Great Lakes, the Horn and West Africa and addressed three themes:-

- ! **Conflict analysis:** covers definitions of conflict analysis, the necessity of doing it, and of seeing the positive as well as negative impacts and the challenge to NGOs in carrying it out. Concludes it currently *ad hoc* and gives recommendations for improvements to current approaches.
- ! **Programming in conflict:** covers questions of accountability and appropriate programming, opportunities and constraints presented by conflict, whether Northern/expatriate NGOs are necessary in Africa and suggested ways of meeting the challenges. Looks at good practice with an emphasis on community-based approaches and national/international codes of conduct.
- ! **Peace-building and reconciliation:** clarifies the terminology in use. Examines the mandates for NGOs' involvement in conflict and the core values with which their work should be invested, a discussion of the ethical dilemmas faced by NGOs and strategies that could be successful.

The report indicates that while gender perspectives and policy are central to and were intended to inform all three themes, their genuine incorporation into peoples' thinking was still a distant prospect. Recommendations are given for affirmative action.

Throughout both parts of the report are highlights of some of the current debates with case studies and examples of good practice.

Beyond “Working in Conflict”: Understanding Conflict and Building Peace

1. Introduction

This Network Paper reports on an international meeting convened by a UK group – CODEP. The meeting aimed to identify and discuss key dilemmas confronting NGOs working in conflict-affected countries.

The Report is divided into two main sections. The first part sets the scene for the meeting, analysing some of the key trends in international aid to regions in conflict, with particular reference to the work of NGOs. This gives the background to, and context for, the work of the UK Network on Conflict, Development and Peace (CODEP). The Report on the first CODEP workshop, in September 1996, forms the second part of the Report.

The participants in the Workshop came with a wide variety of experience and knowledge of the African regions that were the focus for the discussions (the Great Lakes, the Horn and West Africa), of working with non governmental organisations (NGOs) and of the study of conflict. The Report has attempted to reflect the diversity of these views, as well as the themes that emerged during discussion, and has also been informed by the particular knowledge of the two authors.

Conflict studies in relation to humanitarian assistance is a relatively new field, and the Report reflects this work in progress.

2. Background

Civil war is not new. It is the primary form of all collective conflict and history is replete with examples of inter-tribal, inter-community and inter-regional disputes. In the age of imperialism however, there was no conflict that did not immediately take on an international dimension. Wars became regulated by international agreements such as the 1907 Hague Land War Convention. The 1949 Geneva Conventions, framing ‘contained’

conflict in international humanitarian law, were the crowning achievement of humanity's desire to keep the madness of war within mutually agreed limits.

The superpowers' spheres of interest extended throughout Latin America, Asia and Africa by the 1970s and civil conflict resulted in a series of surrogate wars. The 1980s saw perhaps the last wars of national liberation that belonged to an age statehood which was drawing to a close. Conflict is no longer directed within a framework of accepted rules of engagement and is likely to involve mass social trauma. Civilians are targeted, communities are set against each other and often the hierarchy of respect between young and old is lost to the authority of the gun.

In World War One, only about 5% of the casualties were civilians, in World War Two the figure was 50%. The percentage is now 80%, a high proportion of which is made up of women and children (Ingram, 1994). Contemporary wars also last longer, with chronic displacement and insecurity. The risks of violence are further heightened by inequality: the differences between rich and poor increase each year.

If today the poorest 20% of the world's population have 60 times less income than the richest 20% (compared to only 30 times less in 1960), their plight no longer impinges upon the growth and sustainability of self-contained economic blocs such as the European Community, North America and East Asia. It has been argued that there has, as a consequence, been a slow erosion of standards within the international community and a retreat from human decency in international relations. One outcome is the tendency to aim humanitarian interventions towards conflict management rather than conflict prevention or reduction (Duffield, 1996).

At the level of programming, there is a growing sense of confusion within the circles of those responsible for aid and foreign policy as to how best to deal with the numbers and types of violent conflicts around the world. On the one hand, the catalogue of failures of attempts by the UN and government to resolve or stop violence in the early 1990s continues to inform the debate about appropriate levels of 'entry' in a conflict, the role of the military and relative merits of coercive and cooperative intervention. On the other hand, a deeper sense of unease pervades the NGO world in particular: they are the vanguard of a complementary, even alternative, approach to conflict mitigation, but are

they equipped analytically, materially and psychologically for the task? This crisis of identity goes to the very heart of NGO mandates. When the parameters of modern warfare dispense with traditionally understood rules of engagement, NGO intervention itself is left with no clearly defined boundaries. If charitable mandates are enlarged into areas of lobby and advocacy on human rights, for example, are NGOs prepared for the rigour and consistency that this requires? Likewise, on whose authority, with such poorly developed tools, do they set themselves the task of peace-building?

2.1 CODEP

The founding of the UK Network on Conflict, Development and Peace (CODEP) at the end of 1993 was against a background of momentous events challenging and reshaping the approaches to NGO work. Not only had NGOs ‘come of age’ with the advent of the complex emergencies in Africa and Asia, but also their presence was noted, approved and promoted at almost all levels of international discourse on aid (Boutros Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Moreover, the fall of the Berlin Wall opened a floodgate of new NGOs from Warsaw to Beijing. Many of the new organisations and their sponsoring northern NGOs began to claim key positions in fledgling civil societies, often buttressed by donors keen to further the pursuit of democratic governance. The issue of partnership loomed large, as did those of credibility and accountability. In an attempt to describe their activities, northern NGOs adopted the idiom of civil society. Despite conceptual difficulties, donors have, within this context, been persuaded that NGOs provide viable and sustainable alternatives to state dominance. Funding alternative approaches to conflict resolution is part of the equation: if conflict is no longer state-sponsored, its origins lie in little understood social configurations accessible only to those with grassroots credentials.

Sadly, the price of new and precarious freedom for societies in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union was, in many cases, war. This has entailed mass displacement and suffering and put international and national NGOs once again on the frontline. Operational modes learned in Africa and Asia were not easily adaptable or appropriate in such an environment. It was time to deepen NGOs’ understanding of what can be achieved when the ground rules are continually changing.

CODEP was established as a multi-disciplinary forum for practitioners and academics

involved in identifying and disseminating good practice in conflict prevention and mitigation. It was believed that the cross-fertilization of ideas and practice would help members challenge received wisdom on international responses to conflict and begin defining and refining what works and what does not. It was, indeed, a tall order, not helped by the difficulty of providing a clear analysis of contemporary conflict in such a fluid historical period. Though only a loose network, CODEP was represented by most of the leading NGOs in the UK working in complex emergencies whose collective knowledge should, it was felt, be shared more widely.

2.2 The “Development in Conflict” workshop, November 1994

In November 1994, a Workshop on ‘Development in Conflict’ took place in Birmingham, UK. With an emphasis mainly on organisational issues and approaches to conflict, the workshop was not able to reach an easily identifiable consensus. This was perhaps understandable given the relatively new “crisis of identity” NGOs found themselves in. In operational terms, the crisis manifests itself in a number of ways (the following summary is from Borton, 1994):

- ! the personal risk and trauma of agency staff;
- ! the realisation that humanitarian aid is a key resource to be potentially manipulated by warring parties and which, therefore, undermines claims of ‘neutrality’;
- ! the cost effectiveness of humanitarian aid being increasingly questioned as large quantities do not reach their designated targets;
- ! the realisation that humanitarian aid may indeed prolong conflict by sustaining combatants and non-combatants; and
- ! the dilemma of choosing where to work most effectively when UN or regional peace-keeping/enforcing forces are in operation.

In organisational terms, the crisis can be seen in the following ways:

- ! the unprecedented rate of growth in the budgets and scale of operations of many relief agencies;
- ! the increasing dependency, for this growth, on funds from official donors and the

implications this has for NGO autonomy;

- ! the difficult issue of accountability within individual agencies and the relief system as a whole;
- ! the growing shift towards advocacy as the most effective means of mobilising international response to emergencies and the changes this entails for NGOs;
- ! the questioning of traditional developmental approaches in the face of increased conflicts and the fact that conflict prevention and reduction brings agencies closer to human rights work;
- ! the division within agencies of relief and development activities being increasingly redundant; and
- ! the project and project cycle approach to agency activities being ill-suited to the flexible multi-component programmes demanded of conflict work.

The above concerns have not been resolved in the two years since the 1994 workshop in Birmingham; neither have intervening world events reduced the institutional crisis within NGOs in terms of identity and funding. One can discern, however, a shift in emphasis away from the dilemmas posed by relief work towards a more concerted effort to discover and catalogue the wide variety of interventions that contribute, directly or indirectly, to peace-building. It was agreed at the Birmingham workshop that CODEP should take responsibility for taking forward the issues that were raised there. The theme of discussions undertaken by CODEP since November 1994 has been peace-building. Occurring every two months, CODEP General Meetings have invited key speakers to give briefings on current work which has a thematic or geographical focus. In addition, two sub-groups were formed: Development in Conflict (discourse on operational issues and research) and Gender (how researchers and practitioners integrate gender perspectives in practice). The sub-groups are self-selecting; the structure of CODEP allows for the formation of any number of discussion groups around themes chosen by participants; sub-groups have also produced discussion papers.

2.3 The First CODEP Workshop, September 1996

The 1996 CODEP Workshop was an opportunity to report back and further develop themes identified by CODEP in the ensuing two years since the Birmingham meeting. Its aimed *“to bring together current NGO thinking and experience of good practice in*

situations of armed conflict and protracted civil war, with particular reference to three African regions and four themes". The selected regions were West Africa (primarily Sierra Leone and Liberia), the Horn of Africa (primarily Sudan, Somalia and Somaliland) and the Great Lakes Region (primarily Rwanda and Burundi). Each region was experiencing ongoing conflict at the time of the Workshop which added particular urgency and relevance to the discussions. Participants included national and international staff of NGOs working in the three areas, as well as academics and journalists. Case study, area-specific, analysis was fed into three broad themes selected for the Workshop:

- ! **Conflict Analysis.** The tools used for analysing conflict and the ends to which they are put. Is there a consensus among NGOs on the importance of, and methodology applied to, conflict analysis?

- ! **Relief and Development Programming in Conflict.** To identify the constraints and opportunities of programming relief and development work in conflict areas, and to propose ways of meeting the challenges involved.

- ! **Peace-Building and Reconciliation.** To delineate the various approaches to each and to provide pointers towards greater understanding of the processes involved.

Running through all discussions was the final theme of gender. In addition to reporting keynote addresses on the topic, this report attempts to reflect the extent to which gender issues informed discussion over the three-day event.

2.4 Trends in international aid

In 1995, the UN identified 28 complex humanitarian emergencies affecting some 60 million people. Armed conflict, a defining feature of such emergencies, has become a pervasive element on the aid landscape which challenges the traditional conceptual apparatus and resource allocations of bilateral, multi-lateral and non-governmental organisations. The human cost of conflicts such as Bosnia, Rwanda and Afghanistan has necessarily entailed a redeployment of international aid towards increasingly flexible short- and medium-term interventions. In particular, conflict-induced population displacement means that increasing resources are tied up in 'holding operations'.

