



Internews

Center for Innovation & Learning

REPORTING ON HUMANITARIAN CRISES

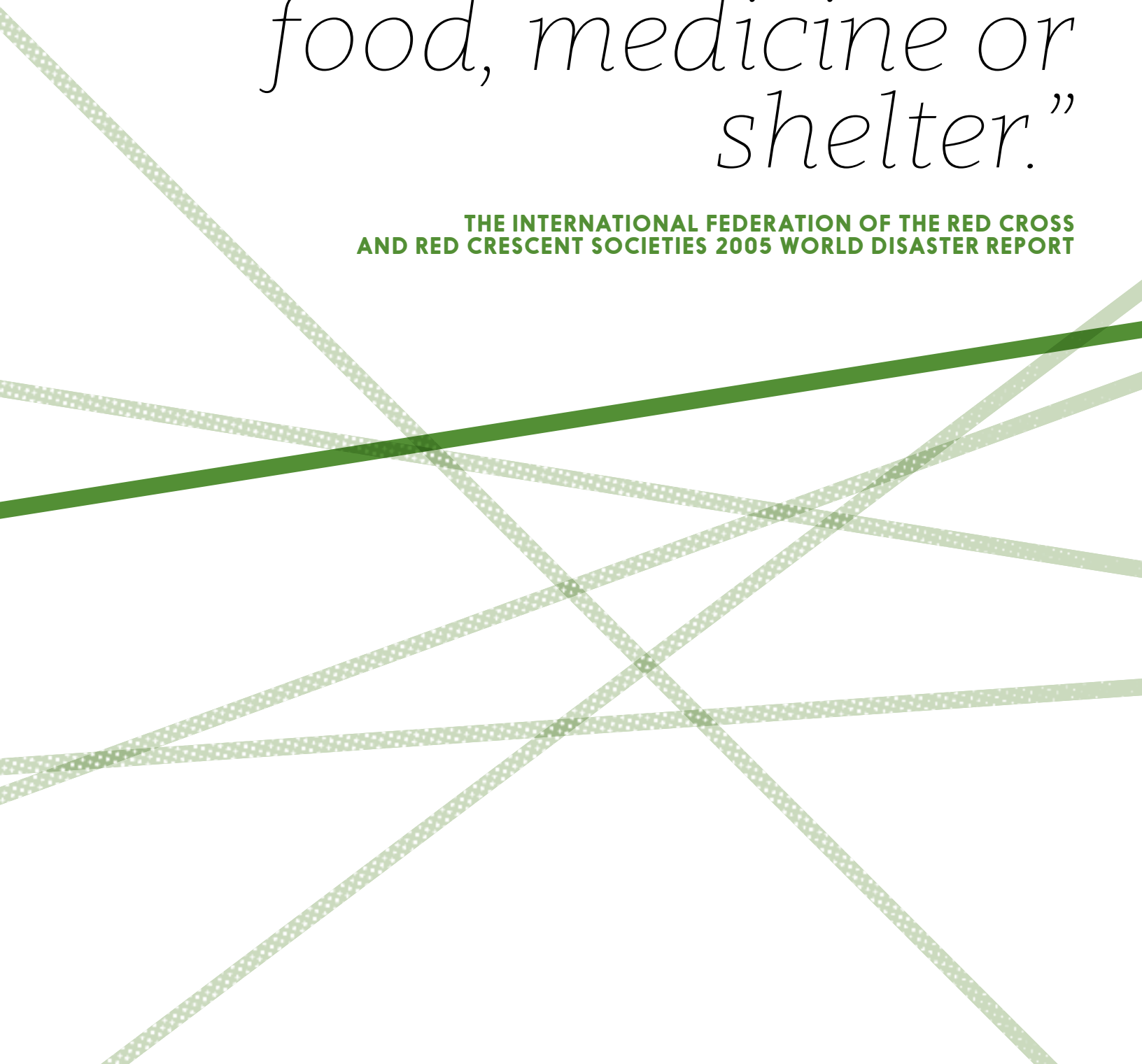
*A Manual for
Trainers & Journalists
and an Introduction
for Humanitarian
Workers*

MANUAL HANDOUTS



*“People need
information as
much as water,
food, medicine or
shelter.”*

**THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE RED CROSS
AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES 2005 WORLD DISASTER REPORT**



ABOUT INTERNEWS

Internews is an international non-profit organization whose mission is to empower local media worldwide to give people the news and information they need, the ability to connect, and the means to make their voices heard.

Internews provides communities the resources to produce local news and information with integrity and independence. With global expertise and reach, we train both media professionals and citizen journalists, introduce innovative media solutions, increase coverage of vital issues and help establish policies needed for open access to information.

Formed in 1982, Internews is a 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in California. Internews has worked in more than 70 countries, and currently has offices in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North America.

Internews Europe, Internews' sister organization, was created in Paris in 1995 to help developing countries establish and strengthen independent media organizations in order to support freedom of expression and freedom of access to information.

Both Internews and Internews Europe share an objective to save lives and reduce suffering of disaster-affected communities. Working in partnership with local media and aid providers, Internews and Internews Europe aim to fulfill people's right to access information, ask questions, and participate in their own recovery.

This manual was written by Jacobo Quintanilla, Jesse Hardman, Matt Abud, Alison Campbell and Deborah Ensor. Thanks for production assistance to Laura Stein Linda mood and Michael a McGill.

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When disaster strikes: information saves lives

The Internews Humanitarian Media Unit is a global leader in working with humanitarian organizations and local media in emergencies to develop cutting edge tools and strategies for improving communication flows between humanitarian organizations, local media and the people affected by the crisis. In most areas, local media are a logical partner

Men listen to the radio in the refugee community of Janzon (Liberia).

for organizations looking for ways to connect with disaster-affected communities. Yet the relationship between aid organizations and local media is often characterized by mistrust, miscommunication and misunderstanding.

Media has a key role to play in a humanitarian crisis situation, one that goes beyond the simple documentation of a disaster. When populations are struggling for basic needs and rights, media can provide a basic crucial resource, INFORMATION. During a humanitarian crisis local journalists can provide a better understanding of what is happening, what is help is available, and how people can better take care of their families. With the help of reliable, relevant, targeted INFORMATION, people can better survive a major humanitarian crisis and eventually begin to rebuild their lives hazards, and warnings that people can use to help themselves and their families.

Standard coverage of humanitarian situations often reflects the immediacy of modern media, only focusing on the crisis at hand, and not considering a more expansive scenario. But solid reporting on a major incident should include a variety of information,

including history, analysis, educational outreach, personal research, and first-hand accounts. This information should come from a variety of sources and stakeholders, including government, international NGOs, UN agencies, local aid organizations, affected communities and more.

This manual presents a combination of standard, professional reporting techniques for journalists covering humanitarian response scenarios, plus a basic education in and understanding of the humanitarian sector, its architecture, mandates and modus operandi. The goal of the manual and the handouts section is to prepare journalists to cover natural and manmade disasters in a more informed, balanced way, and to show how a utilitarian approach to information content and dissemination can an effective life saver. It is intended to function as both an educational guide that journalists can read and learn from, and as an outline for a workshop focusing on the training of local reporters.

It is Internews hope that this manual will be widely downloaded and prove useful in humanitarian response scenarios around the world, as well as in universities and training institutions.



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INTRODUCTION

Radio Voix de
Ouaddai journalist
Issaka Allafouza
interviews Halam
Hari, a disabled
artisan in
downtown Abeche,
Chad.



Ali Abdi, a journalist who underwent training with Internews, interviews people for a story he is working on to do with Road Traffic Accidents, in Isiolo, Kenya on the 11th May, 2012.

Introduction

Information and communication are key tools for saving lives in an emergency response.¹ They help communities in crisis by allowing them to know what's going on around them, to organise, to coordinate, and to identify sources of support and assistance. Information and communication are also vital for aid organisations in assessing what people need and where, and to tell people how they can best access urgent assistance. Equally important, information and communication function to give communities a say in the events affecting them, to express their needs, to say what is working, and to make suggestions as to how an emergency response can be improved.

Local media play a critical role in bringing important information to communities affected by disaster. Local media outlets are known and trusted by the communities they serve; local journalists in turn understand the needs of their own communities and know where to go – and whom to talk to – to find out what is going on. They can also ensure that community voices are raised on critical concerns.

However, reporting on an emergency response is not like ordinary reporting. Time is short; the situation is urgent and often chaotic. Local media organisations and journalists themselves may well be affected by the disaster, looking for relatives and friends and seeking help.

Emergency responses often involve large international and national aid organisations and government agencies with their own operational and communication systems with which local media are unfamiliar. This is an enormous challenge that often creates serious obstacles to good information and communication and can make it much harder for an emergency response to be as effective as possible. Information and communication save lives; poor information or ineffective communication put those lives at risk.

The roles of local media and international media in an emergency response, while they overlap in some areas, are for the most part radically different. International media serve international awareness, telling audiences across the world what has happened and what the impact has been on the local population. Pictures and testimonies from the ground thus help aid organisations to raise the profile of the crisis and to garner funding for the response effort. There are

¹ See 'Case Studies', under '7. Humanitarian Response Reporting – Overview and Summary' for examples of this in action.



many studies and commentaries on how well, or how poorly, international media fulfil this role.

Local media, in contrast, must meet the immediate, detailed information needs of local audiences – the very people who have been affected by the emergency, including neighbouring communities close enough to deliver immediate help. Where local media perform this role effectively, they can save lives and help local recovery take place much faster.

Internews' *Humanitarian Reporting Manual* targets the need for timely and effective local reporting in crisis and response scenarios. The manual provides a ready-made training program through which journalism trainers can get local reporters up to speed on key humanitarian issues and support the critical roles they must play for their communities.

This manual also outlines and explores common systems involved in humanitarian response efforts and provides the tools and references needed to research local variations in those systems. Plus it provides key reference documents and questions to help local media do their jobs and support their communities in the best way they can.

Manual Structure

The manual is divided into three parts:

- ▶ **Section I: Information Saves Lives – Defining Humanitarian Response Reporting** looks at the roles and challenges facing local journalists in a humanitarian response. It emphasises placing affected communities at the centre of reporting on a crisis.
- ▶ **Section II: What Happens in a Humanitarian Response?** includes overviews of international humanitarian systems and mandates and national humanitarian responses. This section gives journalists the frameworks and definitions needed to cover an emergency response. These technical aspects require some adaptation to the appropriate level for training participants; additional introductory notes in this section suggest ways of achieving this.
- ▶ **Section III: In the Field** brings together a range of practical skills and strategies for journalists, including basic journalism skills, strategies for impact, dealing with trauma (affecting both communities and journalists), and journalist safety and security.

Sections I and II are designed to be delivered in totality. The topics in Part III can be delivered individually depending on trainees' needs, local context, and other overlapping training programs that may be taking place.

Each section includes trainer notes and class materials, for use by the trainer; and *Manual Handouts*, for use by trainees and other practising journalists. See below for details on how this material is intended for use.

How to Use This Manual

Humanitarian crises and emergency responses take place in a vast range of contexts: in media-rich locations and in those with extremely limited media and communication infrastructure; in poor societies and rich ones; in capital cities and isolated rural areas. This means that from one emergency to another, both information and communication needs will vary widely; and so will the skills and support needs of local media.

Humanitarian reporting training will also occur in widely differing circumstances. Local media personnel may include experienced reporters who need little more than a better understanding of humanitarian principles and aid delivery systems, or inexperienced journalists who still need to improve basic reporting practice. Training may take place away from the immediate disaster zone, for example in a capital city with good communications and resources, or it may need delivery inside the disaster-hit area itself, where access to electricity and other resources could be difficult.

For these reasons, Internews' *Humanitarian Reporting Module* aims to be as flexible as possible. It is not a rigid course to be implemented in uniform sequence regardless of context. Instead, it is a *structured resource template*, covering key issues, core knowledge, and essential themes. The manual has been developed through extensive work in several emergency disaster responses and is designed primarily *to be adapted to local circumstances*.

Internews does not envisage that every single class exercise will be delivered in every training session or that all reference material will be relevant in all cases.



Rather, this manual relies upon skilled trainers who are familiar with the needs and issues of reporters on the ground, and with humanitarian principles and systems, and who will be able to adapt the material as needed. This means the trainer may omit exercises or reference materials if they are not relevant or add others if necessary.

Notes to Trainers

Each section includes trainer notes and class materials, for use by the trainer in course delivery. These include a rundown of key issues and concepts to highlight; a repertoire of class exercises to choose from (or adapt), and a selection of support materials to deliver with some of these exercises.

Each section also includes *Manual Handouts* that correspond to the trainer notes and are distributed to participants.

Each section is divided into delivery modules. Each module deals with a particular issue that journalists need to understand and engage with for effective humanitarian reporting practice. Each module leads



with a summary of the key points the training needs to teach participants.

Each module provides a selection of class *exercises* to deliver this material. These exercises are a repertoire, not a requirement. The trainer will choose which exercise(s) deliver the material most effectively to the participants. If needed, the trainer can adapt an exercise or introduce her own material.

Each *exercise* includes an outline of material or equipment needed for its delivery. This allows trainers to quickly check whether the equipment is accessible or not, and so help support efficient exercise selection and preparation. For example, an exercise that requires a projector is inappropriate for training that takes place in a location with poor electricity.

Some exercises employ class materials specific for their delivery (for example photos or scenarios for use in role-plays). These are included at the end of their respective module and can be adapted or changed as the trainer sees fit.

As noted, the issues and facts taught in each module correspond to specific *Manual Handouts*, which is

the essential content of the *Humanitarian Reporting Manual*. The handouts are distributed to participants at the end of each training session, providing a complete permanent reference on the issues, concepts, and facts covered in the training. The manual suggests distributing handouts at the end of an exercise, not at the beginning, in order to support more effective learning outcomes. Without prior access to reference materials, participants must engage with the questions and issues outlined in each module based on their own experience. This allows participants to test their assumptions, make mistakes, teach one another, and engage with the issues at hand. Crucially, this approach avoids participants accessing reference material ahead of time to learn concepts or facts by rote and repeat 'what the trainer wants to hear'.

While the *Manual Handouts* are designed to be as broad and accessible as possible, they cannot cover the full range of emergency response contexts. Yet rewriting an entire volume for local contexts is impractical. Distributing this material as handouts means trainers can adapt, include, or omit individual handouts to meet the needs of specific trainings by editing them in soft copy before printing. *However, this does not mean that core issues can be skipped; the content goals of each*

module still need to be delivered. The handout method simply provides a way to do this as effectively and flexibly as possible.

The *Manual Handouts* can also be used to generate further discussion in class and for homework as consolidation reading or to answer test questions.

Complementary training resources that support or overlap with those in this manual, particularly for Part III, are listed under the Appendices (page 160).