Although there was a slight drop in the number of registered refugees in the 1990s, the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) fleeing conflict and unrest continues to rise exponentially. In 1995, conservative estimates put the number of IDPs at 29.1 million and refugees at 16.3 million. This does not include the further 35 million people displaced as a result of development programmes and environmental disasters (IFRC, 1996).

There has been a marked change in the approach to these escalating human disasters in recent years. Traditionally, the international relief system was based upon three key assumptions:

- ! the separation of relief and development, marked by specialist mandates and specific bureaucratic and financial procedures;
- ! an acceptance of the limitations of operations imposed by sovereignty: aid was ‘invited’ by governments who determined their citizens’ needs; and
- ! that aid was neutral and entirely separate from political and military intervention.

Broadly speaking, the above pattern has changed in the following ways:

- ! first, in Africa, the linear model of relief-development is questionable on three accounts: (a) in spite of enormous relief inputs, people in countries such as Rwanda and Somalia have little chance of enhancing their quality of life when their starting point is often below subsistence; (b) relief can rapidly become a way of life for hundreds of thousands of displaced people with little prospect of return to their homes in the short-term; (c) applying any kind of sustainable development model to countries in a state of chronic economic and political collapse is ill-advised;
- ! second, the sovereignty issue had already begun eroding in the 1980s when the ‘right of intervention’ was, for some, promoted above issues of sovereignty and – in Eritrea and Tigray, for example – cross-border NGO assistance created new models for the UN and others. By the early 1990s, new international rights and responsibilities to manage conflict and its humanitarian consequences were claimed by almost all aid organisations. In 1993, the Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Eliasson, enthusiastically promoted the view that ‘sovereignty is no longer a principle we can recognise as absolute...What we need

is a firm commitment to an ethically informed politics of international solidarity' (Eliasson, 1993);

- ! third, the contradictions inherent in offering neutral humanitarian assistance to perpetrators of genocide, most starkly in Zaire/Rwanda, have presented fundamental ethical dilemmas for NGOs. The NGO community itself comprises organisations that place themselves across the spectrum from 'pure' humanitarian to judicial, with many organisations revisiting their mandates in search of appropriate interventions in conflicts where human rights violations cannot be ignored (see Box 1); and

- ! fourth, in mid 1994, six NGOs and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement published a *Code of Conduct* for their work in disaster relief. Despite the fact that the ten codes and three annexes were not binding and no suggestions were made for monitoring and enforcing them, it was nevertheless a laudable attempt on the part of the major northern NGOs to summarise and reach consensus on a number of operational principles. In the last two years, more than 75 additional NGOs have registered their commitment to the Code of Conduct and in December 1995, 142 governments unanimously gave their support to the Code (IFRC, 1996).

Box 1***The Humanitarian Principle***

There is no agreed definition of the meaning of ‘humanitarian’ either in international law, in the Security Council or in non-governmental organisations. There is, however, agreement on the ICRC’s definition of humanitarian action, namely: ‘action to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it is found’. It is non-discriminatory, cannot take sides in hostilities and is guided solely by ‘the needs of individuals’ (ICRC, 1990). In 1992, the President of the ICRC addressed the UN General Assembly on a number of issues worth quoting at length, not least because they provide a cornerstone for debates currently taking place within the NGO community at large:

‘It would be impossible, and perhaps even undesirable, to dissociate humanitarian endeavour completely from political action.

Humanitarian work concentrates on the acute symptoms produced by crises, but the crises themselves cannot be resolved without political measures to tackle their underlying causes. Moreover, just as humanitarian work needs political support, political negotiations stand to benefit from the relief afforded by maintaining a measure of humanity in the midst of conflict.

We are nevertheless convinced that *humanitarian endeavour and political action must go their separate ways* if the neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian work is not to be jeopardised.

In any situation in which humanitarian concerns become the over-riding issue, it is rather dangerous to regard humanitarian action as just another political tool or, conversely, as an excuse for States to shirk their political responsibilities.

Indeed, to tie humanitarian activities too closely to political concerns is to run the risk of seeing humanitarian work rejected on political grounds.

In this regard, I wonder *how wise it is to resort to military means to support humanitarian activities* and, in certain circumstances, to protect the people who conduct them. The effectiveness of our operations is, admittedly, directly affected by the conditions of extreme insecurity in which we have to work. In the former Yugoslavia, and even more so in Somalia, it has unfortunately proved necessary to use armed escorts to protect humanitarian convoys. This, however, must remain a temporary and exceptional measure, and we must take care not to start thinking of it as an acceptable long-term solution. If we resign ourselves to these means, are we not in fact giving up all hope of persuading the belligerents to respect not only humanitarian work but above all defenceless civilians and prisoners?

For all these reasons we believe that it is *dangerous to link humanitarian activities aimed at meeting the needs of victims of a conflict with political measures designed to bring about the settlement* of the dispute between the parties.’ (Sommaruga, 1993)

2.5 Working for relief and development in conflict situations

At the level of institutions, NGOs have begun to explore methodological approaches that link vulnerability and poverty reduction to conflict prevention and reduction. The approach recognises that development is not simply a replacement of physical and political infrastructure; efforts can also be made to strengthen local organisational capacity, human resources and civic institutions even during war. NGOs had found that the previously propounded theory of a “Relief-Development Continuum” had been unhelpful since it did not assist with the understanding of, or address the underlying causes of, conflict and its social and economic consequences. Aid programmes undertaken in conflict-generated emergencies cannot be divorced from causal factors of war which are still prevalent and which still have to be addressed at a fundamental level. This is not a simple undertaking.

Despite the rhetoric, good governance and human rights conditionalities introduced by donors have not been pursued systematically and aid channelled through regimes guilty of corruption, human rights abuses and inequitable distribution of wealth have served to increase, rather than reduce, the vulnerability of the dispossessed. Development assistance previously offered to many of today’s ‘failed states’ clearly did not yield the economic and political progress expected. By concentrating on the internal causes of conflict the external causes, such as military, macro-economic interventions and crippling debt, have frequently been forgotten.

Development itself is inherently turbulent. It challenges, rather than entrenches, the *status quo*. The aim is not to promote stability at any cost, otherwise we would contain conflict at the expense of popular opposition to dictatorship, for instance. For some NGOs, this has led to a debate about ‘good’ and ‘bad’ conflict, and the balance to be found between a politically-informed aid programme (that at least ensures that aid does not exacerbate conflict) and a politically-driven aid programme (that discriminates in favour of one party to the conflict) (Macrae, 1996).

2.6 Donor responses to permanent emergency

During the post-Cold War era, talk of a ‘continuum’ tended to obscure the extent to which

donor policy has already effected a *de facto* accommodation with permanent emergency which has come to play an unexpected role in North-South relations. Humanitarian aid is the North's principal means of political crisis management in increasingly marginalised countries in Africa and elsewhere. As total aid budgets have declined, the number of policy instruments available to donors has increased. Donor governments now have the choice, for example, of either working through the ICRC, independent NGOs or NGO consortia, integrated UN operations, or even to become operational themselves. Apart from confounding coordination efforts, this contributes towards the erosion of collective international responsibility for a permanent political solution to various conflicts; intervention is more often determined by narrow national interests or media exposure.

At an operational level, the UN's negotiated access operations – heralded by UNOCA in Afghanistan in the late 1980s and more recently formalised in Angola, Bosnia and South Sudan – further separate political intervention from humanitarian relief. One consequence is that humanitarian assistance has become closely integrated with the dynamics of violence. In Sudan and Somalia there has been ample evidence of the direct manipulation of relief assistance by the warring factions. Local power relations have been altered and new ones fostered by the intermittent supply of aid. An unfortunate result has been the increase in fatalities of international and national relief workers no longer automatically assumed to be 'neutral' intermediaries.

2.7 Financial trends

Since the 1980s, relief assistance has become increasingly institutionalised as the main response of the international community to situations of armed conflict. Figures are not yet available for the amounts of aid specifically earmarked for the various conflict-related interventions of NGOs, multilateral and bilateral donors. Aggregate figures for complex emergencies are notoriously difficult to obtain and further research is needed to delineate precisely where, and to what sectors, aid in complex emergencies is assigned. However, from the broad trends outlined below, we can begin to see profound changes in international allocations, some positive, others disturbing in their implications for NGOs (Bennett and Gibbs, 1996).

Financial trends include:

A reduction in international development funding

The Reality of Aid is an annual independent report on the development cooperation performance of the 20 countries (plus the EU) of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD (ie. the 21 'rich' donors). It noted that in 1994 eight out of 21 donor countries cut their aid in real terms. The total aid figure of US\$56,737 billion for the DAC countries represented, on average, just 0.3% of GNP for each, the lowest for 20 years (Reality of Aid, 1996).

More official aid being spent bilaterally (from governments) rather than through multilateral agencies (the UN, EC, World Bank, etc)

The percentage of official development assistance spent bilaterally rose from 66% in 1982 to 70% in 1993. At a time of budget cuts, it is often politically easier to cut multilateral aid. DAC countries can pursue their policy preferences more readily (for example through tied aid agreements that channel resources back into the domestic economy). Multilateral aid, by contrast, is more expendable because it is 'pooled' and therefore less visible for public scrutiny. Even without these cuts, multilateral agencies are coming under increasing political pressure from key donors to pursue 'their' policies. Economic considerations are also significant, with bilateral funding giving at least a 40% return on 'tied' contributions to the donor country compared with only a 14% return from multilateral aid. At a practical and ethical level, multilateral aid is better able to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development. For example, 90% of multilateral aid is devoted to low income countries compared with only 60% of bilateral aid. United Nations multilateral aid in particular is also better insulated from commercial and political constraints and tends to place fewer administrative burdens on the recipient countries. This is not always the case with EU multilateral aid which is often tied to commercial, if not political, interests.

More official funding being channelled through northern NGOs

In 1994, northern NGOs as a whole transferred over US\$7 billion to the developing world, collectively making them the fourth largest donor in the world. This includes official donor transfers and transfers through multilateral donors (UN, EC, World Bank and regional development banks) Over the last two decades, total NGO aid as a percentage of total OECD aid has remained relatively stable at around 10-12%. However, the significant factor within this percentage has been the growth in official aid to NGOs. Astonishingly, the OECD records a rise in government contributions to NGOs from \$32

million in 1983-84 to its current levels of around \$1 billion a year (representing about 15% of NGO total income).¹

More official funding being channelled directly to southern NGOs

In the 1980s, and increasingly in the 1990s, donor governments such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, UK and USA began to experiment with a new form of funding: that of transferring grants directly to local NGOs in developing countries rather than through northern NGOs or the recipient's central government. This was in part a response to the inappropriate spending of donor funds by recipient governments; it was also, however, a recognition that local NGOs have the potential to become effective channels for reaching the very poorest groups within their country. The trend is linked closely to the 'governance' debate and the search for appropriate entry points in civil society and has a particular bearing on newly emerging NGOs in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

No significant change in funding allocation to major developing countries

There has been little change in the relative shares of official development assistance to major developing countries in recent years. Flows to Sub-Saharan Africa rose substantially in the 1980s but have recently stabilised at about 35% of the total. Asia and Oceania account for about 40%, though there have been recent changes in the distribution of aid between South and Central Asia and the rest of the region. Latin America and the Caribbean now account for just over 15% of the total and the Middle East, North Africa and Southern Europe combined receives around 10-15% of annual official development assistance flows.

An increase in the levels of development assistance going to Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) and the Newly Independent States (NIS) of the Former Soviet Union

¹ Aid channelled through multilateral agencies to NGOs is not usually counted, yet this is often a significant proportion of NGOs' incomes. For instance, in 1992 alone the European Commission provided some \$300 million directly to NGOs for non-emergency development projects and continues to use NGOs to implement a significant proportion of their emergency work. Other organisations such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, UNHCR and UNDP also have large NGO programmes (Bennett and Gibbs, 1996).

What has changed, however, is the amount of aid channelled to countries of the CEEC and NIS which are **not** designated as ‘developing countries’ by the OECD. From negligible amounts of assistance in the 1980s, the level of aid to these countries rose to around the \$7 billion per annum in 1992 and has remained stable. In addition, local NGOs benefit from significant financial flows from northern NGOs where funding has almost doubled in recent years. Though total levels of support may appear small in comparison with the funds available to developing countries (\$56.7 billion), there are a significantly smaller number of countries (13 compared to over 150) in the CEEC and NIS. Identifiable trends within funding to the CEEC and NIS indicate that aid is becoming increasingly bilateral in nature (rising from 63% to 71% in 1993-94)

Increasing funds to emergency and humanitarian assistance

Spending by official aid agencies on emergencies has quadrupled over a decade and in 1994 stood at about \$6 billion. When measured in terms of the share of total DAC bilateral aid, the percentage of bilateral aid spent on complex and natural disasters rose from 1.5% in 1991 to 8.4% in 1994 (German and Randel, 1996). The increase in financial assistance to emergencies is matched by the increased use of NGOs as implementors of emergency programmes. In 1991 the EC food and emergency assistance together with that for refugees was 290% more than matching grant funds given for development projects. From 1990 to 1992, the amount of British ODA support to UK NGOs for disaster and emergency work rose from £7.1m to £33.6m for emergencies, representing a rise from 11% to 27% in the total funds disbursed to NGOs.

A decline in public donations to northern NGOs

Often NGOs only record increases in public donations as a result of emergency campaigns (huge public funds were raised for the Rwanda emergency in 1994 for example). Public giving outside of an emergency appeal is declining, not only for the sector-specific development NGOs, but also even for the ‘household name’ NGOs such as Oxfam and Save the Children. The funding crisis inevitably impacts upon other organisations such as UNICEF, and ultimately – because even official aid giving is increasingly influenced by public demands – on the whole aid apparatus.

Box 2***Alternative Approaches to Development in Conflict:
A Word of Warning***

NGOs see one of their roles as facilitating the transformation of group dynamics among people who might in future play a role in conflict prevention or resolution. As intermediaries they can nurture those activities which lead to 'empowerment' of communities and individuals otherwise unable or unwilling to move from an entrenched or powerless role within a conflict. However, alternative approaches that seek to build dignity, self-esteem and self-reliance through empowerment, participation and social organisation may themselves be deeply flawed. Social organisation approaches may waste precious resources when evidently basic survival is at a premium. Why build a community centre with bricks that could have been given to the homeless?

Empowerment assumes that newly acquired power will be used more justly. This is not the case when the vehicle is an NGO that mirrors the existing power structures of society; personality-led, dictatorial or ethnically exclusive NGOs are common. Furthermore, a liberal, consensual and pluralistic model that seeks to build the fabric of civil society as something separate from the State ignores the fact that in many countries in transition the State itself is a contested arena within and of society. Promoting alternative structures would, then, heighten tensions rather than diffuse potential violent conflict. The debate is particularly pertinent when we look at the legislative and regulative measures being put into place by governments increasingly wary of donors' preference for NGOs and what this implies for State control of power relations (Yansaah, 1995).

2.8 New concerns

The USA and Russia have not paid their dues to the United Nations and the costs of peace-keeping. This, together with the combined costs of peace-keeping operations, humanitarian assistance and what remains of development cooperation, has brought the United Nations to the brink of bankruptcy. The redirection of donor money through preferred NGOs, highlighted above, cannot disguise the rapid exhaustion of existing sources.

The challenge is, of course, not only financial and material, it is political and conceptual. It lies in the field of politics, of relations between different actors and of mechanisms of response and assistance. If the relief/development dichotomy is no longer appropriate to conflict-related emergencies, it is further eroded and complicated by the inclusion of democracy and security as key concerns of the international aid establishment. At an

operational level, there are at least three broadly defined policy areas where fundamental changes need to take place:

- ! the relative policy mix with which the international community intervenes in conflict situations. If a coherent approach is sought, how do we integrate the various ‘tools’ and forms of actions – humanitarian, developmental, political, military – so that they reinforce each other, when in some circumstances they can also conflict with one another?

- ! the lack of clarity at institutional and operational levels which mirrors policy confusions. The relative responsibilities and mandates of international agencies – the UN, other multilateral bodies, bilateral actors and NGOs – tend to be fought out in the field on an *ad hoc* basis. Who is responsible for what? How can there be effective coordination? How can operational inefficiency, wastage and duplication be reduced?

- ! the political ambiguity over the relations between local and external actors. What should be the relative role of, for example, the remains of local state structures, NGOs and civil society institutions? How significant is the linking of aid to governance issues and the increasing manner in which NGO funding, for instance, is subsumed under this general remit? Present forms and practices of international intervention tend to move from cooperation to interference, with at best paternalistic, at worst (in the eyes of many recipients) imperialistic overtones. The sheer scale of recent humanitarian operations in Africa and elsewhere has led to ‘ideological regression’ that substitutes or destroys existing local coping mechanisms and institutions, rather than supports or enforces them (UNRISD, 1995).

2.9 The political economy of war

The accommodation and ‘normalisation’ of violence within the international aid system has brought with it a language which highlights the irrational, incomprehensible and, therefore, uncontrollable nature of contemporary conflict. If the descriptive language reflects what Mark Duffield refers to as the discourse on ‘new barbarism’, what follows

is ‘functional ignorance’, the avoidance of thorough analysis of the context in which aid agencies work because it does not fit this need to do so.² By contrast, a more thorough political analysis of conflict-induced emergencies would suggest that behind the apparent ‘chaos’ of violence and war lie rational, causal explanations (Keen, 1995). There are a number of deep-rooted and inter-related structural factors which promote war and which, if taken only in isolation, will give an incomplete causal picture often found in ‘snap shot’ analyses. In brief, the levels at which such analysis can take place are:-

Global economic inequity

Nearly all of today’s war-torn societies were poor before they succumbed to conflict and are poorer still as a result of it. The distorted nature of economic development in these countries has undoubtedly been a major factor in generating conflicts. Conflict in Africa, for instance, can be traced to a structural crisis in African economies in the 1970s and subsequent instability in subsistence economies (Bradbury, 1995). With the global restructuring of economic and social institutions in the 1980s – in particular, the increasing consolidation of regional trading blocs in Europe, North America and East Asia – came further marginalisation with a starkly contrasting disparity of income and technology between rich and poor countries. The majority of UN designated complex emergencies are found in the so-called ‘transitional states’ of the Eastern bloc, former Soviet Union and many parts of Africa where wars are increasing. In Africa in particular, foreign investment has declined, leaving in its wake a plethora of safety net arrangements ranging from World Bank soft loans to UN and NGO interventions.

Resource-driven conflict

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a shift away from analysing war in terms of external geopolitical factors towards an examination of the internal dynamics of competition over resources, human and material, and how this impacts upon ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of conflict (Macrae 1996).

² Duffield went further, arguing that aid agencies and the aid system is “structurally incapable of understanding the context within which they are working, “ because to do so would threaten existing power relations and institutions (see Duffield, 1996b).

Strategies have included depopulation of contested areas, denial of food or other material assistance, destruction of infrastructure and mass intimidation. Internal opposition movements have adopted a predatory relationship to civilians that has included negative discrimination against those not 'chosen' by the movement as well as positive discrimination, especially in rural areas, of those under the 'protection' of rebel movements. Such predatory regimes have contributed to what might be called autonomous war economies (Duffield, Macrae and Zwi, 1994). The control and development of parallel economic activities (including, notoriously, the traffic in raw and refined drugs in Burma and Afghanistan), internal taxation, small arms trading and production, and appropriation of land and other assets, has led to the formation of internal political and economic structures almost entirely self-supporting and separate from the State. More often than not, these predatory structures induce impoverishment and are a prime cause of the disasters confronting the aid establishment.

Box 3

***Sudan: Building Bridges across the Frontline
An Example of Good Practice***

One of the most effective programmatic approaches to working in conflict is to identify areas of common interest between warring parties. In Sudan in the late 1980s, Oxfam staffed and funded a cattle vaccination project in South Sudan in which vaccines were taken across war lines to cattle on both sides of the war front. This was possible because both sides appreciated the value of cattle as an essential resource and livelihood. Disease on one side would spread to the other and cattle trade across the frontline was still essential in spite of the war. Interestingly, personal contacts, occasional ceasefires and mutual respect for pastoralist groups was, on a small scale, fostered. This project could not alone be a stimulus for wider peace, but it was undoubtedly a 'containment' element that could be built upon.

Paradoxically, relief responses themselves then become part of the resource wars where short term gains can be made from granting or withholding access to distraught populations. Methods for appropriating relief supplies can include: simply stealing it; manipulating exchange rates for imported relief supplies; monopolising lucrative transport contracts; demanding 'protection goods' for security in contested areas; etc. In recent African wars, factionalism has increased the likelihood that various groups will escape destitution by violent means and that targeting the most needy will involve a pay-off for armed groups 'on the move'. This does not always have negative consequences and there are numerous ways in which relief can potentially diminish violence (see, for example, Keen and Wilson, 1994).

Social conflict

Poverty is rarely a sufficient condition for armed conflict. If, however, poverty is viewed as ‘structural violence’, a manifestation of injustice, inequality and an infringement of basic rights to shared resources, one can see how this would contribute to latent conflict (Galtung, 1990). Conflict around issues of gender, class, racism and land rights, for instance, could become violent when exacerbated by economic and environmental policies, land tenure laws or technological developments over which people have no democratic control (Bradbury, 1995). These political and ethnic dimensions of poverty and vulnerability need to be acknowledged and understood when development strategies that tackle conflict ‘from the bottom upwards’ are constructed.