In summary, three points need emphasis:

- ▶ *The exercises provided here are a repertoire, not a program.* It is neither possible nor desirable to deliver all the exercises below. Internews has provided *a number of exercises to choose from to fit each context*, recognizing the range of circumstances under which this manual will be delivered. Trainers are encouraged to use and develop their own exercises if they can meet manual goals more effectively in any given context.
- ▶ Trainers should therefore *use this manual as a resource to design the best program possible for a given context*, taking into account both the needs of the affected communities and the skill levels of the training participants. A training program may also need to be calibrated for scheduling (e.g., a morning session may cover material from Section II, and an afternoon session may include a field trip from Section III).
- ▶ While there is necessary flexibility in this approach, *the substance of the manual must always be delivered to training participants.* The substance for each module is outlined at the beginning in 'Key Points'. Where appropriate, this substance may be simplified, for example for beginner journalists, but the key points must still be delivered.

Radio Sila journalist Madjihinguem Nguinabe, 29, interviews a doctor at a free clinic in Gouroukoun IDP camp, near Goz Beida, Chad. "I love being a journalist, it's the best job in the world", says Nguinabe, "I will give everything I have, from the training and knowledge, to all my energy and spirit to keep this station running".



How to Use This Manual: Journalists

Ideally, journalists will encounter this manual through direct training. However, it is generally not possible to deliver training to all local journalists covering an emergency response. Journalists not attending training can access the *Manual Handouts* already compiled in a single volume (i.e., not as individual handouts). While this means they will not be able to explore the issues and needs of humanitarian response reporting in the same critical, interactive way as a training event provides, it does provide them with essential facts and concepts that can support their work.



How to Use This Manual: Humanitarian Aid Workers

In an emergency response, lifesaving information and communication are not just the responsibility of local media. Humanitarian aid organisations can use the manual to better understand the importance of a collaborative approach that involves both local media and humanitarian organizations in efforts to provide affected communities with the information they need to cope in crisis situations.

The humanitarian aid sector is slowly gaining better awareness and practice in this area, but there is still room for great improvement. This includes better awareness of the role of information and communication itself, an understanding of the critical importance of local media in supporting this role, and an appreciation of the constraints and challenges faced by local media in reporting on crisis.

The relationship between humanitarian aid organisations and local media varies widely in different scenarios, from close collaboration on shared mandates (in rare cases), to mutual ignorance or misunderstanding of each other's work (which is more common), to outright hostility and suspicion, particularly in locations where disasters take place within a political conflict.

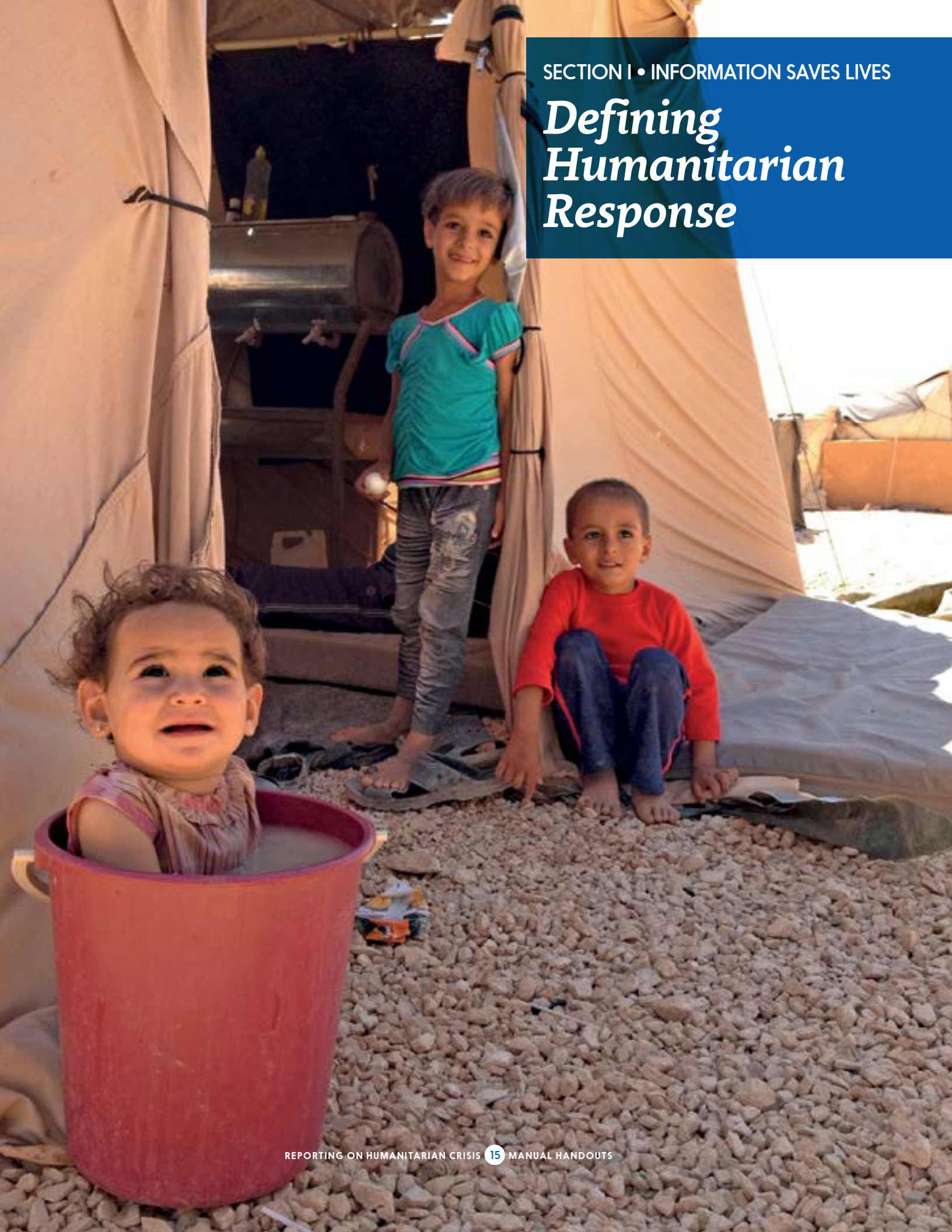
In many cases where collaboration or sharing does not take place, it is simply because media personnel and humanitarian workers simply do not understand each other's work and imperatives and do not have established channels through which they can communicate. Several exercises in this manual seek to actively bridge this gap by providing sessions for humanitarian organisations to meet and exchange with journalists. Aid organisations that participate in these sessions are actively supporting the role of local media in a disaster response, and so supporting better information and communication that can save lives.

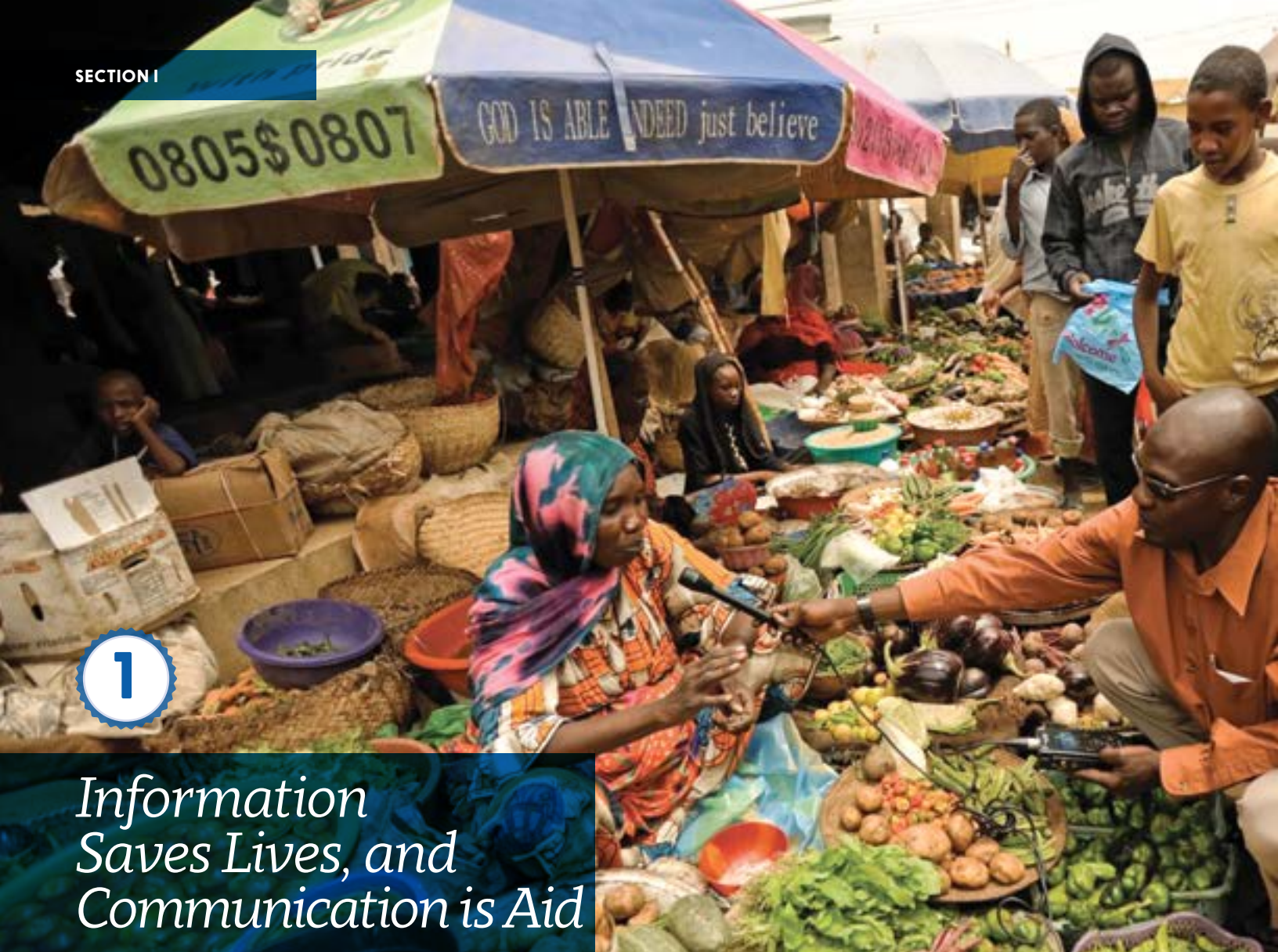
Beyond participating in training sessions, the material contained in this manual, with its overview of humanitarian reporting, provides humanitarian workers with a baseline understanding of the issues local media confront, in order to encourage collaboration between humanitarian and local media actors.

Internews Request for Feedback

The notes provided in this manual are not a set of directions. They aim to offer the minimum tools needed to deliver good training in circumstances where there often simply isn't time or the possibility to develop locally relevant courses from scratch. For all trainers who use this manual, your feedback is important to Internews and is critical for improving this resource. Please do send comments, observations, and recommendations on working with interpreters, extra training exercises, further reference material, and anything else to: jquintanilla@internews.org

Defining Humanitarian Response





1

Information Saves Lives, and Communication is Aid

Internews has leading expertise in the field of exchanging information and communication with affected communities in crisis and emergencies. Along with other like-minded agencies and the network for Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Internews has a substantial body of evidence that work in this field demonstrates the following impacts during times of crisis:

- Saves lives
- Improves humanitarian effectiveness
- Provides vital psychosocial support
- Helps manage community expectations
- Gives affected populations a voice and fulfills people's right to know

► **Saving lives:** In Haiti, Internews conducted “baseline” focus groups for an evaluation of its daily humanitarian radio broadcast, ENDK, in February 2010, about a month after the start of the program. 80% of groups identified ENDK as their main source of news and information, particularly for crisis-related information. In July, when Internews conducted the “end-line” focus groups, 100% of groups indicated that ENDK was their main source of **reliable** news and information. Moreover, they were able to cite specific examples of information they had applied to their lives. Most of these were health- and hygiene-related issues. The application of hygiene rules by the affected population mitigated the onset of any number of critical diseases often found in crisis situations.

‘In terms of programming, the principal, most identifiable, and tangible impact of USAID/OTI’s



Radio Voix de Ouaddai journalist, Abdel-Bagui Mahamat, interviews a street market vendor while working on a story about rising food prices in downtown Abeche, Chad.

investment in Internews is clearly the effect of the news program Enfomasyon Nou Dwe Konnen (ENDK). It is evident from the evaluation, as well as Internews' own research, that the creation of ENDK was vital to ensuring affected populations had access to timely and essential information to help them survive the aftermath of the earthquake. More recently, as priorities have shifted from emergency to reconstruction, ENDK has taken steps to keep up with listener needs, based on Internews research results, and begun to provide information more relevant to the recovery process.'
Terry Thielen, independent evaluator, OTI/ USAID Haiti

► **Improving humanitarian effectiveness:** In humanitarian disasters, people affected by the unfolding

tragedy need more than physical necessities: They also have an urgent need for information. In the wake of crises, from earthquakes to armed conflicts, survival can depend on knowing the answers to critical questions: Is it safe to go back home? What is the extent of the damage? Should I stay with my family or go for help? Where can I get clean water? Where is the nearest health facility?

"Lifeline [Internews' Humanitarian Information Service in Sri Lanka, 2008-2010] is filling a need that we had recognized before the inception of the programme; by providing specific information on displaced people's needs, requirements and administrative barriers, Lifeline is filling a critical information gap." **Gordon Weiss**, UN spokesman in Sri Lanka

► **Providing vital psychological support:** The Eastern Chad Humanitarian Information Service provided an important space for women suffering from sexual violence to air their trauma in culturally sensitive ways, accompanied by the broadcast of information that corrected misconceptions and rumours.

'Our protection/community services section works regularly with the Internews reporters: whether it be by responding to questions on our activities in recorded interviews or by addressing the refugee population through the radio network. Internews has proven very helpful in providing information on programmes and activities in the camps and thus helping to curb wrongful rumours and disinformation. The reporters have also helped us address specific issues related to sexual and gender-based violence through local news messages and campaigns. We need this service.' **Claude Vadenboncoeur**, UNHCR protection officer in Abéché, Eastern Chad

► **Managing community expectations:** Local Internews-trained reporters in flood-affected Punjab and Sindh provided a vital bridge between the humanitarian community and the international relief operation that was unable to meet the needs of the millions affected by the floods.

‘There was almost a consensus from both listeners and humanitarian organization respondents [in Pakistan], that information provided by radio reports was useful and helped flood-affected people manage their situation better. Respondents from humanitarian organizations, in particular, also found the information useful as it helped them mobilize assistance in complicated political situations.’

Ana Margarita Tenorio, independent evaluator on behalf of UNOCHA

► **Giving affected populations a voice and fulfilling people’s right to know:** Without genuine participation, communities cannot ask questions or make informed decisions, they cannot access information and they cannot inform, guide or direct those services supposedly intended to relieve and support them. Ultimately they are left further disempowered.