The approach is particularly pertinent when one looks at a gender analysis of conflict. If NGOs are to develop an analysis beyond the simple statistical issue of women’s needs in war and its aftermath (which presupposes that men’s behaviour is the norm and women are the more ‘vulnerable’ deviation), it is necessary to examine gender-determined roles of men in a culture of violence (Large, 1996). A social construction of gender draws us away from cultural determinism, from the language of ‘difference’ in which cultural mores are a given, immutable fact. It challenges us to examine the institutions of violent warfare and its participants and to relate this to pre-war and post-war environments in which women’s and men’s roles provide a framework for the perpetuation of violence. In the upheaval of war, both sexes undergo the social reconstruction of their gender identities; NGO programming in post-conflict situations should be able to accommodate and promote the positive changes this may entail.

This is not to underestimate the importance of positive discrimination in favour of programming for and by women. Key steps that can be taken in this respect, particularly in complex emergencies, might include:-

- ! Listening to people – women in particular – and using their expressed concerns as the main guiding factor in determining a response. Such consultations would probably lead to challenges to accepted practice, based on the recognition that men and women have different material needs.

- ! Respect for local (including women’s), points of view, local resources, local expertise and technological knowledge.

- ! Reinforcing local organisational capacity which can operate to the benefit of the whole community and, in particular, reinforcing women's organisations. This would include: an awareness of the processes which underlie such structures; a recognition of the potential for building on women's skills and organisational capacities for transformative change in gender relations; and a commitment to enable women to have decision-making power.

Box 4

Gender Goals and Possibilities

'Gender belongs to men, to women, and to overarching social structure. Its use for analysis and policy is at a critical juncture. It is time to extend this dimension to the structures of war and to transition; the dynamics of armed recruitment, the informal economies of arms and drugs, rehabilitation and re-integration initiatives, the training or retraining of civil police in areas of political transition, and the reclaiming of positive cultural traditions of manhood alongside those of womanhood.

Goals and possibilities could range from international investment in labour-intensive environmental or civil engineering schemes which retrain, provide livelihood and reconstruction after war, to the development of conscientious objection status (and mechanisms to give this meaning) as a human right amid realities of press gangs and blackmail. The inter-personal and psycho-social aspects of training can be reviewed by development agencies, to re-frame questions and inter-actions with partners about rebuilding relationships as well as infrastructure after war.'

Extract from Judith Large, 'Breaking Cycles of Violence: Towards Complementarity in Gender Analysis and Policy', paper presented at CODEP Workshop, September 1996.

3. CODEP 1996 Workshop Report

Thematically, the 1996 Workshop was divided into four elements: gender and conflict (though not treated as a separate topic, this theme was to be integrated into the following three); conflict analysis; programming in conflict; and peace-building and reconciliation.

3.1 Gender and conflict

There was a considerable amount of discussion at the workshop on the importance of gender perspectives. However, the incorporation of gender perspectives into the centre of analysis, both at the workshop and into the practice of NGOs, seemed a distant prospect.

Four key objectives have been suggested for agencies wishing to establish a gender focus in responding to conflict:

- ! to develop a broader framework for needs assessment; this should encompass community and individual needs, even in emergencies, including those of men and women for self-esteem and role acknowledgement, as well as for survival;
- ! to upgrade assessment skills to ensure that women – and others who are relatively ‘invisible’ – are consulted and actively engaged in the planning process. This will include recruiting and training staff who are able to consult participatively at a grassroots level;
- ! to invest in people on the ground, by capacity-building for staff, by recruiting greater numbers of women staff, by supporting and involving local groups including women’s organisations, and by developing flexible and sensitive internal management structures; and
- ! to address the lack of gender awareness and gender competence within the agencies’ own hierarchies, particularly at senior management level.

3.2 Conflict analysis

African conflicts are increasingly heterogenous and tend to be complex and unpredictable. The proliferation of hand-held weapons and their easy availability in many countries has led to a ‘culture of violence’ in which weapon possession is a mark of prestige and power. A simple typology of contemporary conflict would include national class wars,

resource/economic wars, warlordism and social banditry.

The categories are not mutually distinct. Conflicts are not static, they are shifting processes that are increasingly difficult to analyse and predict. Methodologies for analysing contemporary conflict must take account of shifting styles, content and causes.

For NGOs to fully analyse conflict, they ought to know what information they need, as well as having an understanding of what they can and cannot change and the difference in between.

Those analysing conflict should not assume that its effects will only be negative; conflicts can alter the *status quo* for the better in some instances. When NGOs talk of conflict, they tend to problematise the concept, when what they should be problematising is violent conflict. Furthermore, as outsiders involved in conflict situations, NGOs should analyse their own position within a given conflict. As those involved in bringing in resources, NGOs are part of the dynamics of conflict and should place themselves centrally in any analysis of the violence in which they intervene. In part, this involves returning to some fundamental questions: Who are NGOs to be involved in other peoples conflict? What are their motives? Are their high profile interventions simply drip-feeding the conflict? What are the dangers NGOs put themselves into and what changes can they realistically bring about?

Box 5*Somali Women as Peacekeepers*

In a society steeped in traditional patriarchal clan structures, it has been a great challenge for Somali women to take on new roles in a post-war society as sole providers to their families and as those responsible for reconstruction of their communities. Breaking the mould implies re-examining women's roles in perpetuating the culture of violence. Boys, for example, are given names such as "Kalashnikov", and women teach their children clan lineages, including ancient animosities. Women did, in fact, have a traditionally 'passive' role in peace-keeping when, for example, daughters were offered as wives to ex-enemies to seal the peace by bonding old antagonists with blood ties. Nevertheless, this was beyond the control of women who are now searching for more proactive roles they might play. Offering support to women's organisations has proved to be a useful strategy for rendering external intervention more effective, for it helps to address negative cultural behaviour while empowering women and, ultimately, promoting the recovery of Somali communities.

From 1988 to 1990 during the civil war in the breakaway Republic of Somaliland, a group of displaced women formed a group called Allah Amin. Its aim was to facilitate and provide support to about ten thousand inhabitants who were displaced inside Somaliland. The activities of these women included fundraising, running makeshift hospitals for the wounded, supporting war widows, providing standard health care, running children's schools, etc. When the civil war ended in Somaliland, women returnees set up market stalls and played a crucial economic and social role in the rebuilding process.

One cannot, however, underestimate the potential for cultural norms to reassert themselves. Despite the crucial roles women play in these difficult times, there has been little change in local attitudes, due to the feeling that the increased number of female heads of households has created as many problems as it has solved. This is mainly due to the feeling that the new responsibilities acquired by women, particularly as breadwinners, have encroached on male power and disrupted traditional family relations.

Presentation by Zeinab M. Jama at the CODEP Workshop, 1996

There is a concern that humanitarian workers are increasingly intervening in conflict situations, of which they may have limited understanding, because they are responding to donor or media demands for action. There may be confusion between analysis and information collection/exchange. Four stages of information processing can be identified:-

1. *gathering*; eg. by use of questionnaires, for the purposes of planning
2. *aggregation*; directly by collecting reports in one place, indirectly by synthesising

reports

3. *analysis*; making sense of the information gathered and setting up programmes and refining systems for 1. and 2. as a result of such analysis.
4. *dissemination*; ensuring that relevant information is made available at all levels, within each and between all organisations involved.

Thorough analysis demands specific methods and a process of logical argument, and should be a prerequisite of intervention. Analytical tools to help practitioners understand conflict are needed to identify both subjective and objective causes. Perhaps more importantly, analysis should allow for the possibility of **no** intervention, if this is appropriate.

Lack of rigour in analysis has led to dominant media concepts and images determining our responses. Thus, refugees often get the largest coverage compared with IDPs, brutality is highlighted and conflict is frequently described as tribal, religious or both, which assumes that these are the sole motivating factors at all levels of the conflict.

What is meant by conflict analysis?

Two different uses of conflict analysis can be identified. Some agencies use it to look at conflict ‘pressure points’ where resolution techniques and interventions might be applied; others use it to determine humanitarian ‘space’ where it may be possible to work. Analytic tools have, to date, been developed in a decentralised and informal manner at field level. The type of analysis carried out is determined by programme objectives, strategy and directives of the organisations engaging in the conflict arena. There is, then, no complete picture from any one agency. In this respect, it is interesting that analysis presented by a serious journalist after only a brief visit can sometimes be more salient than that supplied by aid organisations, not least because the journalist’s informants and his/her questions are formulated for different purposes. Because methods, sources and organisational agenda determine the outcome of enquiries, information, especially that pertaining to conflict, is always value-laden.

It is not surprising to find that self-analysis of the conflicting parties in some countries – of their own situation and the role of NGOs within the conflict – has been more

sophisticated than that of the aid agencies themselves. Aid agencies can thus be manipulated by warring parties who understand very clearly the strategic importance of influencing aid decisions. In the early 1980s, NGO ‘solidarity’ in the Horn of Africa found this accommodation quite acceptable; in the 1990s, a stricter adherence, by NGOs, to neutrality would mean such a situation would be less comfortable.

Box 6

A Terminology for Working in Conflict

Conflict can be both violent and non-violent, negative and positive, individual and collective. It is not necessarily problematic and may be ambiguous if not qualified by a more specific use of the term *armed conflict* or *organised conflict*.

Pacification implies the absence of political violence. It does not include the dynamic, positive attributes of *peace* that promotes and respects individual and collective rights. Peace is thus a process, not a state of being.

Conflict transformation recognises that conflicts are not static; they change from latent to manifest, from escalation to de-escalation at all stages of the peace-war-peace transition. Thus, they can be transformed positively or negatively.

Conflict prevention can cover a whole series of interventions aimed at establishing a basis for equity and justice and which prevent conflicts from becoming overt and violent. Establishing productive assets, resolving land tenure disputes, delivering basic social services are all part of the process of prevention. NGOs usually locate their inputs at the levels of capacity-building and economic activation. Systematic approaches to early warning, however, are beginning to be developed as a key element in conflict prevention.

Conflict resolution usually refers to direct interventions in overt, violent conflicts. There are three levels at which this might take place: international mediation and diplomacy; intermediate level mediation that involves bringing disputing sides together through NGO, media or academic initiatives; and grassroots level reconciliation through indigenous structures (Based on Oxfam, 1996).

Why is Conflict analysis important?

Developing and improving analytic tools is important for:

- ! operational effectiveness/safety/appropriateness of programming;
- ! clarification of the type of programme to be implemented;
- ! implementation of policy change where necessary;

- ! understanding underlying causes, not just recent effects;
- ! minimising the effect of aid as a fuel to conflict;
- ! helping to identify alternative strategies and partners with whom to work; and
- ! strengthening advocacy and the arguments upon which it depends.

In general, analysis is done to minimise the damage of programmes, rather than to have a direct impact on the resolution of the conflict itself. ICRC, for instance, uses it to ‘responsibilise’ the actors, make them see the impacts and implications of their actions.

What are the challenges in conflict analysis?

1. Risks of information collection

It is important to recognise the risks that local staff/local people associated with southern NGOs may run by passing on or gathering sensitive information in conflict situations. Indigenous NGO staff are often afraid of putting information on paper as it could be used against them. More attention needs to be paid therefore to the process of gathering information and what implications this has for the informants.

Greater knowledge can lead to a greater reluctance to act. More information and a deeper analysis often leads to greater awareness by an NGO of the complexity of the conflict, and recognition that there is no easy answer or ‘inevitable’ direction that the conflict will take. It can also lead to greater difficulty in identifying the areas of advocacy that NGOs can campaign for with any confidence and certainty. For example, in Somalia, designing food distribution systems able to incorporate the complex local distribution channels, community leaders and the latent war economy was much more difficult. Complex analysis demands complex responses.

2. Western centred tools, sources and methods of conflict analysis

Western-centred analytical methods may create barriers between the analyst and local people who may feel alienated by such an approach to gathering information. Alternatively, the information gathering process can affect, and be affected by, values and ideologies prevalent in the conflict. In Bosnia, NGOs were undoubtedly influenced by the

prevailing anti-Serb feelings in the West, which undermined their claims of impartiality when it came to deciding where and with whom to work.

Local NGO staff are often relied upon as sources of information, even though they may not themselves have reputable sources. The breadth of their local knowledge can also be over-estimated. NGOs tend to be descriptive rather than analytical, an approach that can be a historic or superficial. Apart from the danger of using only a limited reference group of local people, a lot of gathered information is under-utilised. Information cannot be 'static'; the prediction of conflict must take account of likely outcomes of preventative action already underway, otherwise NGOs will be accused of being too pessimistic.

Finally, a degree of humility is required. NGOs have, at times, been entirely wrong in their predictions and in their responses, in spite of ostensibly thorough analysis. Being wise after the event is a common predicament for organisations caught up in fluid historical situations. Even when NGOs assessments have been correct, and they have issued warnings, they may find that this is in vain. In Rwanda from 1988-89, NGOs knew of human rights abuses and altered their policies accordingly. They also alerted the outside world to these abuses but no action was taken. NGOs must accept and reflect upon the gap between information and analysis and the failure to respond appropriately. Rwanda was arguably the 'known event' *par excellence*.

Sharing and exchanging information through NGO networks and coordination bodies is one way of minimising the spread of misinformation or ground-truthing. Another is to be very clear about what is and what is not within the 'control' of an NGO. For example, if an NGO claims 'support' for a particular political person or movement in a country, does this actually inform and alter policy on the ground? Or is it merely speculative gossip?

Box 7

***Good Practice in Information Analysis:
ActionAid in the Great Lakes Region***

ActionAid has established ERIC (Emergency Relief Information Centre) in Nairobi, run by two staff. ERIC gets information from the local media, UN, NGO contacts and field visits. It reports on a monthly basis and tries to interpret information and speculate on likely emergency scenarios. The sensitivity of the analysis has resulted in some elements being kept confidential. ERIC's work has helped in developing procedural rules of engagement for ActionAid in Burundi; it has also fed into ActionAid's conflict-related advocacy work.

In Burundi, ActionAid has asked staff to document their experiences since 1993. In a 1996 regional workshop, they explored the causes of conflict: why was the President killed in 1993? etc. But the question of whether to include a chapter on causes of conflict in the ERIC report has created some difficulties as staff fear reprisals if ActionAid is seen to be commenting on publicly sensitive political issues.

3. Time commitments

It is increasingly difficult and unsatisfactory for an NGO to run programmes in conflict areas for short periods of time. Conflicts are often protracted, demanding greater organisational commitment that, in turn, requires a deeper analysis of events. Given the rapid turnover of NGO staff, much analysis suffers from a lack of continuity and institutional learning. Again, this points to the importance of NGO coordination and cooperation, so that a body of knowledge can be built up as an essential reference for analysis.

4. Diverging views within an NGO of particular conflict situations

NGOs, particularly large NGOs, are rarely homogeneous, making it very difficult to agree on a common analysis and course of action, either operationally or in terms of advocacy. Deferring decisions to the field begs the question of the quality of field staff. Information exchange within an NGO can also be poor – the policy department may not have the same information as the field office or the desk office. Independent analysis, using consultants and/or academics, may suffer from the same communication problems. Moreover, a consultant rarely has the luxury of influencing his/her client, since reports are often more acceptable when they underline existing points of view within the organisation.

5. NGO coordination and shared analysis

Conflict analysis needs to be supported by an ongoing information gathering process, rarely within the ability of one organisation. Thus, collaboration to reduce duplication, particularly in the area of early warning, and the establishment of fora for policy and programme discussions, is the key to improving the quality and use of conflict analysis. There is ample evidence to suggest that ongoing information networks and field-based coordination structures have contributed to the process of building consensus in conflict situations (Bennett, 1995). However, for every new complex emergency, NGOs have had to ‘re-invent the wheel’ and again be persuaded to forge alliances. Useful field models for NGO coordination exist (Bennett, 1994), but have tended to be under-funded. Donors need to be persuaded of the necessity and benefit of supporting such structures so that comprehensive information and analysis is shared, not only between NGOs, but also within the wider humanitarian community.

The challenge of coordination goes to the very heart of institutional mandates and highlights the increasing competition for resources between NGOs. Humanitarian agencies need to examine the package of conflict programmes which they transport to Africa. The absence of a common analysis of conflict is partly due to limited efforts at coordination, and partly to competition for geographical ‘turf’. There has been a lack of clarity in changing roles and relationships between NGOs and the State (if it exists) and an often ambiguous relationship with UN organisations. The situation is further complicated by different mandates, policies, mission statements, backgrounds and experiences of international NGOs engaging in emergency work. It cannot be assumed that foreign NGOs are ‘close to the ground’; all too often it seems that the analysis reached by NGOs differs from the beneficiaries own perceptions of a given conflict.

6. NGOs and governments sharing information

Conflict analyses should always be politically informed. We have seen how NGOs increasingly replace governments as social welfare agents, especially where the State is in disarray. We have also seen how donors increasingly favour NGOs as the preferred channels for aid. The result has been strained relationships between NGOs and recipient country governments. The role and approach of NGOs can undermine governments or

other local structures, creating mistrust and even undisguised antipathy.

Only when NGOs have a balanced analysis of the role of the state or *de facto* decentralised structures (where a State does not exist) will the possibility of a sufficient level of political analysis emerge. A starting point has to be a re-assessment of complementary roles between NGOs and governments. It is often easier to influence policies and practices of government through dialogue and communication, rather than through confrontation. NGOs need to recognise that they are single players in complex situations; in the post-conflict period, state mechanisms will begin to re-assert themselves as the primary channel for development assistance. Questions of legitimacy and accountability are as much directed at the NGO community as they are at governments.

Conclusions

NGOs undertake conflict analysis in an *ad hoc* manner, rarely pre-planning their methods (which are numerous, uncoordinated and vary from NGO to NGO and from region to region). Analysis is conducted often unilaterally by the major players, at different organisational levels with varying perceptions, and from different standpoints and disciplines. This frequently results in different interpretations of a given situation. NGOs should try to improve their methods and seek ways in which to build shared analysis involving all the appropriate players, not least those within the communities they serve. The sharing of information and formation of fora for joint analysis; the use of collective memory; incorporating previous analysis and the valuing of peoples' perceptions are ways to build a more professional approach to conflict analysis.

A significant amount of time must be taken for research and information gathering in conflict situations. This can be cost-effective in the long-term, ensuring more effective intervention. Essential to this process is the investment of time to generate consensus and coherence between and within NGOs on how conflict analysis might lead to effective programme development. In Liberia, for example, international NGOs failed to anticipate the breakdown of the peace accords and the resulting changes in political and social outlooks. The local population probably had greater insight into this change, but dialogue with them was minimal.

Carrying out conflict analysis and its associated information gathering represents a political act in a conflict situation. Thus, the framework for analysis needs to be considered for its appropriateness in relation to a realistic range of responses. For instance, to define an analytical framework around ethnicity may lead to inappropriate responses if other frameworks have not been considered. Most practitioners recognise that humanitarian responses are not sufficient. NGOs need to apply political pressure in conflict situations, an imperative that not only stretches mandates but also involves learning new tools for conflict analysis at different levels in their work.

There is also a need to develop research techniques that investigate indigenous methods of conflict prevention, management and resolution. For example, Caritas in Sierra Leone organises post conflict consultative meetings involving affected communities to discuss and plan reconciliation and trauma healing. Collating and systemising such approaches opens up new possibilities for NGOs wishing to provide an alternative and complementary approach to the macro-analysis of official agencies.

Workshop participants suggested improvements in current approaches to conflict analysis which would include:-

- a) Greater focus on analysing proposed outcomes of interventions undertaken: what impact will they have on longer-term development, future conflict prevention, etc.
- b) Seeking to increase information exchange between international NGOs and local populations, possibly using local NGOs as intermediaries.
- c) A framework for analysis should include careful use of terms. The term 'ethnic', for example, may point to a wider set of issues not contained within the framework, and therefore may confuse rather than clarify the issue.
- d) Coordination of methods and sharing of results is imperative.
- e) Recognising the importance of conflict analysis as a guide to the nature and timing of interventions.

- f) Experimenting with and developing early warning indicators. Information is not always acted upon, due to differing interpretations of indicators by the actors.

3.3 Programming in conflict

The Birmingham Workshop on conflict in 1994 had emphasised that NGOs do not simply work **in** conflict, but they attempt to address causes and consequences and change policy and practice accordingly. Programming thus encompasses conflict analysis and peace-building. In the 1996 CODEP Workshop, the three themes were dealt with separately, while recognising essential link between them. Thus, interventions may include low-key community-based development projects linked to tension reduction, especially where such tensions are related to inequitable distribution of resources at a local level. If this is development re-written as conflict prevention, so be it, for it is informed by an analysis of how and at what level an NGO can have the optimum impact.

Two broad concerns needing particular attention can be identified: appropriate programme activities in situations of armed conflict and the quest for good practice among NGOs.

Programming and coordination of NGOs

NGOs, more than any other institutions involved in conflict mitigation and prevention, represent a wide spectrum of, for the most part, legitimate and complementary activities. What they often fail to do, however, is maximise their impact through forming ‘strategic alliances’ and working effectively together. The imperative for fundraising and ‘profile’ can work against coordination, for the latter represents a perceived threat to the independence of an NGO (it has been argued elsewhere that this does not have to be the case (see for example, Bennett, 1994)).

Without coordination, however, NGOs will neither achieve consensus over good practice, nor will they be able to implement guidelines and exchange views necessary to refine such guidelines. The arrival of 180 NGOs in Rwanda in the space of one month (August-September 1994) and the extraordinary difficulty in setting up a well-resourced coordination structure for them is one of the more celebrated examples of the NGO ‘circus’ (Whitman, 1996).