‘If the radio stopped operating at the moment, I think it would leave the community in the darkness.... They will be in the darkness.’ **Focus group participant** Malualkon, South Sudan

Internews is one of the founding members of the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network (www.cdacnetwork.org), a groundbreaking, cross-sector initiative between aid agencies, UN organizations, the Red Cross movement, media development organizations, and technology providers that recognises information and two-way communication as key humanitarian deliverables.



communicating with disaster affected communities

CDAC Network members believe that information and communication exchange with people affected by crisis are essential life-saving interventions, key to helping people take greater ownership of their own recovery, and critical to accountability and genuine participation.

CDAC Network members believe that communication is aid – see this two-minute animation produced by the infoasaid project (www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6bB0y8DdYY), a DFID-funded joint venture of Internews and BBC Media Actions

Current full members of the CDAC Network are BBC Media Action; International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); International Media Support (IMS); International Organization for Migration (IOM); Internews; Merlin; the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA); Plan UK; Save the Children; the Thomson Reuters Foundation; and World Vision International.

2

Disaster-Affected Communities

Radio Voix de Ouaddai journalist Issaka Allafouza, 29, interviews a woman that had taken her baby to a free clinic in Abougoudam, a village of Chadian Arab nomads in a remote area of Eastern Chad several hours away from Abeche.

TAKEAWAY 3

- ▶ **Disaster-affected communities are at the centre** of our understanding of humanitarian crisis response. This includes a focus on what aid communities need but, crucially, also an emphasis on communities' own resilience and responses.
 - ▶ **Information is crucial for disaster-affected communities** in a crisis situation. This is true before the crisis takes place, so that people know what to expect and can prepare for it; during the crisis, so that they can make the best decisions to protect the safety and wellbeing of themselves and their families; and when the initial crisis passes, so that they can find out how to rebuild their lives and communities.
 - ▶ **Community members need to tell their own stories.** This is important so that they know they are heard and can say what they need, and what they think, in their own voices. This is vital for several reasons: as a means to affirm the dignity of those affected, to promote accountability for aid efforts on the ground, and to support empathy from audiences outside the crisis area.
 - ▶ **Local journalists have a crucial role** in all of these processes that support communities' own resilience and responses. Information is key for communities to meet their own needs and to give feedback to those providing assistance.
- To do this, journalists need to understand the following:
- ▶ *Who and where the communities affected by the humanitarian crisis are.*
 - ▶ *How communities are responding to the crisis themselves.*
 - ▶ *What help communities are getting from outside, and from whom they are getting it. This includes help from neighbouring communities, from the government, from national and international organisations, and so on.*
 - ▶ *How well the media (local and international) are covering this issue.*
 - ▶ *What affected communities need, and what they need **from journalists**.*

Key Concepts in Humanitarian Response

Definition of Humanitarian Crisis and Humanitarian Response

What is a humanitarian crisis?

In practice, there are many different definitions of a 'humanitarian crisis'. People will disagree whether it is accurate or not to give certain situations this description. Sometimes this is because of genuine disagreement about what is taking place. Sometimes it is because calling a situation a 'humanitarian crisis' implies that action needs to be taken, and for various reasons some interest groups may not want to do this.²

But the broad understanding is fairly clear.

² For example, donor governments may not want to commit resources to resolving a humanitarian crisis; national governments may not want to allow humanitarian organisations into part of their territory and will feel pressure to do so if a crisis is declared; and so on.

The online collaborative encyclopaedia Wikipedia defines a humanitarian crisis this way:

"[A]n event or series of events which represents a critical threat to the health, safety, security or wellbeing of a community or other large group of people, usually over a wide area." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Humanitarian_crisis).

From the Oxford Dictionary, the following definitions apply:

humanitarian: Concerned with or seeking to promote human welfare

crisis: 1. A time of intense difficulty or danger.

This is Internews' definition of a humanitarian crisis for the purposes of this manual:

A 'humanitarian crisis' is a situation with high levels of human suffering in which basic human welfare is in danger on a large scale.

There are many possible causes of humanitarian crises. Two of the most common categories used within the humanitarian sector to describe types of crises are natural disasters and complex emergencies, or ‘conflict-generated emergencies’.

Key Definitions: Natural Disasters

What is a ‘natural disaster’?

For many of us, the definition of a ‘natural disaster’ appears clear. An earthquake, a flood, a forest fire, or a hurricane all generally fit the common understanding of a natural disaster.

However, the humanitarian sector also uses more precise definitions.

A dramatic natural event that doesn’t affect people is not a disaster: for example, a forest fire that burns away from human beings or a hurricane in the open sea where no one is travelling. A natural disaster is an event that impacts people.

A dramatic natural event that affects people, but which they can manage on their own, is also not a disaster. A flood that passes through a town, but causes damage that the community can repair on its own, is not a disaster. A natural disaster is one that is too big for local people to manage by themselves.

The IFRC has its own definition of disaster:³

“A disaster is a sudden, calamitous event that seriously disrupts the functioning of a community or society and causes human,

material, and economic or environmental losses that exceed the community’s or society’s ability to cope using its own resources. Though often caused by nature, disasters can have human origins.”

Dramatic natural events, like earthquakes or hurricanes, are dangers or hazards that can occur almost anytime. According to the IFRC,⁴ there are different types of hazards:

Natural hazards are naturally occurring physical phenomena caused either by rapid or slow-onset events, which can be geophysical (earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis, and volcanic activity), hydrological (avalanches and floods), ‘climatological’ (extreme temperatures, drought, and wildfires), meteorological (cyclones and storm waves/surges), or biological (disease epidemics and insect/animal plagues).

Technological or man-made hazards are events that are caused by humans and occur in or close to human settlements. They include complex emergencies/conflicts, famine, displaced populations, industrial accidents, and transport accidents. (Although not included in the IFRC list, sudden price rises in essential goods, like the global food price rises in 2008, may also be added here, caused by financial factors rather than a reflection of overall food supply.)

A range of challenges,⁵ such as **climate change, unplanned urbanization,**

³ For a definition of disaster, see www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/about-disasters/what-is-a-disaster/.

⁴ For a definition of hazard, see www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/about-disasters/definition-of-hazard/. Further definitions of specific natural and man-made hazards noted here can be found on the same site.

⁵ For further definitions of these issues, see <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/about-disasters/aggravating-factors/>.

underdevelopment, and the threat of pandemics, will shape humanitarian assistance in the future. These aggravating factors will result in increased frequency, complexity and severity of disasters.

People or communities that cannot save themselves from hazards – because they are trapped in a dangerous area, or because they are too poor to take sufficient measures to protect themselves – are vulnerable.⁶ For the IFRC, therefore:

“A disaster occurs when a hazard impacts on vulnerable people. The combination of hazards, vulnerability, and inability to reduce the potential negative consequences of risk results in disaster.”

This is an important definition, because it shows that it's not just nature that creates disaster. The strength of a community or society is the other half of this danger. A community with good resources, strong buildings to resist earthquakes, warning systems to sound the alarm for hurricanes, and so on is *less vulnerable* and so less likely to suffer a 'natural disaster'.

Whether an event is a natural disaster or not depends on *whether it affects people, and if people have the ability to respond to it by themselves*.



Key Definitions: Complex Emergencies

What is a 'complex emergency'?

Complex emergencies need more careful definition. They may include a natural disaster. But they also involve human conflict that makes a humanitarian crisis much worse – and as the name indicates, more complicated.

The United Nations' Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) uses this definition:

“[A complex emergency is] a humanitarian crisis in a country, region, or society where there is total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international

⁶ For a definition of vulnerability, see also <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/about-disasters/what-is-a-disaster/what-is-vulnerability/>.



response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing United Nations country program.”⁷

The IFRC has also developed its own definition,⁸ building on that of the IASC:

“Some disasters can result from several different hazards or, more often, to a complex

⁷ This definition was used by the IASC in its 1994 ‘Working Paper on Definition of Complex Emergencies’, and reused in its 2003 ‘Glossary of Humanitarian Terms’ (Keen, 2008). Keen, a leading academic in the field, also discusses the definition in the Introduction to his 2008 book, *Complex Emergencies*: ‘But what is a “complex emergency”? The term is employed here in accordance with common usage in the aid world, which is to say that complex emergencies are humanitarian crises that are linked with large-scale violent conflict – civil war, ethnic cleansing, and genocide... Complex emergencies are ‘conflict-generated emergencies’ (Macrae and Zwi, *War and Hunger*, 2004). Complex emergencies should be distinguished from natural disasters – that is, from disasters caused primarily by drought, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, tidal waves or some other force of nature. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has emphasised that complex emergencies are linked to ‘internal or external conflict’.”

⁸ See www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/about-disasters/definition-of-hazard/complex-emergencies/.



combination of both natural and man-made causes and different causes of vulnerability. Food insecurity, epidemics, conflicts, and displaced populations are examples.”

Such complex emergencies are typically characterised by the following:

- Extensive violence and loss of life
- Displacements of populations
- Widespread damage to societies and economies
- The need for large-scale, multifaceted humanitarian assistance
- The hindrance or prevention of humanitarian assistance by political and military constraints
- Significant security risks for humanitarian relief workers in some areas

Key Definitions: Other Types of Humanitarian Crisis

What are some other types of humanitarian crisis?

Natural disasters and complex emergencies are the types of humanitarian crisis that the international humanitarian sector has defined as the situations within which it operates. However, there are other types of humanitarian crisis that are less clearly defined. They can include the following:

- *Industrial accidents*
- *Environmental destruction/climate change*
- *Health crises*
- *Crime and social violence*
- *Severe poverty*

Below are examples of natural disasters and complex emergencies that included an extensive international humanitarian response:

- *Natural disasters*
 - ▶ *Asian tsunami, 2004*
 - ▶ *Hurricane Katrina, 2004*
 - ▶ *Haiti earthquake, 2010*
 - ▶ *Pakistan floods, 2010*
- *Complex emergencies*
 - ▶ *Rwandan genocide, 1994*
 - ▶ *Sri Lanka civil war, 1970s/1983-2009*
 - ▶ *Darfur civil war, Sudan, 2003*
 - ▶ *Somali famine: famine, civil war, international conflict, 2011*

But there are many humanitarian crises that did *not* have the same kind of humanitarian response, although they may have had other responses (such as public health, law and order, and other initiatives):

- *Other crises with humanitarian suffering*
 - ▶ *HIV/AIDS epidemic, ongoing (health)*
 - ▶ *Bhopal gas tragedy, 1984 (industrial accident)*
 - ▶ *Mexico drug war, ongoing (crime)*
 - ▶ *Food prices crisis 2008 (financial)*

Definitions can be complicated!

Much of the Horn of Africa has suffered from drought in recent years, including Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Kenya. But Somalia's 2011 famine involved drought, a civil war, and international engagement in that conflict, including peacekeepers and the Kenyan military. It was both a natural event and a conflict, which makes it a complex emergency.

The Asian tsunami impacted Sri Lanka during a ceasefire but before the civil war was over. The politics

A refugee shows her UNHCR wristband. "This is not life. No homes. No water. No toilet...nothing. Only a wristband...and that is not a life" said Abdi Hassan Isaack, a Muslim religious leader organizing aid distribution refugees living in the overflow areas of Hagadera refugee camp.



of the cease-fire affected the tsunami response, but because humanitarian aid still flowed at that time, it was not described as a complex emergency. When the cease-fire failed and large-scale fighting began again, the conflict then became a complex emergency.

Possible discussion question:

- ▶ What other natural disasters can you think of that became a crisis partly because of conflict? Can you describe them all as complex emergencies?

Some natural disasters are relatively 'straightforward' single events, such as the Haiti earthquake. For others, longer-term causes may underpin the event, such as the role of climate change many highlight in the 2010 Pakistan floods.

Possible discussion question:

- ▶ Are there some humanitarian crises that you think should be recognised as having more than one cause, and maybe should have more than one definition?

Definitions, Limitations, and This Manual

Why definitions are important: The limitations of this Humanitarian Reporting Manual

Humanitarian crises are usually understood as rapid events, whether that be a natural disaster or the outbreak of war in a complex emergency. These often lead to an emergency humanitarian crisis response, mobilising aid organisations to deliver emergency aid and assistance to those in need.

This manual aims to help train local journalists to report on that humanitarian response. A humanitarian response has specific problems and contexts that journalists need to understand so that

they can report effectively and, by doing that, support their communities.

But this manual does not cover reporting on humanitarian crises that do not have a humanitarian response.

We have listed just a few examples of situations that can cause great humanitarian suffering, but which are not defined by humanitarian organisations as 'natural disasters' or 'complex emergencies'.⁹ Crucially, these situations do not usually result in an emergency humanitarian response.

This is simply a matter of practicality. This manual cannot possibly aim to support reporting on all kinds of humanitarian suffering. The range of contexts – between environmental destruction, health crises, ethnic conflict, and so on – is just too broad to be included in one training resource.

It is important for you to be aware of this limitation. If later in your career you also have to report on humanitarian crises that do not have an emergency humanitarian response, you will also need to find ways to report on that effectively. This is just as important for serving your community as reporting on an emergency humanitarian response.

Some other specialist journalism training can support you here, including environmental journalism, health journalism, development journalism; and, in conflict situations, conflict-sensitive journalism. In some contexts, these will overlap with humanitarian reporting, which specifically deals with a humanitarian response; in other contexts they will not.

9 For example, UNOCHA includes industrial and technological disasters under environmental emergencies: <http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/coordination-tools/environmental-emergencies>.



Hundreds of people fleeing drought, famine and a civil war in Somalia wait in line at dawn to register at Ifo refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya. According to the United Nations, 3.7 million Somalis are in crisis.

Crisis, Vulnerability, and Long-Term Causes

What about examples of humanitarian suffering that don't get an emergency humanitarian response?

We have seen that some causes of humanitarian suffering, especially sudden events, lead to an emergency humanitarian response, while other causes often do not. This is a limitation and, in many ways, a contradiction within the humanitarian mandate.

In addition, even when a sudden event causes suffering, people's *vulnerability* to a humanitarian crisis is present before that event and is often caused by poverty and a lack of resources. Poverty is usually seen as a 'development' problem; a natural disaster or a sudden conflict is usually seen as a 'humanitarian' problem. In fact, the lines between them are not so clear.

While some organisations do some work both in development and in humanitarian response, the humanitarian sector so far simply doesn't have the systems, the resources, or the definitions to respond to

all of these situations. More and more humanitarian organisations are also starting to think about these contradictions. However, they are still a long way from developing a clear and consistent position.

Possible discussion questions:

- ▶ When comparing humanitarian crises and development needs, many people talk about 'shock-driven' events and about underlying causes. What is the difference between these two issues? In the crisis in your country, what events and what underlying causes can you identify?
- ▶ Apart from the crisis at the heart of the immediate humanitarian response, are there other 'crises' in your country, or in neighbouring countries, which you can also identify? What are they?
- ▶ What do people mean when they talk about 'development contexts'?
- ▶ Do you agree that when we talk about humanitarian suffering, crisis contexts and development contexts should be considered the same? What are some of the difficulties with this?

Connecting Humanitarian and Development Needs

Several organisations are grappling with how to include development needs within a humanitarian framework. The United Nation's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) is one of these organisations. Below is an example of the debate from their point of view (all italics have been added).