Good practice

International NGOs work most effectively as catalysts, helping mobilise communities to define, organise and address their perceived needs. In dealing with issues of scope, scale and sustainability interventions must shift from being ‘community-based’ to being more fully community-implemented and managed. The capacity of local people determines the pace of work undertaken. During and immediately after conflict, NGOs should strive to develop a sense of normality by providing protection, security and a sense of predictability in everyday life. What is a funding trend for foreign NGOs may not always be appropriate to the needs of the communities being helped. Thus, for example, local ‘survivor group’ NGOs in Rwanda have stressed that shelter provision (requiring external finance) should, for foreign NGOs, take precedence over psychosocial support (an ongoing, often culturally-specific activity better done through existing support mechanisms).

Codes of good conduct and practice – notably those produced by the Red Cross and signatory NGOs (see RRN Network Paper 7) – are part of the consensual apparatus now being produced at an international level that recognises the specific contribution of NGOs and the necessity for some kind of regulation for this increasingly diverse body of humanitarian actors. However, consensus must not be allowed to dampen initiative and define good practice in terms of the lowest common denominator. Local codes of practice, formed by coalitions, networks and coordination bodies at national levels, are useful as lobbying tools and as the focus of debate for operational NGOs. Above all, they provide ‘horizontal’ mechanisms for developing good practice, as opposed to the more common ‘vertical’ mechanisms imposed through donors, multilateral agencies and governments.

Box 8

***Targeting Vulnerable Groups:
Good Practice in Mozambique***

With support from an international NGO, a life-skills building programme was established through a local community association in a rural village in one of Mozambique's northern provinces. The programme included basic numeracy and literacy, recreation, access to viable trade skills and 'mentor' relationships with adult role models. The programme was opened to a wide range of economically marginalised adolescents, including those who had been internally displaced, returning refugees, original local residents and, more recently, demobilised child soldiers. As the long-term goal was to promote genuine reintegration into the local community, special programmes were **not** established for particular sub-groups such as former child soldiers or separated children. There was a conscious effort to address common problems and issues with support being reflective of individual needs rather than being tied to membership of a special sub-group.

Excerpt from 'New Approaches to New Realities', First International Emergency Settlement Conference, University of Wisconsin, April 1996.

What are the practical operational opportunities, constraints and dilemmas of working in conflict?

Workshop participants identified the kind of opportunities and constraints presented by conflict situations that might influence programme priorities for NGOs.

Opportunities

- ! Ability of 'new' governments to organise themselves and take control;
- ! international aid and funding;
- ! change of legislation in favour of women;
- ! emergence of strong local groups;
- ! greater possibility for regional fora on peace-building; and
- ! NGOs rethinking on civil society.

External constraints

- ! Political sensitivity of information and activities may affect the physical security of personnel;
- ! frequent lack of coordination and mutual understanding between local authorities and NGOs;
- ! insensitivity towards national NGOs;
- ! time pressure leading to inappropriate, ill-conceived programmes supported by poor analysis;
- ! poor gender analysis reinforces traditional (male) systems;
- ! project-oriented short-term donor money emphasises material intervention without recognising the importance of institution building;
- ! people are no less poor after emergency yet the assistance is often phased out or significantly reduced;
- ! Funding either arrives much too quickly or too late, which has led to unprofessional activities being undertaken by inexperienced agencies and individuals;
- ! urban bias of relief programmes results in remote regions being neglected as urban centres provide better security and logistical capabilities;
- ! relief distribution may assist warring factions;
- ! projects are often designed to meet donor conditionality, not needs on the ground; and
- ! lack of coordination of NGO work, duplication and high level of competition for funds and geographical 'turf'.

Box 9

Civil Society: the 'Rwanda Dilemma'

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw increasing amounts of material and financial assistance being channelled through national NGOs and church-related institutions in Rwanda. A large proportion of this assistance was for building 'civil society' – ie. local NGO institutional support and the like. After the 1994 genocide many local NGOs had dissolved or were fragmented, with some having had employees who were perpetrators of the genocide. Apart from the internal political sensitivity of reconstituting NGOs known to have had links with the previous regime, there remains a dilemma for international donor NGOs: who to support? The resulting mistrust and misunderstanding has led to international NGOs largely failing to support local NGOs, arguing that current uncertainties prevent them from determining who is legitimate and who is not in the post-war, post-genocide fallout. Opportunities have thus been missed for supporting genuine grassroots organisations. Some 'survivor groups', for example, have accused international NGOs of 'policy paralysis' leading to protracted debates and late delivery of much-needed assistance.

Internal constraints

- ! The reporting structures of NGO head offices can be counterproductive if they entail delays and endless paperwork;
- ! the dominance of logistic and information technologies tend to place expatriates in positions of power while more knowledgeable local staff are kept in subordinate positions;
- ! international staff brought in for relief/conflict work often lack experience. Poor appraisal is exacerbated by high staff turnover;
- ! staff support systems are often weak. There is frequently limited preparation before assignments and the sharing of staff/project objectives is poor. Greater stress needs to be placed on human resource development and training, of both local and international staff;
- ! local staff have relatively little input into programme decision-making. Strengthening local staff capacity is one way of ensuring that programmes do not collapse as expatriates leave and high initial budgets are reduced;
- ! local staff are often stigmatised because they are paid at very low rates when compared to expatriates. There is a need to recruit African expatriates, perhaps more acceptable to local communities, to work in African situations, otherwise charges of neo-colonialism will persist; and

- ! staff security invariably excludes genuine concern and action for local staff.

Ways of meeting the challenges and constraints

Allocating tasks to governments, UN, NGOs, local leaders, etc., inevitably leads to assessing the competence of the many actors involved, a highly-charged value-laden process. Over-simplistic assumptions such as “local people always know best/are more accountable/more representative/more skilled/etc.” must be corroborated. In general, however, programmatic decisions should at least address the following issues:

- ! management by governments of international and national NGOs (improved legislation/regulation of NGOs);
- ! attempts at self-regulation through the code of conduct for humanitarian organisations;
- ! adherence to codes of practice for human resource management of emergency personnel (donors should be consulted and included);
- ! focus on strengthening local initiatives, including human resources development; and
- ! inter-agency (donors, INGOs, LNGOs, UN and government bodies) coordination as well as inter-NGO coordination.

Are expatriates needed to work in conflict?

An inescapable fact for operational agencies is that, in violent situations, programming decisions on the ground will be increasingly dictated by the political climate. Expatriate involvement in relief operations is often necessary at the start of a conflict as there are problems (financial and ethnic, for example) that frequently face local governments. However, one can question the commitment of international NGOs to include, train and give management responsibility to local staff because of the number of expatriates still in the field for long periods after the initial intervention. The lack of strategic thinking and the crisis-management approach of relief agencies mean that local capacities are often not being utilised or developed. Paradoxically, it is often the donors who speak most of capacity-building, and who, in turn, enable their own national NGOs to employ large numbers of (expensive) expatriates. What follows is disempowerment and the weakening

of local structures.

Box 10

Building Trust in Somalia: an Example from Dutch Church Aid

A year before the ‘battle for Mogadishu’ started in earnest, Dutch Church Aid (DCA) saw the war coming. Having a mixed-clan staff of some 50 Somalis in the Northeast, DCA was obviously worried. They therefore sat down with traditional elders and negotiated a deal. DCA would continue the water emergency programme in their region, stretching from Central to the very Northeast of Somalia, as long as security and logistics would permit. In return, the elders swore to treat all Somali staff of DCA as ‘guests’ according to Koranic tradition. After four years, not a single staff member had been harmed.

The DCA compound was attacked and local people defended it on orders of the elders. Early in the war, they sent an expedition to Mogadishu to rescue from the carnage women and children related to DCA Somali staff. 37 people were brought back to safety. In both events, they lost a number of people and trucks, but refused compensation from the NGO because they had honoured their deal. Later, when hundreds of thousands of their clan members fled back to the region and the food situation became precarious, DCA honoured its part of the deal and rendered assistance.

Excerpt from ‘New Approaches to New Realities’, First International Emergency Settlement Conference, University of Wisconsin, April 1996.

Should Northern NGOs be working in Africa at all?

NGOs live and work in situations of ambiguity. Some of these ambiguities are inherent in the nature of the NGOs themselves – an organisation which is accountable to trustees in one country, but working with communities in another; committed to fundamental reforms, but funded by donors and supporters who demand short-term results; wanting to democratise development but forbidden from entering formal politics. Others problems that emerge are of an institutional nature. For example, an NGO may decide to work across a range of approaches embracing service delivery, capacity-building and advocacy. Each of these areas may require different funding mechanisms, organisational structures, skills and timescales.

There are times when NGOs have spent too much time criticising others and not enough time putting their own houses in order. It is not only a matter of coordination and good

practice. It is arguable that international NGOs should be trying to work themselves out of a job. No matter how effective NGOs are technically, questions regarding the future role of NGOs in Africa and elsewhere have yet to be addressed. Developing countries will continue to need support from their Northern partners, but donors, host governments and even some NGOs themselves are beginning to raise issues of accountability which will throw open once again the whole debate about NGOs and civil society.

3.4 Peace-building and reconciliation

Peace-building and reconciliation are now marketable items, assured of funding. Not surprisingly, many NGOs without experience in programming in conflict are increasingly raising money on the back of this trend. Apart from a more logical division of specialist roles, we need greater clarification of the terms used.

Peace and peace-making are not just techniques deployed to patch up differences when conflicts erupt. They are larger concepts having application even in situations that are not visibly conflictual. Peace entails individual and social transformation. It is about change from immature to mature relationships, from destructive competition to energising cooperation.

Box 11

Sierra Leone: Good Practice in Conflict

Caritas has a programme for community-based reconciliation and trauma healing in Sierra Leone. This began with consultative meetings with the government, civil authorities, NGOs, military committees, youth, community leaders, church leaders and refugees. The watchword was transparency to build trust. This highly participatory approach also ensured high quality information and input on how to address the conflict. Issues arising from the consultations included: the impact of war on women and children; involvement of youth in conflict; social and cultural changes as a result of war and issues of bad governance.

Caritas arranged for some local leaders to visit Liberia to learn how they handle conflict and its effects. The experience was incorporated in the programme. Lacking personnel and resources to carry out this programme single-handedly, Caritas networks with other agencies working in relief and rehabilitation who fill the gaps.

continued overleaf

Box 11 (continued)

For the rehabilitation of the people affected, a manual, translated into the local languages, was produced and used by community animators who were selected and supported by the community, with Caritas acting as a facilitator to train the trainers.

The rationale of the programme was that by building the capacity of community to take care of its own needs, the first tentative steps towards a lasting peace could be made. Activities included media activities (including airing peace messages), training in how to analyse and address conflict, the drawing up of action plans to solve conflict and the use of cassettes as training resources.

What are the common trends of conflict resolution and peace-building? Firstly, it is important to recognise that one cannot resolve conflict and thus make peace unless the root causes of the conflict are identified and dealt with. Secondly, reconciliation includes an element of justice. The various approaches to conflict resolution have been categorised by Hiskias Assefa (1993) according to the level of participation involved (see Box 12).