UNOCHA Thematic Areas: Humanitarian Development Nexus¹⁰, from shock-driven to a more predictable response system

With the confluence of many global challenges, such as climate change, financial and food price crises, population growth and urbanization, humanitarian, peace building and development actors are increasingly joining efforts to find sustainable solutions *that address the underlying causes* as well as carrying out their specific mandates.

Water scarcity in Yemen and energy insecurity in Central Asia demonstrate how interconnected global challenges can drive humanitarian vulnerabilities in different parts of the world. The global food crisis, climate change adaptation, and the response to the financial crisis have all demonstrated that *there is no sequencing between humanitarian and development action; in fact, both responses need to be planned simultaneously, the only difference being that some measures require immediate action, while others may take more time.*

Today's humanitarian response system however, is primarily triggered by discernible, "shock-driven" events, for example armed conflicts or sudden-onset

natural disasters. In the context of such events, the acute vulnerabilities and needs of populations surface quickly. *Far less developed at this point are the mechanisms to respond to such populations' humanitarian needs in slow-onset disasters, lower profile or 'forgotten' climate-related crises, including droughts and floods; or more structural crises emanating from global challenges* like the food and financial crises, population growth, and migration.

Nevertheless, the 2010 Secretary-General's Report on Strengthening of the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations¹¹ highlights a gradual paradigm shift. To meet humanitarian needs more equitably and predictably, the humanitarian system is increasingly (albeit not yet consistently) responding to underlying vulnerabilities rather than merely shock-driven stresses. This may include humanitarian needs that arise in situations which have not been declared a 'humanitarian emergency' and even in so-called 'development contexts'.

UNOCHA is working at the policy level to examine how humanitarian processes and tools can be adjusted to identify vulnerabilities of humanitarian concern earlier and provide a more anticipatory response. In many countries, UNOCHA and the humanitarian system are already responding to underlying vulnerabilities in various ways.

For example, following the response to the post-election violence in Kenya in 2009, UNOCHA and partners have been working to map and assess vulnerability in Nairobi's slums in order to inform a response that both addresses urgent needs and underlying, structural challenges. Efforts are now underway to make these kinds of approaches more systematic.

¹⁰ This reference can be found at www.unocha.org/what-we-do/policy/thematic-areas/humanitarian-development-nexus. Other references can be found elsewhere in the UNOCHA site, for example: <http://ochaonline.un.org/ocha2010/framework.html#>.

¹¹ See <http://ochanet.unocha.org/p/Documents/SG%20ECOSOC%20report%20A-64-82%20-%20E-2010-88.pdf>.

TAKEAWAY 3

Definitions in a Humanitarian Crisis Response

- **Humanitarian crises are defined by the size and scale of human suffering they involve.** *Deciding what is and what isn't a humanitarian crisis can be complicated. It's important to understand how this works in order to understand how humanitarian relief efforts operate and are structured.*
- **Humanitarian crises are usually understood as sudden events**, or problems that suddenly reach a critical 'tipping point'. But long-term issues (i.e., protracted crises) **almost always contribute to the suffering** involved by making communities more vulnerable to the events that cause the crisis. The relationship between immediate 'crisis' issues, and contributing long-term 'development' and 'social' issues needs to be understood.
- **Vulnerability** is a critical concept when reporting on a humanitarian crisis and humanitarian response. It is often **partly or predominantly created by long-term problems, including poverty**. This means that humanitarian crisis issues and development issues overlap.
- **A humanitarian response is an urgent, coordinated effort to get emergency aid to crisis-affected communities.** This can include emergency food, medical care, shelter, and so on. A humanitarian response often involves the international humanitarian sector, including the UN, donor governments, and others.
- **A humanitarian crisis is broader than a humanitarian response.** For example, HIV/AIDs, environmental, developmental, and financial forces can all cause humanitarian suffering, but they don't necessarily result in a response by the humanitarian sector.
- The international humanitarian sector identifies **two main types of crises: natural disasters and complex emergencies**. Other situations that can be described as a crisis **do not always easily fit into these definitions**.
- A **natural disaster** is a natural event that impacts on communities' vulnerability. A **complex emergency** is a crisis linked to large-scale violent conflict, and may include civil war, ethnic cleansing, or genocide (i.e., 'conflict-generated emergencies').
- **This module focuses on humanitarian response reporting.** This doesn't mean that humanitarian crisis reporting is less important. But humanitarian response involves a specific context that journalists need to understand in order to work effectively within it.

4

What is Humanitarian Response Reporting?

Reporting Skills and Principles

Humanitarian response reporting relies on the same principles and skills as all reporting. For example, a story aimed at affected communities immediately after a crisis should be able to respond to these questions on the story topic, whether that topic is health care, food aid, shelter, and so on:

- **What** do people need to ensure safety for themselves and their families?
- **Who** is delivering that assistance (i.e., government/humanitarian agencies/others)?
- **Why** is this assistance being delivered in a particular way? (For example, food may be distributed by vouchers, cash may be given for work, women may have separate health services; the reasons are important to understand.)
- **Where** can people seek that assistance?
- **When** can they go and get it?
- And **how** can they get it (e.g., do they need to register, and how do they do that)?

Yes, these are the basics in journalism: the 5 Ws (and 1 H).

All stories need to be *accurate* and *clear*. All facts must be *confirmed*, relevant *sources* must be included, and all details *attributed*. All stories must be relevant to the *target audience* (see 'Know Your Audience' below).

Crucially, stories must also conform to journalistic *ethics*. In a humanitarian crisis, when the situation is urgent and many people are suffering, ethical treatment of stories becomes especially sensitive.

Many journalist associations and media outlets have their own codes of ethics, but in general they overlap.



The Code of Principles of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)¹² is a good example:

There are particular challenges in covering stories where people have been traumatised, something that is very common in humanitarian crises. Some codes of ethics attempt to recognise situations where people are vulnerable and at risk; for example, the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance of Australia,

which also covers journalists, includes in its code the following point:

11. Respect private grief and personal privacy. Journalists have the right to resist compulsion to intrude.¹³

However, this important and sensitive area needs more attention from journalists than it has so far received. The course will look at this in more detail under 'Stress and Trauma' in Section III.

¹² See <http://ethicaljournalisminitiative.org/en/contents/ifj-code-of-principles-on-the-conduct-of-journalism>. There are many other examples available from the same link, such as The New York Times' detailed internal guidelines: nytc.com/pdf/NYT_Ethical_Journalism_0904.pdf.

¹³ See www.alliance.org.au/documents/codeofethics.pdf.

IFJ Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists



(Adopted by 1954 World Congress of the IFJ. Amended by the 1986 World Congress.)

This Declaration is proclaimed as a standard of professional conduct for journalists engaged in gathering, transmitting, disseminating and commenting on news and information in describing events.

One: *Respect for truth and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of the journalist.*

Two: *In pursuance of this duty, the journalist shall at all times defend the principles of freedom in the honest collection and publication of news, and of the right of fair comment and criticism.*

Three: *The journalist shall report only in accordance with facts of which he/she knows the origin. The journalist shall not suppress essential information or falsify documents.*

Four: *The journalist shall use only fair methods to obtain news, photographs and documents.*

Humanitarian Response Reporting and Journalistic Challenges

Journalists face many challenges in their day-to-day work, and these can become even more difficult in a humanitarian crisis response. There is less time, and information is more urgent. Every crisis and every situation is different, so it is impossible to come up with a comprehensive overview of these challenges. But there are several common features that often appear:

- Lack of time to research and the urgency of immediate need. If information isn't covered quickly, it can greatly increase suffering, which differs from a normal situation.
- The consequences of getting something wrong. If information is incorrect – for example, by saying that floodwaters won't reach the town when they will, or giving an incorrect location for food distribution – this can also increase suffering.
- Rapidly changing situations, which make it difficult to stay up to date.
- The dangers of rumours, which can create panic and fear.
- Lack of community access to media and other information sources.
- Lack of access to sources, including isolated communities, international actors, and so on
- Trauma of communities and individuals, which requires greater sensitivity – and often more time – to treat people respectfully while working on a report.
- Trauma and exhaustion of the journalists themselves, especially if they're also worried about their own families and communities.

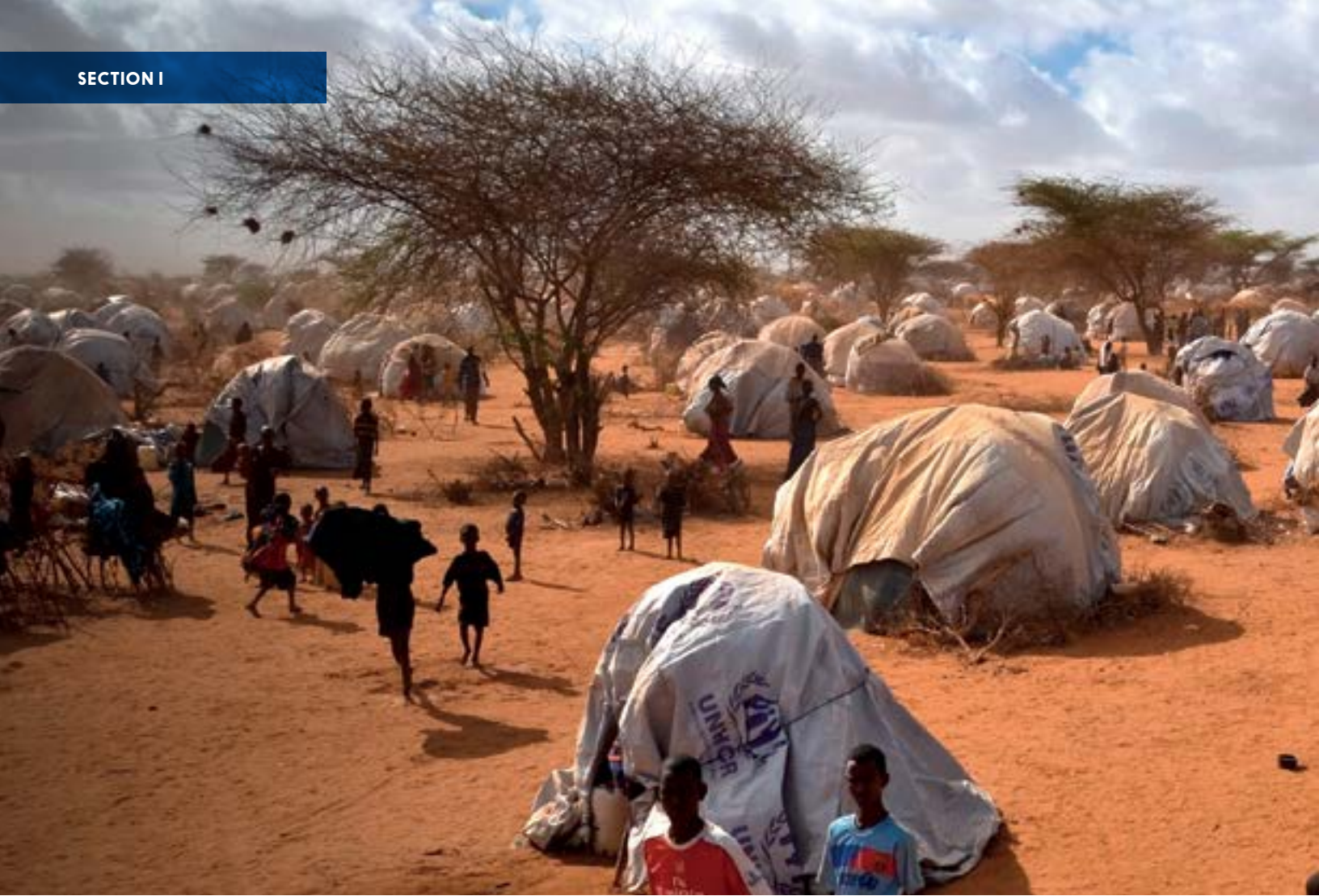
Five: *The journalist shall do the utmost to rectify any published information which is found to be harmfully inaccurate.*

Six: *The journalist shall observe professional secrecy regarding the source of information obtained in confidence.*

Seven: *The journalist shall be aware of the danger of discrimination being furthered by the media, and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discrimination based on, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origins.*

Eight: *The journalist shall regard as grave professional offences the following: plagiarism; malicious misrepresentation; calumny, slander, libel, and unfounded accusations; acceptance of a bribe in any form in consideration of publication or suppression.*

Nine: *Journalists worthy of the name shall deem it their duty to observe faithfully the principles stated above. Within the general law of each country the journalist shall recognise in professional matters the jurisdiction of colleagues only, to the exclusion of every kind of interference by governments or others.*



- *Security and safety of the journalist, especially in conflict scenarios. In some situations journalists may be specifically targeted.*
- *Lack of familiarity and contact with humanitarian actors, especially newly arrived international organisations and individuals often working in different languages and different operational systems from those used nationally.*

Possible discussion questions:

- ▶ What other challenges do you think journalists can face when reporting on a humanitarian crisis response?
- ▶ Are there any particular challenges in the crisis in your own country?