The categories that Hiskias Assefa has elucidated are as follows:-

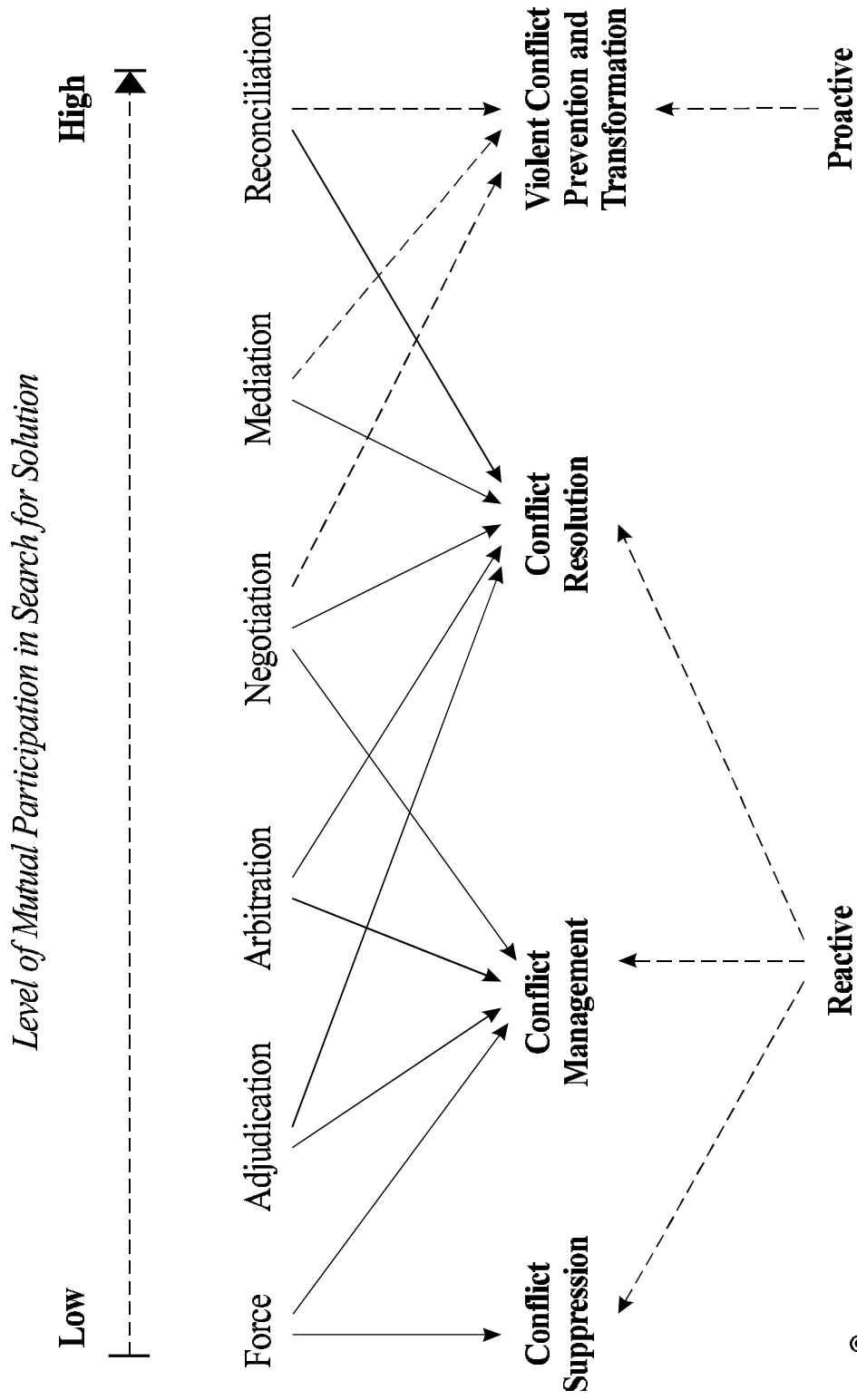
Use of Force. This is a process where peace is imposed by an external military agent. The level of participation is low and conflict is more often suppressed than diffused.

Adjudication. Decision-making is at a higher level, by international tribunal or courts. Participation, though higher than in the use of force, is minimised by decisions being made by a third party. Conflict management and regulation come to the fore and expensive mechanisms are put in place to ensure peace (for example, peace-keeping forces).

Arbitration is a stage further than adjudication, because both parties have a say in who the decision-maker is going to be and may sometimes decide the law that is going to be applied. Although the parties may or may not abide by the outcome, there is a high level of participation.

Box 12

Spectrum of Conflict Handling Mechanisms



© Assefâ, 1995

Negotiation has a very high level of mutual participation, with all parties participating and collectively finding a solution to problems. Political bargaining may entail coercion to impose decisions made, but each party has room to manoeuvre.

Mediation is negotiation facilitated by a third party (for example, the Carter initiatives in the Great Lakes). Yet, the enforcement of the solutions depends on the parties themselves. The mediators role is to make it easier to come up with solutions that are workable for everyone. Ironically, while mediation is the most lasting of all the processes, it is the least well-funded.

All situations of conflict resolution are associated with the term ‘reconciliation’, a process that involves a restructuring of relationships. Here, those involved go beyond the resolution towards a closer examination of relationships, perceptions, attitudes, hostilities and hate. In doing so, an attempt is made to change them to harmony and solidarity; from a relationship characterised by hierarchy to one marked by equality, participation, respect, mutual enrichment and growth. The process of conflict resolution might involve the following stages:

- ! acknowledgement of the injury inflicted by both sides;
- ! sincere regret for that injury;
- ! apology;
- ! letting go of bitterness;
- ! commitment not to repeat the injury;
- ! redress of past grievances (though not revenge); and
- ! creation of new relationships.

Reconciliation is not just a technique; it is a lens through which we can look at governance, political and economic growth, and development. You cannot **do** reconciliation to someone else.

This perception is particularly pertinent to the visions espoused by NGOs and individuals in the North. If NGOs in the North do not examine what is happening in their own countries and how that affects Africa, how can they understand or engage in reconciliation abroad? By looking at issues such as structural adjustment and globalisation, people,

North and South, can transform what happens in both regions. Otherwise, the risk is that reconciliation work will go the route of development: people will become the subjects of something being done to them.

NGOs have a role in trying to change the external causes of conflict, however they ought to ask themselves whether they have the commitment and the capacity to effect the changes they promote. While donors give NGOs funds to alleviate suffering and poverty in Africa, they, at the same time, sell arms of destruction to Africa. The question is whether NGOs have the capacity to stand up to the sources that support them?

Box 13

Peace-building in Somalia

Somali women working at the grass-roots level founded an umbrella organisation called “the coalition of grassroots women organisations” which aimed collectively to find means to achieve lasting peace. Working initially in Mogadishu, attempts are now being made to link up with other women’s organisations countrywide. The coalition aims to remove Somali women from the arena of conflict. Although women are not direct participants, they give moral and logistical support to violence. The coalition has used Islamic values to appeal to each other to solve, rather than perpetuate, conflict. This includes, for instance, teaching the Koran to illiterate or semi-literate women without the ‘filter’ of local (male) custom. Some have travelled abroad to learn from the experiences of other women in other conflict situations. A group of women who went to South Africa, for instance, have since translated the training manuals they obtained into Somali to enable other women to get access to them.

With strenuous efforts, it has taken 18 months to get 18 groups of women into the coalition. It is a slow, sometimes threatening, process, but the hope is that this coalition will begin to influence men in order to create a peaceful environment in Somalia and to give women a chance to broker peace.

Comment from a participant at CODEP.

Mandates and missions of international NGOs in conflict situations

Constructing a mandate for working in conflict involves NGOs in two crucial questions: a mandate for whom and by whom? More specifically, does the NGO mandate have currency in the outside world – ie. is it understood and accepted by all parties concerned? The unique mandate of the ICRC as the ‘guardian’ of international humanitarian law (the

Geneva Conventions) has taken years to achieve and the Red Cross/Crescent movement as a whole invests substantial resources in the public promotion of its fundamental principles. Dissemination of those principles to warring factions is a prerequisite to intervention and the Red Cross/Crescent is backed in this venture by national governments worldwide who are signatories to its conventions.

NGOs do not have the same formalised level of legitimacy. Indeed, unlike the Red Cross/Crescent, most NGOs would not claim to be neutral. ACORD, for instance, accepts that its interventions in conflict affect the political process. It does, however, believe itself to be impartial. This opens the doors for the pursuit of justice and a stated commitment to empowering the poor. If NGOs have a unique role, it is perhaps through adding an element to the complex and much-contested relief/development dichotomy – that of peace-building which becomes the interlinking theme within both.

Core values and common ground

- ! Advocacy for victims;
- ! impartiality, while accepting that at different stages of a conflict certain NGOs have a comparative advantage over others;
- ! awareness of the three way relationship between relief, development and peace-building;
- ! lessons need to be learned from the rapidly changing ways in which NGOs are working in conflict. Learning techniques must encompass an element of humility and include gender analysis and application, evaluation and regulation; and
- ! identification of local and traditional peace-building efforts as a first step towards conflict resolution.

Box 14*AVEGA, Rwanda*

In Rwanda, there is no shortage of local initiatives trying to achieve peace, yet many are constrained through lack of funds. Those widowed by the genocide formed AVEGA-AGAHOZO in January 1995 to respond to the needs of those who had survived three months of slaughter in 1994 but were now in need of mutual material and psychological support. The essential social support function of the network continues, but other pressing needs have been identified: housing, legal aid, advocacy on land rights (widows and daughters still have no legal right to land or property, though this may change soon). AVEGA currently has about 10,000 registered members countrywide (from an estimated total of 30,000 widows inside Rwanda and an unknown number in exile).

To date, AVEGA has been working with 10 women's associations in the country. Lack of resources has prevented AVEGA from supporting these associations in providing much needed housing reconstruction, medical assistance, psycho-trauma counselling, training in income generation, etc. Although the government has supported AVEGA's aims, it has no means of its own to address these. For the most part foreign donors, including NGOs, have been slow in offering assistance and there is a danger that the grassroots mobilisation of AVEGA members will be undermined by the failure to deliver material assistance.

It is worth recalling the ethical dilemma facing NGOs in Rwanda. International NGOs have enjoyed security inside Rwanda since the end of genocide. They have, however, largely been sub-contracted by multilateral and bilateral donors, while using their private funds to feed refugees across the border in Zaire. It is thought that these refugee camps are harbouring killers, militia and the former Rwanda army that is (with support from some international agents) considered to be re-arming itself and preparing again for war. Recent events in East Zaire have highlighted again these concerns. NGOs could perhaps have done more collectively to demand that the international community moves the refugees further away from the Rwandan border (the camps are three miles away), and that they demilitarise the camps.