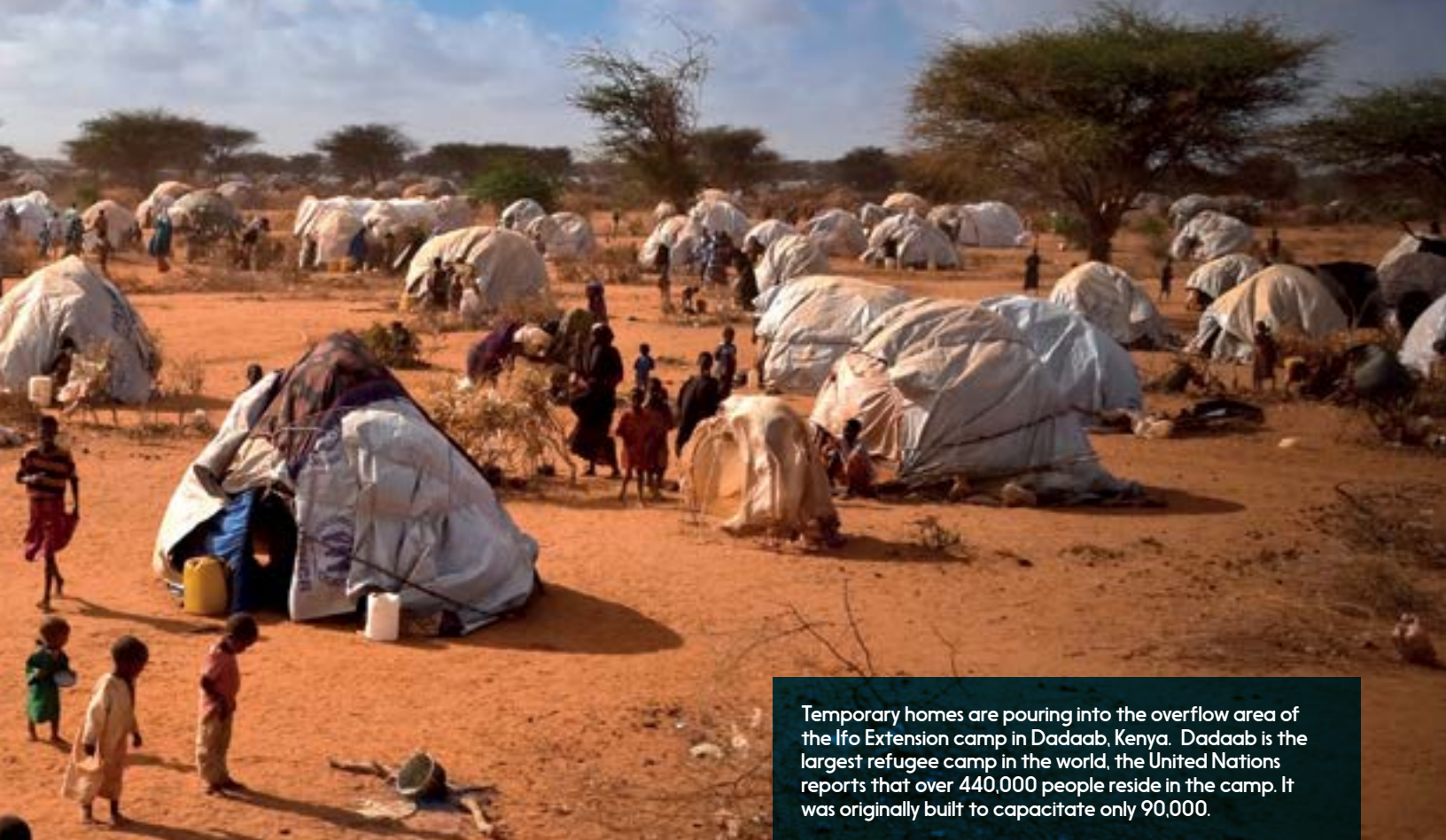
So, while humanitarian response reporting uses the same skills and techniques as conventional journalism,

sometimes the situations within which you have to work are very different.

A Question of Trust

Local media and humanitarian organisations – especially international organisations – frequently know very little about each other. Partly as a result of this, there is often a lack of trust between them. This is explored and developed throughout the course, including by inviting humanitarian organisation speakers, conducting mentored field visits, and so on. This early discussion aims to help lay the groundwork for this improved interaction. The discussion should be framed by the following observations:

Often humanitarian agencies do not approach local media to seek out potential areas for collaboration.



Temporary homes are pouring into the overflow area of the Ifo Extension camp in Dadaab, Kenya. Dadaab is the largest refugee camp in the world, the United Nations reports that over 440,000 people reside in the camp. It was originally built to capacitate only 90,000.

If there is any potential for controversy in the local context (even a controversy that is more ‘perceived’ than ‘real’), local media may even be considered a threat by humanitarians. Local media, on the other hand, are often suspicious of the motives and efficacy of humanitarian organisations, without necessarily understanding their mandates, roles, and limitations, and sometimes attribute cynical or political motives to their activity.

As a result, local media and local journalists are often greatly underutilised in a humanitarian response. This means information and communication that needs to take place often does not happen, which increases community suffering.

Local media need to be given the recognition and support they need to become fundamental players in humanitarian response, reconstruction, and community development.

Case Study: Central African Republic

Many of these issues were highlighted in an Internews survey that looked at the existing relationship between humanitarian organizations and local media in the Central African Republic.¹⁴ It starkly reflects a longstanding distrust between humanitarian organizations and the local media.

Media: Resources and Credibility

Humanitarian organisations see the local media environment as bleak. There are just a handful of

¹⁴ This was part of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for a six-month project funded by the Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF) in 2012, Integrating Local Media and ICTs into Humanitarian Response in Central African Republic (CAR). See www.humanitarianinnovation.org/blog/internews/pvinct. The final report was based on 17 interviews with humanitarians and 26 interviews with local reporters; see www.internews.org/research-publications/addressing-mistrust-between-humanitarians-and-local-media.

media in CAR, and while community radios are emerging throughout the country, most media remain predominantly in the capital, Bangui. Humanitarian representatives emphasised the ‘lack of credibility’ and spread of ‘unverified information’ in the media, as well as frequent ‘bias’, and the ‘lack of depth and analysis’ in reporting. They also pointed to the ‘monetization’ of news coverage, with coverage being bought (if not fully produced) by humanitarian organisations themselves, which distorts media coverage. More than half of those interviewed rated the media as either ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’.

Journalists, on the other hand, acknowledged that their lack of resources was an impediment to conducting basic fact-checking and verification. However they also emphasised the ‘lack of responsiveness of humanitarian representatives’ as a key challenge in their news gathering. Over half the journalists consulted identified humanitarian representatives’ ‘lack of responsiveness and willingness to communicate’ as the main constraint to working more closely with humanitarian agencies. According to journalists, when humanitarians contact them, it is mostly to get coverage of specific events or to conduct awareness campaigns. As one journalist puts it: *‘They are only interested in their own publicity, but fear critical coverage’*.

Nonetheless, 16 of the 26 journalists interviewed listed humanitarian agencies as among their key sources of information. However, this information flow was not two-way, with humanitarian organisations saying they primarily rely on information from communities, collected through their own projects.

TAKEAWAY 4

Humanitarian Response Reporting

- *Relevant, accurate, and well-targeted information saves lives, reduces suffering, and can improve the quality and accountability of aid efforts. Bad or late information can lead to lives being lost or suffering increasing.*
- *This gives local media a crucial mandate to serve communities in a humanitarian response. It means the basic skills of reporting – accuracy, clarity, sources, attribution, and speed – are even more essential.*
- *A crisis situation creates specific challenges for journalists. Situations change quickly, there is less time for research, dangerous rumours often circulate, crucial sources – especially international organisations – are unfamiliar to reporters, and communities often lack access to media. Journalists need to try to find ways to manage or solve these problems.*
- *Trust and good communication between humanitarian organisations and local media is critical. That relationship needs to be built and nurtured over time so that local media have timely access to information and so that humanitarian sources and humanitarian organisations can help support credible, unbiased, and quality local reporting.*

5

Who Is the Journalist's Audience?

Know Your Audience

There are potentially many diverse audiences for journalists covering a humanitarian crisis. Each one has a different and important role to play in responding to the crisis.

Even though there are important differences between each audience, the critical ones you will work for generally fit into three main categories:

1. Directly affected communities
2. Indirectly affected communities
3. Humanitarian responders

We will look more at some of the different audiences involved in a humanitarian response, including government and other humanitarian organisations, in subsequent parts of this manual. But it's important to develop a clear idea of the audiences for humanitarian response reporting right from the beginning.

1. Directly Affected Communities

Everyone in this audience is affected by the crisis, and they all need information that can help alleviate suffering, save lives, and enable them to participate in their own relief and recovery.

The need is for *accurate, timely, and well-targeted information* on how they can get immediate help and support. In later stages of a humanitarian response, the need is for information on how they can reconstruct their lives – for example, rebuild houses or get a job.

But even though an affected community needs information and people need to tell their stories, that doesn't mean they make up a single audience. Different groups have different needs: men, women, or children; older or younger people; the healthy, the sick, or the disabled may require different specific information.

In all cases, information can help alleviate suffering and save lives; telling stories and raising community voices can promote dignity and a better emergency response effort for affected communities.



2. Indirectly Affected Communities

(Including host communities and the national public)

‘Host communities’ are, as the name indicates, communities that accept and support directly affected populations when they flee a conflict or a disaster. They may be related to affected communities (e.g., relatives or friends) and accept them into their homes, or affected communities may stay nearby in public buildings or camps in their area. There are many different examples.

Beyond host communities, this category also includes the rest of the national public where the crisis is taking place, and if the disaster creates a large cross-border refugee population, the national public of the country where those refugees arrive.

People within the same region, country, or even a town may not be aware or informed about important

humanitarian issues – and they need to be. Geographic divides can result in certain populations having little knowledge of or familiarity with the experiences of citizens or refugees living in the same country.

When they know what’s happening, host communities and the national public often provide some of the most crucial support – whether by giving direct help, or by supporting (or demanding) that humanitarian responders (including the government) make crucial decisions to provide aid to affected populations. There are several examples of this:

Kenyans for Kenya (www.kenyansforkenya.org), was launched in 2011 as a response to the perception that the government was not doing enough about the famine in Somalia. A group of Kenyan community and business leaders, led by Safaricom, a telecommunications company, collaborated

with the Kenya Red Cross to set up an online donation service through the mobile phone finance platform M-PESA. The goal was to raise approximately \$500,000, yet over \$11 million was raised within two months.¹⁵

Diaspora – members of the affected communities and the rest of the national population who live in countries abroad – are often also a crucial audience. They can provide critical assistance, push governments in their country of residence to act, and raise awareness far from home, among other roles.

All of these audiences need information. Helping to educate and inform a wide range of audiences is an important part of humanitarian crisis coverage. Coverage must engage the public not directly affected by a disaster and help them understand what is happening and how it affects their lives, despite geographic, cultural, linguistic, or ethnic disconnect.

But not every story will be relevant to everyone. The journalist must decide *who* the critical audience is, and focus on what they need for each relevant story.

3. Humanitarian Responders

(Including government agencies plus local and international non-government organisations)

Humanitarian responders have the responsibility to get aid to people who need it most. However, especially in the early stages of a crisis, this doesn't mean that they already know what's going on. For them, it can be hard to find information about who needs what; and during a humanitarian response, it can also be hard for them to be sure which aid is most effective.

Journalists have a vital role to play in making sure crucial information reaches those who make the decisions on aid distribution. This information should focus on the immediate needs of the affected populations, with a priority on firsthand information from the crisis area, particularly from the worst-affected areas and the most vulnerable groups.

There is often a difference in the information that national responders and international responders need to hear. This is because while many of the roles of various responders are the same – to get aid to those in need – they may work in different ways. International organisations sometimes have a bigger role in raising money and gathering resources; national organisations often have greater local expertise and a role in distributing aid and providing direct support to communities.

Targeting the Story

Many different, specific audiences can come under these three main categories. Some examples:

- *Affected communities (e.g., men, women, children, the elderly, the sick, the disabled, etc.)*
- *Neighbouring and host communities*
- *National public*
- *Diasporas*
- *National humanitarian organisations*
- *National policy makers*
- *International public*
- *International humanitarian organisations*
- *International policy makers*
- *Donors*

In all cases, journalists need to be aware of who their target audience is, and what information and stories that audience needs to know. To help journalists do this, Section II looks at humanitarian organisations, policy makers, and donors in more detail.

15 The State of the Humanitarian System, p. 39, ALNAP. www.alnap.org/ourwork/current/sohs.aspx.

TAKEAWAY 5

Who Is Your Audience?

- *Affected communities are the ones in most urgent need of information. Much of the crucial information will be relevant to everyone in affected communities.*

But there are many different audiences in a single community, who may have different needs: men, women, children, the elderly, the disabled, the sick, and different social groups.

- *Audiences outside the affected area also require information to help resolve the crisis, including the general public, decision makers, and humanitarian organisations. Local journalists play a vital role in informing them about what is happening. These audiences can be local, national, or international.*
- *To fulfil their role, journalists must be clear on their target audience and meet their information needs. This is the first step in deciding what humanitarian response story to cover and how to cover it.*



6

Covering Causes – Development Issues in Crisis Response Reporting

A Tale of Two Articles

Article 1:

6.3 Million Rupees for Flood Victims

COLOMBO, 25 October 2008 (The Daily News) – Arrangements have been made to provide relief through Government Agents to flood victims, Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services Minister Rishad Bathiudeen said.

Some 18,082 families comprising 76,760 persons have been affected in Kalutara, Gampaha, Matara, Galle, and Puttalam Districts.

An allocation of Rs. 6.3 million has already been made by the Resettlement and Disaster Relief Services Ministry to be given to the District Secretaries. Rs. 300, 000 for Kalutara, Rs. 2 million for Gampaha, Rs. 1 million for Matara, Rs. 1 million for Galle and Rs. 2 million for Puttalam District has been given.

A total of 145 families consisting of 542 persons have been affected by floods in the Divisional Secretariat areas of Dodangoda, Walalaawita, Bulathsinhala, Bandaragama, Horana and Milleniya in the Kalutara District while 14,105 families consisting of 61,095 persons have been affected by floods in the Divisional Secretariat areas of Aththanagalla, Gampaha, Katana, Negombo and Wattala in the Gampaha District.

A total of 389 families consisting of 1,360 persons have been affected by floods in the Divisional Secretariat areas of Mulatiyana, Akuressa, Thihagoda, Matara, Welipitiya, Kirinda, Dickwella and Devinuwara in the Matara district while 690 families consisting of 2,790 persons have been affected by floods in the Divisional Secretariat areas of Niyagama, Yakkalamulla and Karandeniya in the Galle District.





A total of 2,753 families consisting of 10,973 persons have been affected by floods in the Divisional Secretariat areas of Karuwalagaswewa, Puttalam, and Mahawewa in the Puttalam District.

“As a result of the rainy weather followed by floods, 16 houses have been completely damaged and 68 houses partially damaged. The Disaster Relief Center is monitoring the situation and is operational round the clock and is on standby to provide emergency relief,” Minister Bathiudeen said.

He instructed Government Agents to take immediate action to clear areas inundated with rain water by releasing the water in low lying areas if necessary making use of backhoe machines.

(The original article is at: www.dailynews.lk/2008/10/25/news23.asp.)

Article 2:

Low-lying areas struck by flash floods¹⁶

COLOMBO, 23 October 2008 (IRIN) - At least six districts in Sri Lanka have experienced flooding this week, according to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights.

The *National Disaster Relief Services Centre* said around 2,800 families had been displaced and in total almost 11,000 people affected by the floods. At least four deaths

¹⁶ The numbers of affected families and funds allocated have been changed in this article to match the figures in the first article, in the interest of a consistent exercise. IRIN's original story reported that according to 'the National Disaster Relief Services Centre, up to 1,000 families displaced and in total more than 49,000 people affected by the floods (...) The government has so far allocated Rs4 million (about US\$40,000) for immediate relief'.



were reported. The government has so far allocated Rs 6 million (about US\$80,000) for immediate relief (*).

In the past 12 months, the country has experienced major floods on at least four occasions - in December 2007, this March and June and this week. Specialists blame the floods more on man than on nature.

“People think these floods are caused by heavier-than-usual rains, but that is not the case,” S. R. Jayasekera, a deputy director at the Department of Meteorology, told IRIN. “Because we have either blocked the channels for rainwater or filled them, even 50mm of rain in a single day means a congested city like Colombo can be hit by flash floods.”

Jayasekera said rainfall patterns had not indicated any major spikes in the past few decades. “There is no such increase that we can see, but what we do know is a lot

of low-lying land has been filled [in urban areas].” He told IRIN that tanks meant for water storage in rural areas had also become shallower due to sediment being washed in. “When there is no place for the rainwater to flow, it flows where it can.”