There are profound ethical dilemmas for aid agencies in conflict situations such as feeding the hungry who may include those planning further violence. However, most NGO mandates involve assisting the most needy and this invariably means giving material assistance for shelter, health, education and small-scale enterprise and these are necessary for the NGOs to win the confidence and trust of the people. While doing so, they should develop greater understanding of the root causes of conflict. The next step could then be

to slowly introduce programmes that unite communities, stimulating self-help and advocacy for wider ideals.

Suggested strategies

- ! Humanitarian agencies should invest in preparedness strategies, including increasing their capacity to understand the social impact of conflict on both women and men and carrying out rapid consultation with affected communities. They should attempt to improve the participation of women, not only to meet such gender-specific needs but to enhance women's skills and organisational capacities and redress gender inequalities in access to resources and power.
- ! Agencies should invest in their staff (those who implement projects on the ground), providing them with training, monitoring and management support to enable them to respond effectively to the real needs of communities on the ground.
- ! Aid agencies should set aside 'blueprint' programmes in favour of taking time to plan, research and consult with intended beneficiaries. This will enable them to increase the relevance of their activities and their effectiveness in strengthening communities' ability to withstand future conflict.
- ! Donors should use their conditionalities and reporting criteria as instruments to ensure that value is placed on quality and on developmental approaches, rather than exclusively on quantitative targets and the satisfaction of immediate needs. In particular, donors have a role to play in integrating gender analysis into guidelines on the assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures which it lays down for aid recipients.
- ! Programme assessments and evaluations should, first and foremost, address the issue of human resources, particularly the level of inclusion of local and regional resources and the manner in which capacity-building is being tackled.
- ! NGOs should not tackle work that is beyond their capacity; expanding gradually is preferable to attempting to deal with every issue, including peace-building NGOs should set realistic objectives, rather than place too great expectations on themselves and should allow themselves credit for good work .

4. The Future of CODEP

CODEP was initially set up as a discussion forum through which primarily UK-based academic and aid institutions could exchange views and promote good practice in working in conflict. CODEP has increased in size and scope since its inception, but would benefit from an increased and regular input from Southern partners. It was agreed that CODEP should continue, and that in reviewing its status and future orientation, should take into consideration the following:-

- (a) In order that CODEP becomes a dynamic exchange mechanism, ways should be developed to increase South to North, as well as North to South, dialogue. Information flows to the South should be improved and the North should be more accountable to the South. Explanation should be forthcoming from the North about the efforts made to resolve conflicts, such as lobbying, and there should be increased coordination of such efforts.
- (b) Commitment must be made to North/South collaboration, not simply information flow. Partnership should be genuine rather than a means to producing consensual statements which translate into imposed policies.
- (c) Since there is incomplete knowledge in the North about political formations in the South, and the manner in which these may perpetuate violence, Northern NGOs should exercise a degree of caution, not least when they promote closer cooperation with host governments. The same caution must be exercised when 'civil society' is held up as the goal in which democratic and participatory structures are located. Newly formed civil structures in the former Soviet Union, for example, are increasingly a mirror of past communist models; and in Rwanda it was precisely some of those civil/NGO structures funded in the 1980s that were implicated, directly or indirectly, in the genocide in the 1990s.
- (d) CODEP is one of several existing mechanisms for building consensus and a degree of coordination among operational and non-operational agencies. Few will dispute the necessity for coordination, but there is no comprehensive, universally accepted body of norms for recognising good and bad practice in conflict work. CODEP should address such issues as – how do NGOs measure good practice, looking not

only at how but why they do what they do? In addition to identifying issues for discussion CODEP should produce a set of relevant case studies to assist in the development of NGO practice in the field of conflict.

- (e) The demand for NGO self-regulation is increasing, not only to consolidate good practice, but also because the designation 'NGO' cannot describe the myriad of organisations using the label. Codes of conduct created by, for example, the International Red Cross, SCHR, People in Aid and participating international NGOs must be supplemented by local codes and guidelines best formulated through country-level coordination/networking structures.
- (f) NGO approaches and responses to conflict should remain inherently flexible, and not assume that no good can come out of conflict. They should not only programme for stability; instability means taking risks and acceptance of those risks by donors.
- (g) NGOs are being asked for ever more complex analyses and justification of their roles in conflict. Apart from programmatic concerns, it was agreed that CODEP must remain a forum for compiling, debating and disseminating state of the art analytic and theoretical thinking on global trends and how they affect/are affected by aid interventions. Furthermore, CODEP should have a responsibility for engaging in debate with donors and the UN. Ideally, CODEP should have a representation at appropriate international policy and research fora.
- (h) CODEP has to date been organised as an open forum with no formal membership or secretariat. Responsibility for much of the administration has been voluntarily taken by ACORD. If CODEP is to fulfill the role assigned to it by those who have contributed to and benefitted from it, and by those attending the 1996 Workshop, then it was agreed it will be essential to ensure that CODEP has its own organisational capacity.

Annex 1**List of Workshop Participants**

Mark Adams	ACORD
Virginie Anieux	CCFD
Asha Arraleh	Afwar
Georgina Ashworth	CHANGE
Sally Austin	CARE (UK)
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Jon Bennett	
Janine Bossy	CHANGE
Mark Bradbury	
Emery Brusset	
Margaret Buchanan-Smith	ActionAid
Alun Burge	International Alert
Andy Carl	Conciliation Resources
Paul Crook	SCF - Somalia Programme
Regina Davis-Tooley	USAID/BHR/Office of US (OFDA)
Cosmas Desmond	
Robert Dodd	ActionAid
Judy El Bushra	ACORD
Sue Ellis	PRDU, University of York
Carlo von Flüe	ICRC
Diana Francis	
Judith Gardner	CIIR-ICD
Janice Giffen	Oxfam - Strategic Planning
Jonathan Goodhand	INTRAC
D Stuart Gordon	RMA Sandhurst
Marion Gough	British Red Cross
Richard Graham	Charity Projects
Assefa Hiskias	Nairobi Peace Initiative
Pierre Humblet	Médecins sans Frontières

Martina Hunt	INTRAC
Laura Jackson	Relief and Rehabilitation Network, ODI
Zainab Jama	African Women in War (AFWAR)
Mary Kayitesi-Blewitt	
Hannemor Keidel	Institute for Social Science, Technical University of Munich
Marion Kelly	Overseas Development Administration
Mary Kiden	South Sudan Women Concern
Ingrid Kircher	CIIR
Jan Klugkist	NOVIB
Judith Large	CREATE
William Lume	IFAA
Elizabeth Lupai	South Sudan Women Concern
Isobel McConnan	International Health Exchange
Joanna Macrae	Overseas Development Institute
Mr Malek	The University of Birmingham
Peter Marsden	British Agencies Afghanistan Group, Refugee Council
Elizabeth Marsh	Charity Projects
Barney Mayhew	
Bruce Menser	World Vision International - Sudan Program
John Mitchell	British Red Cross
Faiza J Mohamed	CARE Somalia
Noor Mohammed	SCF Somalia Programme
Cecile Mukarubuga	ACORD Rwanda
Lola Nathanail	The Save the Children Fund
Ophelia Nelson	Afronet Trust
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Colin Nobbs	
Eleanor O'Gorman	University of East Anglia
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Comfort Osilaja	CAFOD
Quentin Outram	University of Leeds
Caroline Phillips	Overseas Development Administration

Jose Manuel Pinto Texeira	ECHO - European Commission
Adam Platt	ACORD
Rosemary Preston	The University of Warwick
Susan Quick	
Peter Raven	Children's Aid Direct
Meg Rothwell	Overseas Development Administration
Rik Samyn	NCOS/Eurostep
Jo Skelt	International Extension College
Jane Shackman	Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture
Hugo Slim	CENDEP
Ines Smyth	Oxfam UK & Ireland
Theresa Songu	National Catholic Development Office
Birgitte Sorensen	UNRISD - War Torn Societies Project
Ndeye Sow	International Alert
Katarina Toll	UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs
Bernard Vicary	World Vision International - Sudan Program
Tina Wallace	University of Birmingham
Bernie Ward	International Alert
Martin Wilkinson	Quaker Peace & Service
Steve Williams	Responding to Conflict
Suzanne Williams	Oxfam - Policy Department
Elizabeth Winter	British Agencies Afghanistan Group, Refugee Council

Annex 2

Workshop Programme

Wednesday 4 September

1400-1530	Registration
1530	Tea
1600-1645	Opening Plenary Session
	! Welcome
	! CODEP Update 1995/96
	! Workshop Aim and Methods
	! Housekeeping
1645-1715	Presentation: Gender and Conflict
1715-1815	Introductions and Exercises

Thursday 5 September

0900-0930	Presentation: Conflict Analysis
0930	Regional Groups on Conflict Analysis
1100	Coffee
1130	Mixed Groups on Conflict Analysis
1300	Lunch
1400	Presentation: Programming in Conflict
1430	Regional Groups on Programming in Conflict
1600	Tea
1630-1800	Mixed Groups on Programming Conflict
1800-1830	Close of Day 2

Friday 6 September

0900	Presentation: Peace-Building and Reconciliation
1000	Panel Discussion Regional Groups on Peace-building and Reconciliation
1100	Coffee/tea
1130	Mixed Groups on Peace-building and Reconciliation
1300	Lunch
1400	Closing Plenary Session ! Participants' Reflections ! Workshop Overview
1530-1630	Workshop Evaluation

Facilitators of the Workshop were:

Hugo Slim
Diana Francis

Papers were presented by:

William Lume
Judith Large
Zainab Jama
Mark Adams
Hiskias Assefa

Suggested Further Reading

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Acronyms

CEEC	Central and Eastern European Countries
CODEP	UK Network on Conflict Development and Peace
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DCA	Dutch Inter-Church Aid
ERIC	Emergency Relief Information Centre
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
INGO	International non governmental organisation
LNGO	Local non governmental organisation
NIS	Newly Independent States
NGO	Non governmental organisation
NOVIB	Dutch Organisation for International Development Co-operation
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
OECD	Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Relief
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCA	Office of the Co-ordination of United Nations Humanitarian and Economic Assistance Programmes relating to Afghanistan
UNRISD	United Nations Research Institute for Social Development

Relief and Rehabilitation Network

The objective of the Relief and Rehabilitation Network (RRN) is to facilitate the exchange of professional information and experience between the personnel of NGOs and other agencies involved in the provision of relief and rehabilitation assistance. Members of the Network are either nominated by their agency or may apply on an individual basis. Each year, RRN members receive four mailings in either English or French comprising Newsletters, Network Papers and Good Practice Reviews. In addition, RRN members are able to obtain advice on technical and operational problems they are facing from the RRN staff in London. A modest charge is made for membership with rates varying in the case of agency-nominated members depending on the type of agency.

The RRN is operated by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in conjunction with the European Association of Non-Governmental Organisations for Food Aid and Emergency Relief (EuronAid). ODI is an independent centre for development research and a forum for policy discussion on issues affecting economic relations between the North and South and social and economic policies within developing countries. EuronAid provides logistics and financing services to NGOs using EC food aid in their relief and development programmes. It has 27 member agencies and two with observer status. Its offices are located in the Hague.

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