Lack of planning

Irrigation experts say the lack of proper planning is one of the main reasons for the floods. “We are paying a very heavy price for these floods which are not that rare now,” BK Jayasundera, senior deputy director at the *Irrigation Department* in charge of flood protection, told IRIN.

In June, flash floods in parts of the western province affected 418,000 people and left 23 dead. According to statistics compiled by the National Disaster Relief Services Centre, at least 488,000 people were affected by floods in 2007 that killed 20 and damaged 9,800 homes. More than Rs159 million (about US\$1.4 million) was spent on relief and reconstruction following the 2007 floods, the centre stated.

“This is money that we could spend on development if we had proper flood protection systems,” Jayasundera said. He said proper rainwater drainage systems needed to be maintained in cities while water retention schemes upstream would minimise flooding in low-lying areas that were prone to floods during heavy rains.

“We know the causes and the answers, but what we need is the will to put these plans to work,” he said. “My house was flooded this week because when someone built the main road, they blocked the storm drain. It is the lack of planning [that is to blame], not heavy rains.”

(The original article is at: www.irinnews.org/Report/81080/SRI-LANKA-Low-lying-areas-struck-by-flash-floods)

Points to note for each article:

Key differences between the two articles.

The first article relies on numbers to quantify the situation and the damage. There is a quotation from officials, but no real in-depth research or understanding of the larger situation.

No field visit appears to have been made to acquire firsthand information or perspectives. There is no background context on earlier floods and no analysis of why floods are constantly causing so much trouble. Nor is there an examination of the lack of plans to deal with this.

The second article has better coverage, mixing facts, figures, and official comments with local examples.

The article also clearly implies important questions regarding frequent flooding, including Who is responsible for the major damage that repeatedly comes from floods? What plans exist to change this predictable outcome? (These can all be followed up in subsequent coverage.)

Yet while the sources are critical, they are all official; again, there is little evidence of field visits to affected areas.

The second article shows the importance of including information on the *development issues* that contribute to communities' *vulnerability*. This can point to *longer-term solutions*. It's an example of how development and humanitarian issues are closely linked; both need coverage if we are to understand what is happening and how to solve it.

However, no article can cover everything. Although one source from the Irrigation Department does tell that his house is flooded, there are no other perspectives from affected communities themselves,



telling their stories about how their lives have been impacted. There is also little information on how they can get assistance.

This is why humanitarian response reporting needs to include a range of coverage and a range of perspectives. Development issues, shown here, are one. Other issues already discussed in this manual are also crucially important, including raising community voices, telling people where they can get assistance, and informing policy makers and humanitarian actors about what is happening on the ground.

Disaster Reporting Perspectives

Although causal development issues are crucial to covering humanitarian crises, they are often ignored in media coverage. As we have seen, some humanitarian organisations have started to discuss the importance of addressing underlying development issues – but there is still a very long way to go before this can change the way organisations carry out activities on the ground.

In the dominant perspective covered by most media, development issues are often not included in coverage of a humanitarian crisis, whether a crisis is caused by natural disasters, conflict, or both. This coverage can be rather simplistic: Many journalists stop after acquiring the basic numbers, failing to explore important issues and details further.

Not every story needs to include a ‘development’ perspective. But if the great majority of coverage ignores development issues and longer-term causes of vulnerability, then that is a significant weakness and something that journalists and media outlets need to change in their coverage.

As outlined in the book *Disaster Communication: A Resource Kit for Media*,¹⁷ the basic lens through which most stakeholders (including media) view a humanitarian crisis can often distort central development issues at the core of the problem. In effect, this amounts to misinforming the public.

The Resource Kit breaks down this dominant perspective and suggests an alternative perspective that attempts to integrate development and crisis issues in media coverage:

¹⁷ *Disaster Communication: A Resource Kit for Media*. Amjad Bhatti and Madhavi Malalgoda Ariyabandu, Practical Action and Journalists Resource Centre Pakistan, 2002.

DOMINANT PERSPECTIVE	ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disasters/conflicts viewed as isolated events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disasters/conflicts are part of the normal process of development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linkages with conditions in society during normal times are not analysed to any great degree. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysing linkages with society during normal times is fundamental for understanding disasters/conflicts.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical/law-and-order solutions dominant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on solutions that change relationships and structures in society. The objective is to reduce people's vulnerability and to strengthen their capacity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralised institutions dominate intervention strategies. Less participation of people, who are treated as ‘victims’. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation of people paramount in intervention strategies; people treated as ‘partners’ in development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing agencies less accountable and their processes less transparent to people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring that accountability and transparency are emphasised in implementation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interventions are made after the event occurs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigation of disasters/conflicts is the fundamental aim.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The objective of intervention is to return to the situation before the event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disasters/conflicts viewed as opportunities for social transformation.

DOMINANT PERSPECTIVE	ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disasters/conflicts viewed as isolated events. 225,000 people died, and governments and aid agencies spent more than \$7 billion to clean up the aftermath. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disasters/conflicts are part of the normal process of development. This is the latest in a long line of natural disasters that often hit developing countries particularly hard.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linkages with conditions in society during normal times less analysed. Not much investigation of prior reality that contributed to WHY so many people died. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysing linkages with society during normal times is fundamental for understanding disasters/conflicts. Lack of early warning systems, sub-par infrastructure, and marginal government systems caused higher death count.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technical/law-and-order solutions dominant. Coverage limited to government response and analysis of situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis on solutions that change relationships and structures in society. The objective is to reduce people's vulnerability and strengthen their capacity. What does the public really need to know to help them cope with the situation? What information can help them advance their knowledge and understanding?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centralised institutions dominate intervention strategies. Less participation of people, who are treated as 'victims'. Public treated as numbers in coverage. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participation of people paramount in intervention strategies; people treated as 'partners' in development. The public is an active character in this unfolding story. How did the public respond to the disaster? What did people learn? How are they part of the problem and solution?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The objective of intervention is to return to the situation before the event. Focus centred on who is to blame for the disaster. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disasters/conflicts viewed as opportunities for social transformation. Focus on better educating public on what they need to know in case of future humanitarian crisis.

Testing the Dominant /Alternative Perspectives

Let's put this humanitarian matrix into a workable context. When the Asian tsunami hit countries like Indonesia, India, Thailand, and Sri Lanka in December 2004, there was little time to react and respond to the magnitude of the event.

In the early days, weeks and months, thousands of journalists scrambled to cover the details of the unthinkable disaster. But what exactly did they achieve in their coverage?

Here's a look at tsunami coverage approaches through the *Resource Kit* matrix:

Possible discussion questions:

- ▶ How are the media covering the crisis in your country?
- ▶ Are there examples of the dominant perspective and the alternative perspective?
- ▶ Is the alternative perspective more prominent or less prominent in your country's coverage?
- ▶ What kinds of things would you like to change, or see changed, in the way your country's media are covering the crisis?

TAKEAWAY 6

Covering Causes in Crisis Response

- Media coverage of a crisis usually focuses on the immediate situation. It's important to include longer-term causes to help understand why the crisis has happened and what the implications are for the future. This means including development and vulnerability issues in crisis coverage.
- In media coverage, the most common or 'dominant' perspectives often look only at the immediate event, and see the goal of recovery as being a return to the way things were before.
- Broader or 'alternative' perspectives look at longer-term causes and explore the possibilities that recovery can become a chance to improve people's situation in the future.
- A crucial factor that differentiates these two approaches in media coverage is whether communities are seen as participants in their own recovery, or whether they are presented only as victims who need help.
- Not every story needs to include a development perspective. But if the great majority of coverage ignores development issues and longer-term causes of vulnerability, then that is a significant weakness and something that journalists and media outlets need to change in their coverage.

7

Humanitarian Response Reporting – Overview and Summary

Case Studies: Information and Communication in a Humanitarian Response


Two Stories from Haiti¹⁸

At 4:53 p.m. local time on January 12, 2010, southern Haiti was struck by a shallow 7.0 earthquake lasting approximately 35 seconds. Enormous areas of the capital and surrounding areas were destroyed, with tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, losing their

lives.¹⁹ The event triggered the largest humanitarian response since the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. International, local, NGO, governments, and private organisations all joined the response effort, including a significant number of media development and IT actors. Communication with the affected population through local media and new technologies was key to supporting this humanitarian response and saving many lives.

¹⁸ Both sourced and adapted from Wall, I., and Yves, Gerald Chéry, Ann Kite Yo Pale / Let Them Speak, 2010. See http://infoasaid.org/sites/infoasaid.org/files/iaa_haiti_2010_0.pdf.

¹⁹ Haiti's government states that over 300,000 were killed, while separate studies put the number around 80,000 or less – yet another indication of how difficult obtaining clear information can be in a disaster, and why journalists need to be careful and rigorous in their work. See for example Report challenges Haiti earthquake death toll, BBC, 1 June 2011 [<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-13606720>].



Deeqa Abdo watches
as women build a
stick shelter in the Ifo
extension camp for
new arrivals on August
7, 2011.

Case Study 1: Signal FM

For survivors of the earthquake, local radio stations became essential to survival in the days after the quake. For many, they were the only way to find out what was going on. They were also a source of entertainment, solace and community feeling – a reminder that survivors were not alone.

Signal FM is one of the most important news radio stations in Port au Prince, and was also one of the few unscathed by the earthquake (its entire staff survived). Within a few hours of the quake, four staff members had arrived and began to broadcast what they had seen. The station quickly found itself becoming a spontaneous information exchange centre, with queues of listeners wanting to broadcast requests for help, to publicise names of the missing, or to just tell their stories.

The station found ways to tell people how to handle the catastrophe. Doctors, engineers, seismologists, and clergymen went on air. They told people what to do with dead bodies, where it was safe to sleep, where they could locate medicine and food, which hospitals were open, and they read out lists of those confirmed dead or alive. ‘We were like a phone for the country,’ says station CEO Mario Viau. They also relayed confirmed reports of people trapped but alive. One woman, Elcie Dyess, came to Signal FM on the third day after the quake to appeal for help in finding her husband, Jean Francois, who had been at work at a nearby bank at the time of the quake. Listeners heard her appeal, went to the bank that had collapsed, and dug him out alive.

Signal FM also played an important role internationally. Its online broadcasts were listened to by many



Haitians overseas; foreign embassies gave Signal FM information on how their citizens in Haiti should contact them; and many diaspora radio stations in the United States, Canada, and France rebroadcast Signal FM's programming. Two Haitian stations abroad also requested time on Signal FM to broadcast requests for information from diaspora Haitians looking for relatives in the affected area.

Throughout this time, the only formal assistance Signal FM received was a government delivery of fuel for generators when the station ran out. As with many stations, Signal FM was at times dependent on donations and support from ordinary Haitians in order to stay on the air. Listeners brought food and water to the journalists to help them continue working. In the years since the earthquake, Signal FM has become the go-to station for Haitians during emergencies.

Case Study 2: ENDK Emergency Radio Broadcasts

On January 21, 2010, within nine days of the Haiti earthquake, Internews began producing the daily humanitarian radio show *Enfomasyon Nou Dwe Konnen* (ENDK, or ‘News You Can Use’). ENDK generated an enormous response from the first days it was broadcast, and within weeks it was being carried for free by more than 40 stations in Port-au-Prince and beyond. It could be heard across Haiti and by diaspora audiences online.

Produced by a team of Haitian journalists in the capital Port au Prince, ENDK was a 15-minute long magazine format that used a mix of news, reports, interviews, vox pops, and audience feedback, all designed to provide actionable information and advice on the response to the disaster that survivors could use in their daily lives.

Several supporting factors strengthened the program’s role in making the humanitarian response more effective. Firstly, the ENDK team included a specialist humanitarian liaison officer, who promoted the program to humanitarian organizations and raised awareness of how communication could help support the response effort. This outreach helped bring many essential organizations to the program to communicate critical information – for example, the World Food Program became a regular guest and explained to people how the emergency food distribution system worked and what they needed to do to get food. This liaison was critical, as many other local media found it difficult to access humanitarian organizations and get the information that audiences desperately needed. (ENDK also distributed daily English-language summaries of the programme via email, which built knowledge and understanding of the show among international organizations at the scene.)

ENDK also began soliciting audience feedback via an SMS hotline, and received more than 800 messages within the first 24 hours. Listeners raised critical questions, and the feedback was organised to help decide what issues should be included in the radio program, which helped to make sure the show met audience needs.

ENDK was also supported by an audience research team, whose findings were essential in developing editorial content and were widely shared and used by other organizations working in communication. As the newsroom became stronger, ENDK also served as a training center for journalists from the regions to learn how to produce humanitarian programming.

More than a year later, the show remained extremely popular. This meant that some of the stations that broadcast it were able to generate income by charging higher rates for advertising.

“This is a very great show. It helped very, very much during the time of the earthquake. I always want to listen to the show because I find information about everything regarding life in community.”

Raymonde Calixte, Delmas 56, Port-au-Prince

“Since the earthquake happened, we heard this show [ENDK] and we learned about this aid that is available for our communities. We are not used to these disasters, and through the programme we found much information regarding the behaviours we need to adopt to avoid the worst happening.”

Richemonde Pierre, Leogane

Two Stories from Indonesia

Case Study 3: Jalin Merapi²⁰

Mount Merapi in densely populated central Java, Indonesia, is one of the most active volcanoes in the world. After a relatively minor – but still very serious – eruption in 2006, a much larger eruption took place in October 2010, killing hundreds of people, forcing hundreds of thousands more to evacuate, and destroying many villages and homes. Information and communication were critical to a fast, large-scale, community-led response to the 2010 disaster, drawing from the experiences of 2006. The response used community radio networks, social media, and new technology, plus the community networks and practice that had built up since 2006.

In 2006, locally based NGO Combine Resource Institute (CRI) and a network of three community stations called Radio Komunitas Lintas Merapi (RKLM) worked closely together to support information and communication flows for affected communities. This collaboration was sustained after the disaster passed, and RKLM also developed relationships with volunteers who worked face to face with the communities surrounding Mount Merapi to improve disaster preparedness.

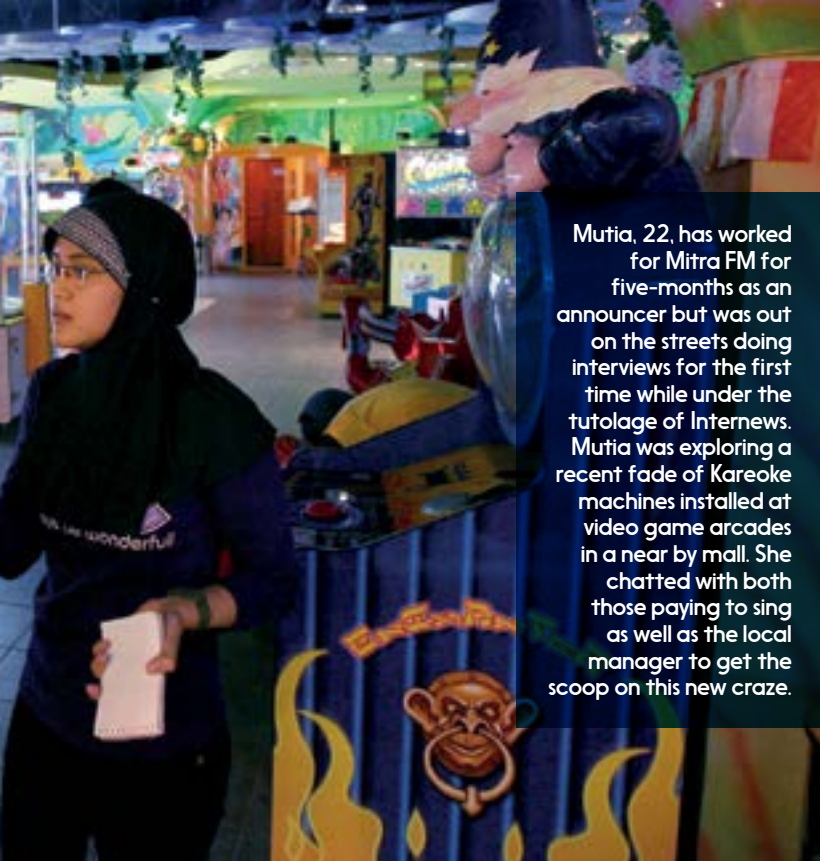
When the 2010 eruption occurred, CRI set up the operational headquarters of Jalin Merapi, a volunteer effort that gathered and disseminated information and provided coordinated volunteer responses to requests for urgent assistance via Twitter, Facebook, SMS gateway, email, and the RKLM radio stations. This included a dedicated website, merapi.combine.or.id, which brought information together and included an interactive map of the unfolding situation. Volunteers



also used handheld walkie-talkies to communicate. Information was verified before dissemination and action, but even so, reaction times were extremely fast. Audio material wasn't just broadcast on the radio but was also streamed online. In at least one case, a listener played this stream to his community over a loudspeaker, which helped them get information they would not have been able to access otherwise.

The combination of a variety of information and communication platforms working closely together was critical: It allowed information to be shared rapidly

²⁰ Sourced and adapted from Tanesia, A. and Habibi, Z., Jalin Merapi Community Information System in Response to Mount Merapi's 2010 Eruption. See http://www.amarc.org/documents/Caribbean_Conference/CR_ResponseJALIN_MerapiEruption_EN.pdf, and Abud, M., 2012, Indonesia: New Digital Nation?, Internews. See <http://www.internews.org/research-publications/indonesia-new-digital-nation>.



Mutia, 22, has worked for Mitra FM for five-months as an announcer but was out on the streets doing interviews for the first time while under the tutelage of Internews. Mutia was exploring a recent fad of Karaoke machines installed at video game arcades in a near by mall. She chatted with both those paying to sing as well as the local manager to get the scoop on this new craze.



to many different audiences. Through crowd-sourced information and rapid coordination, this supported extremely fast volunteer efforts that provided everything from large-scale food provision and transport to emergency evacuation for those in need. Online networks, community radio, and on-the-ground volunteers all worked closely together to save lives and to alleviate the suffering of those who were displaced. Around 800 volunteers worked to support this effort, coordinated in part through different Facebook groups. Twitter followers reached around 35,000, with dedicated hashtags relating to different groups and needs.

Many elements came together to make this possible. Data-management and verification systems were key in CRI's efforts; community radio networks across the country also provided assistance to RKLM with personnel and equipment. The on-the-ground volunteers who had been working amongst communities at risk were also crucial in providing and responding to information. These volunteer efforts at disaster relief far outstripped those of the local government in both speed and size, and the communication and information platforms – built on the technical and media capacity of everyone involved, and the experience many different networks had developed by working together – were the foundation of this achievement.

The work didn't stop with the disaster. Webcams continue to monitor Mount Merapi today, both for possible eruptions but also because of the risk of landslides from the debris left on the mountainsides by the 2010 eruption. Disaster response has moved towards disaster preparedness.

Case Study 4: Aceh Community Outreach Program²¹

The earthquake and subsequent tsunami that struck North Sumatra on December 26, 2004, claimed an estimated 150,000 lives, left 500,000 people displaced in the region, and caused immense physical and psychological damage amongst the communities affected. An unprecedented international humanitarian response sent enormous amounts of aid to Aceh – but with that also came huge challenges to deliver aid effectively and accountably.

Around 12 months after the tsunami, it became clear that the overall humanitarian response wasn't serving the needs of everyone: The people who were

²¹ Sourced and adapted from Beneficiary Communication and Accountability: a responsibility, not a choice, IFRC, 2011. See www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/94411/IFRC%20BCA%20Lesson%20Learned%20doc_final.pdf.

falling through the cracks were generally the poorest of the poor. Research by the Irish Red Cross Society (IRCS) and Palang Merah Indonesia (PMI, Indonesian Red Crescent) showed that communities needed information and guidance to navigate the services provided by humanitarian actors.

The IRCS and PMI set up the Community Outreach Programme (COP) to respond to these needs. The COP integrated communication and information with advocacy, using the information communities gave them to push humanitarian organisations to meet their needs.

This program had several elements. The *Community Advocacy Unit (CAU)* contacted communities through field visits, SMS, telephone, email, and office visits. It used a casework method, with an SMS gateway system and case management database, to maintain contact with community members. This included responding to individual requests within 72 hours and a system to verify and follow up on cases over several stages within a month to see if their needs had been met or their issues resolved. Over 95 per cent of people contacted the CAU by SMS (over 16,000 people, with 6,000 of them assessed as having eligible cases). The CAU helped communities develop plans and brought together other actors, like humanitarian organisations and government officials, to find solutions to challenges.

The CAU was part of the IRCS and PMI's humanitarian work – it was not journalism work. However, the other half of the COP was media-based, demonstrating how media and technology approaches can integrate with other humanitarian activities to make an emergency response more effective.

The *IRCS media department* developed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated media tools to fill the information gap, and advocated for affected communities. The effort involved three main activities.

The *Rumoh PMI newspaper* was a 16-page newspaper tabloid published in 12 one-monthly editions, peaking at 60,000 copies and distributed across 13 districts through offices, homes, public places, and radio stations. *Rumoh PMI radio programming* started as a one-hour weekly show before expanding in to a licensed Community Radio service broadcasting 24 hours of radio per day on eight-hour loops, across 11 districts, and eventually disseminated by satellite to 38 stations. Finally, the *Warung Kupu Rumoh PMI TV* program was added in 2009. It was a live weekly variety show that included weekly topics on reconstruction and rehabilitation, talent shows, and quiz segments. It also included SMS and call-ins from the audience. The program broadcast weekly for 18 episodes and was received by approximately 90 per cent of Acehnese homes.

The media and case management activities reinforced each other. Issues raised through the CAU helped inform media producers on the topics they needed to raise, so that media production could support advocacy for larger-scale changes. Greater profile from media production also meant that more people in the community became aware of the support the COP could provide, and so they got in touch – or they found out, from the radio, TV, and the newspaper, how they could try to solve some of their own problems.

COP is a strong example of humanitarian organisations and media working together to help communities in a humanitarian response. It used multiple platforms of communication – face to face, mobile, radio, TV, print, and online – to increase its effectiveness. The collaboration between the different areas all fell under the IRCS and PMI, which was a different approach to media initiatives in other crisis scenarios. However, the lessons demonstrated were the same: When humanitarian organisations and media cooperate, they provide great support to people hit by disasters.



Interview with Mark Frohardt²²

While basic needs like safety, food, and shelter are obviously vital to people in distress, media can also play an integral role in helping to save lives and in helping people act as agents in their own survival and recovery. The core rationale for this manual is the fact that *information and communication* are essential components for the survival of people caught in a humanitarian crisis.

Mark Frohardt's 16-year career in humanitarian relief has led him to coordinate health services for refugees on the Thai-Cambodian border; to work for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Chad and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Sudan and Somalia; to assist with the repatriation of Kurds

into Northern Iraq after the first Gulf War; to consult in Sarajevo during the Bosnian war; and to manage UN human rights field operations in Rwanda following the genocide.

-What drives your interest in using media in crisis situations?

-My initial interest arose from seeing how the lack of information in a complex emergency could have enormous negative consequences for people affected by the crisis.

In a crisis situation, the sooner an effective two-way flow of information can be established between the local population and those providing assistance, the sooner those affected by the crisis can become active participants in their own recovery.

-In a crisis, isn't media support a luxury compared to food and shelter?

-It is not a zero-sum game. Support for local media doesn't detract from humanitarian response; accurate information dramatically improves the delivery of assistance.

Information abhors a vacuum. So the absence of reliable broadcasts or other forms of information coming from trusted sources creates exceptionally fertile ground for rumours.

In Chad we found that when the government imposed travel restrictions, rumours spread that the government was trying to make life difficult for the refugees to make them go home. Actually there were serious security problems. Once local radio shared this, people's attitudes changed.

-What are some of the roles media play in a humanitarian crisis?

-In the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster, people only know what they can see of their immediate

²² Some of the issues central to humanitarian response information and communication are explored in this 2009 interview with Internews Network's Mark Frohardt, former Vice President for Africa, Health and Humanitarian Media. Frohardt is currently the Executive Director of the Internews' Center for Innovation & Learning. See www.internews.org/about-internews/bio/mark-frohardt.

surroundings. Broadcast media, particularly radio, can provide a critical assessment of the extent and severity of the crisis for the entire community. This helps families to decide whether to pack up and move or hunker down.

Local media can play a key role in informing the response and the process of reconstruction. Reporters who have been covering the community for years are well placed to create a forum for discussion, giving voice to the community in the reconstruction process.

-To what extent do relief agencies recognize the role of media in disasters?

-Humanitarian organizations often find it easier to communicate through controlled information campaigns rather than local media, whom they perceive as overly focused on the problems in assistance delivery.

Support for local media can help reporters better understand the complexities of delivering aid in an emergency and form more constructive relationships with humanitarian agencies. This helps local reporters provide the information that communities need to maximize the use of assistance and report on the problems of aid through a constructive public dialogue, rather than simply critical reporting.

The best way to ensure effective communication between the humanitarian community and the local population is not through information campaigns, but through local media who speak in a voice that the community trusts.

In a crisis situation, the sooner an effective two-way flow of information can be established between the local population and those providing assistance, the sooner those affected by the crisis can become active participants in their own recovery.

TAKEAWAY 7

Humanitarian Response Reporting – in Three Sentences

- *Journalists need to be aware of all other reporting on the crisis that they are covering – and they need to critically evaluate it to see how effective and thorough it is according to the points already examined and discussed.*
- *Journalists need to stay up to date with other examples of media innovation and humanitarian media projects, as these can offer new ways to conduct research, develop stories, and reach audiences.*
- *All journalists should have a clear understanding of where their role fits in the humanitarian response effort.*

What Happens in a Humanitarian Crisis Response?

An Internews team set out to understand the complexity of Dadaab, the world's largest refugee camp complex, in August of 2011 by surveying residents about their access to information, media, and their communication needs. Internews chose to conduct this survey using smart phones as part of a program that utilizes technology to improve upon traditional methods, and gather precise information about the needs of residents as timely and efficiently as possible.

8

How Does a Humanitarian Response Start?

Policies and Systems in Humanitarian Crisis Response

Humanitarian crises, whether natural disasters or complex emergencies, have been increasing in frequency in recent decades. In many cases the responses to these crises are carried out by the

respective national governments, and each government has its own institutions and systems for doing this.

However, in other cases, the scale of humanitarian needs means that an international contribution is needed. These contributions take place at the request of national or host governments and are framed by those national governments (although, on some occasions, the scale of the disaster means the capacity of national government itself is sometimes seriously curtailed, for example after Haiti's 2010 earthquake).

A humanitarian response is complex. There are enormous needs and great challenges in meeting those needs. Journalists should play a vital role in explaining how the response should work and in ensuring that community voices are heard and community participation highlighted as the response rolls out. This is often the only way communities can find out what's going on and play a role in the response itself.

That means journalists *must* understand what happens in a humanitarian crisis response at both the national and international level. International humanitarian actors, led by the United Nations, have developed relatively consistent systems and policies for crisis response.

Journalists need to understand both national and international systems and policies. These are what drive how aid is distributed and the methods humanitarian organisations use to identify what needs are most important at each step. This manual focuses mostly on international systems and policies, because these are consistent across different responses. However, it's important for journalists to also find out as much as they can about what's happening at the national level. Every country is different, which means journalists need to research what is in place. At the international level, this manual introduces the most important features that can help support good humanitarian crisis response reporting.

Communities are usually unaware of the way a humanitarian response is implemented, and this can cause confusion and distress. They need to know what is happening and why, and to be able to speak up if something is not working. If journalists can explain the response clearly, and get informed community feedback, they can provide an enormous step towards making the response more effective in alleviating suffering.

International Humanitarian Response Phases

A humanitarian crisis response is divided into phases, with actions and priorities guided by each phase.

The phases are commonly defined this way:

1. Relief
2. Recovery
3. Rehabilitation

These terms are in general use; however, not everyone uses exactly the same description. The 'relief' phase may be called the 'emergency' phase, 'emergency relief', or 'emergency response'. 'Early recovery' is sometimes placed before 'recovery' to highlight specific needs that occur at that point. 'Reconstruction' is sometimes used either instead of 'rehabilitation' or following 'rehabilitation'.

There are several discussions within the humanitarian sector about what each phase should be called and why. This course will not go into all of those details. It aims only to outline the general structure of an international humanitarian response, and what actions typically take place in each phase, so that journalists have enough background to report effectively for their communities and audiences.

If a source mentions 'early recovery' or 'reconstruction' to a journalist, the most important thing is to know that this refers to a particular phase of a process that tries to deal with the needs of a humanitarian response in sequence.

The UN usually coordinates the response, often together with the national government (the coordination role of the UN is outlined in more detail under '10. Humanitarian Response: Key International Actors').

Phase 1: Relief

The first phase aims simply to save lives in a crisis. The dominant needs almost always include emergency provision of the following:

- Food (often as rations)
- WaterShelter (usually tents)
- Health care (often emergency clinics that may be in hospitals, or in temporary structures wherever they are needed)

The exact priorities depend on the nature of the crisis itself.

Some crises may also have other specific needs in the relief phase. Earthquakes almost always require international emergency 'search and rescue' teams to find people alive and trapped under fallen buildings. Complex emergencies that involve conflict may need humanitarian ceasefires and/or humanitarian corridors (routes where those involved in a conflict agree that humanitarian organisations can travel safely) before aid can be delivered. The scenario may require general security or peace-building measures, which are not something humanitarian organisations can do themselves but which may be provided by peacekeeping forces or others.

Phase 2: Recovery


The 'recovery' phase begins when the immediate large-scale threat to human life and wellbeing has diminished. This doesn't mean the need for aid has stopped; rather, it means that the type of aid starts to change. The goal is to provide support so



that communities can start putting their lives back together. This can involve a very broad set of activities, including, for example, the following:

- Cash-for-work programs that pay communities to clean up debris left by floods, earthquakes, or other disasters
- 'Transitional shelter', so that people who may be living in tents can move to a better place until their homes are rebuilt.
- Temporary education programs for children until the schools reopen

The recovery phase can last for months or even years. Again, there can be many different activities depending on the nature of the crisis. A complex emergency, for example, will definitely require better security measures for the recovery phase to be effective; this may include, for example, reconciliation initiatives between different fighting groups.



A herd of goats is driven through Ifo refugee camp at dawn on August 8, 2011. Many families interviewed by Internews said they fled to Dadaab after all of their livestock died because of the drought in Somalia. The dirt road from Garissa to Dadaab is littered with cow and goat skeletons.

It is almost inevitable that different locations will recover from the crisis at different speeds. One area may be moving out of a relief phase situation quickly, while others have bigger challenges and need more time. This means many relief and recovery activities can easily overlap.

The recovery phase is intended as a 'transition', moving from immediate life-saving interventions towards local development needs. The goal is for communities and societies to 'get back on their feet'. For the UN, recovery also means that coordination and direction of humanitarian efforts should move away from international organisations and be taken on more by national organisations.

Several organisations also talk about the need for early recovery activities. This means that even when the relief phase is happening, some recovery activities have to start as soon as possible – otherwise communities will take much longer to re-establish their lives. Early

recovery overlaps across relief and recovery. (These details are quite technical but may help journalists in understanding what international humanitarian organisations are aiming to achieve when they talk about the different phases.²³)

Phase 3: Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation phase aims to support communities and societies to regain their livelihoods and resilience. Activities can be extremely broad, depending on context. Some examples:

- *Rebuilding roads and buildings, including houses, schools, and hospitals*
- *Training for teachers, health professionals, and others*
- *Supporting traders, farmers, and others to restart their livelihoods*
- *Strengthening justice systems, including local courts and police*

It is clear that these have gone beyond the humanitarian needs of crisis and are social and economic development activities. In many cases, the catchphrase 'Build back better' is used to promote a goal that communities and societies shouldn't just return to where they were before the crisis, but should become stronger and more resilient against any future disasters.

Rehabilitation goals should be set by the national government of the country where the crisis has taken place. This phase typically lasts for years, and organisations that have only a humanitarian focus may not stay involved. Other organisations that focus on *both* humanitarian and development issues may remain over the longer term.

²³ See 'Guidance Note on Early Recovery', Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery, 2008, for more details at <http://ocha.unog.ch/drptoolkit/PPPreparednessEarlyRecovery.html> or [http://ocha.unog.ch/drptoolkit/PreparednessTools/EarlyRecovery/GuidanceNoteonEarlyRecovery,%20bytheClusterWorkingGroup\(CWGER\),%20April%202008.pdf](http://ocha.unog.ch/drptoolkit/PreparednessTools/EarlyRecovery/GuidanceNoteonEarlyRecovery,%20bytheClusterWorkingGroup(CWGER),%20April%202008.pdf).

Response Phases and Journalist Coverage

Why is it important for journalists to understand different humanitarian phases?

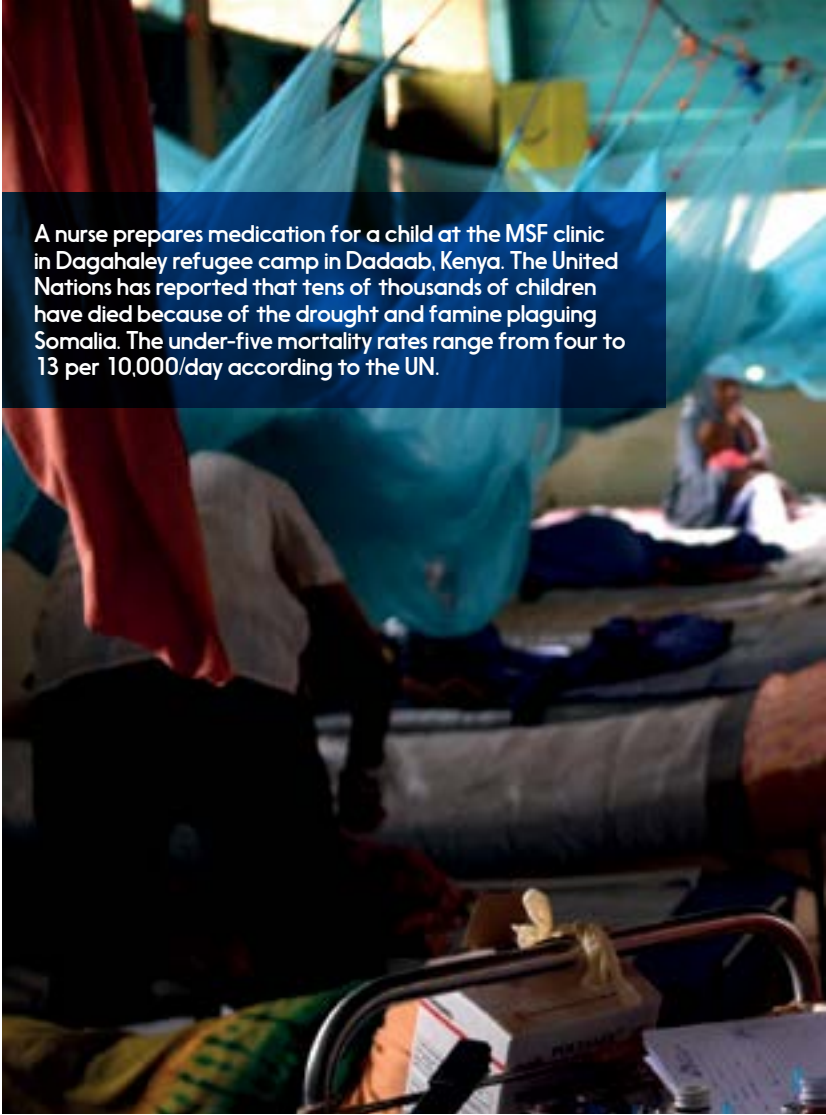
The three phases outlined above are important for several reasons.

Reporting accurately. If you know the terms the humanitarian sector uses, you can report more accurately. For example, when humanitarian organisations or the national government say, ‘The relief phase is over’, this *does not* mean that aid has stopped – it just means that different kinds of aid, in support of recovery, become the priority. If a journalist doesn’t understand the term and reports incorrectly that all aid is stopping (which has happened before), it could cause panic among communities who still need support, and make the situation worse.

If journalists know the terms used, this can also help them understand the plans of humanitarian organisations and ask the right questions.

Giving feedback. If a journalist knows the goals of the humanitarian sector, he or she is better able to check whether those goals are being met. For example, in the relief phase, shelter is usually provided with tents. In the recovery phase, transitional or temporary housing is the goal – but if tents are still being used, that probably means these goals are not being met. Knowing this can help journalists report more effectively from the ground and provide feedback from communities to government, humanitarian organisations, and the general public.

Needs assessments. In the first two phases, the international humanitarian sector conducts needs assessments to see what kind of aid is required and



A nurse prepares medication for a child at the MSF clinic in Dagahaley refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya. The United Nations has reported that tens of thousands of children have died because of the drought and famine plaguing Somalia. The under-five mortality rates range from four to 13 per 10,000/day according to the UN.

where. If journalists know what assessments are taking place and when, they can use this information for their own reporting; journalists can also contribute indirectly to the kind of information the assessments gather (see ‘Needs Assessments’ below for more details).

Funding. International humanitarian efforts typically ask for support for the activities of each phase and are funded by international donors. Donors may give some money for the relief phase and a different amount for the recovery phase. If journalists understand what funding is coming, from where, when, and under what conditions, they can use this knowledge to check whether the funding at each stage is big enough to meet the needs and, more importantly, if it is meeting targeted needs. This can also be important information for both the general public and for affected communities (see ‘Funding’ below for more details).



Needs Assessments

Better data and information on the impact of disasters and the needs of affected communities are key elements in ensuring the best possible response. Humanitarian aid should be based on a clear understanding of the needs of the affected population. Needs assessments are surveys that gather information on the kinds of help communities need. *They are a critical part of the humanitarian response*, especially in the first two phases.

In the relief phase, one of the biggest challenges is simply finding out *what* aid is needed and *where*. Even a day's delay in any of the essential aid can have tragic consequences, yet there is often simply not enough information available on who needs what. Where are the people who have been displaced by the flood? Which neighbourhoods have the most survivors?

Where did the communities run to when the fighting started, and what did they take with them?

It's not enough to simply drive through neighbourhoods and distribute aid to anyone who says they need help; that can lead to some people getting much more than they need, while others get nothing.

Right from the beginning, humanitarian organisations need to know what people need and where they are. At the same time, humanitarian organisations cannot wait for all the relevant information before they start providing assistance – that would lead to more suffering and death. So the first part of the relief phase is usually somewhat chaotic, with organisations using whatever means they can to find out where to deliver assistance.

It's extremely difficult to deliver aid the best way possible in the first days, and very easy to criticise mistakes. The

most important thing a journalist can do in the early part of a response is to understand what humanitarian organisations are trying to achieve, what obstacles they face, and how they are trying to overcome those obstacles. It's important to highlight who is missing out on aid, but this doesn't mean that a response is 'failing' right from the beginning: It just means it takes some time to put complicated systems in place. Journalists with good information can help this happen faster.

Relief Phase Needs Assessment

As soon as possible, organisations in an international humanitarian response effort will conduct needs assessment surveys to help target aid in the relief phase. The international humanitarian sector does not have one standardised assessment method (although some organisations are working to help promote this).

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Coordinated Assessments

In July 2009, a working group with the IASC, the primary overall mechanism for humanitarian assistance, created the time-limited IASC Needs Assessment Task Force (NATF) to develop a package of tools and products aimed at harmonizing and promoting cross-sector needs assessment initiatives. This package is being implemented by operational agencies working in humanitarian contexts, including NGOs, UN agencies, and governments. The IASC approach aims to ensure the collection of consistent, reliable and timely data on needs in humanitarian settings and to strengthen informed decision making to improve humanitarian response.

<http://assessments.humanitarianresponse.info/who-we-are>

As a result, there are several large-scale coordinated needs assessments. In the relief phase, some common ones include the following²⁴:

- ▶ **Common Needs Assessment (CNA).** This is several assessments combined together, coordinated with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)²⁵
- ▶ Developed by the IASC NATF, the **Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA)** outlines an approach to undertaking a joint multi-sector assessment in the earliest days of a crisis or change in the context.
- ▶ **Vulnerability and Analysis Mapping (VAM),** implemented by the World Food Program (WFP)
- ▶ **Health and Nutrition Tracking Service (HNTS),** implemented by the World Health Organisation (WHO)

See also the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS, see text box) for examples of its Disaster Needs Analysis²⁶ and check the Global Emergency Overview (GEO), a mobile app designed to improve access to information and analysis on crisis impact that aims to contribute toward creating shared situation awareness at the

²⁴ Some organisations are focusing on improving this effort, but there is still a long way to go. See for example UNOCHA: <http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/coordination-tools/needs-assessment>, or <http://onerresponse.info/resources/NeedsAssessment/Pages/Needs%20Assessment.aspx>, and ACAPS www.acaps.org. UNOCHA also has a consolidated list of a large number of specific assessments: <http://onerresponse.info/resources/NeedsAssessment/Pages/Toolbox.aspx>.

²⁵ Examples of CNAs include Pakistan's 2010 floods McCRAM Assessment: www.acaps.org/img/documents/mcram-report-121010-mcram-assessment-report.pdf, and Haiti's 2010 earthquake RINAH Assessment: www.acaps.org/img/documents/rinah-report-final-rinah-report-feb2010.pdf.

²⁶ DNAs provide first responders and humanitarians on the ground with clear, detailed, and up-to-date analysis of background information about the affected area, groups of interest, and risks and vulnerabilities, as well as sectoral information at the local level. DNAs for emergencies are based on review of secondary data, field studies ongoing during the emergency, contact with individuals working in the field, and lessons learned and experience gained from similar crises or disasters in the past.

early stage of a disaster. GEO was jointly developed by ACAPS and Internews²⁷.

UNOCHA can provide information about what assessments are taking place in your country (see 'UNOCHA' below under 'ro. Humanitarian Response: Key International Actors', on UNOCHA's role.)

Individual organisations will often also conduct their own assessments, either focusing on a particular need or a geographic area. This can be helpful but also confusing – especially for affected communities who may be asked many questions by many different people before significant aid arrives.

In spite of the importance of assessments, no commonly accepted methodology for assessment exists within the humanitarian system. Numerous methodologies have been developed by individual agencies and within sectors, but it is difficult to compare the results from these different assessments. According to ACAPS, this makes coordinated assessment one of the biggest outstanding challenges to the humanitarian community and can also pose challenges for journalists as they try to analyse different information sets²⁸.

Recovery Phase Needs Assessment

Needs assessments for the recovery phase (and for early recovery) can look at a much broader range of issues than initial assessments. Some examples include the following:

- **Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA)**, which often combines representatives of the national government and international organisations and looks at a broad range of issues ranging from

About ACAPS

ACAPS is an initiative of a consortium of three NGOs – the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), HelpAge International, and Merlin – dedicated to improving needs assessments in complex emergencies, sudden-onset disasters, and protracted crises. ACAPS works with a number of humanitarian actors, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Needs Assessment Task Force. Learn more about ACAPS at <http://www.acaps.org> and on Twitter at @ACAPSproject.

infrastructure damage, environmental effects, social needs, and macroeconomic impacts²⁹.

- **Post-Conflict Needs Assessment (PCNA)**, which again combines representatives from national governments and international organisations. This may look at issues including peace and security, rule of law, and refugee returns, among other development needs³⁰.

Recovery phase needs assessments are more focused on overall policy directions than immediate relief phase assessments. This means that the ways journalists can use these assessments is similar, but the type of information they contain and the possible stories that may result are different.

²⁷ GEO: A Mobile App Improves Decision-making in Humanitarian Responses www.internews.org/our-stories/project-updates/geo-mobile-app-improves-decision-making-humanitarian-responses?device=mobile

²⁸ <http://www.acaps.org/en/pages/what-is-acaps>

²⁹ See for example the PDNA following Haiti's 2010 earthquake: <http://reliefweb.int/node/351317>.

³⁰ See for example an overview of PCNAs by the United Nations Development Group: <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=144>.

Needs Assessments and Journalist Reporting

Journalist Roles: Before and During a Needs Assessment

We have noted that providing aid in the first days is usually chaotic. People are in urgent need, full aid supplies may not have yet arrived, and, crucially, organisations do not have enough information about what people are doing and what they need. At the same time, communities do not have enough information about what humanitarian organisations are doing.

This means that, in the early days, the journalist's role is especially vital. Journalists know their communities and know how to find local information. The information they gather and give out can help save lives in the first days, even in the first hours, of a crisis. But journalists must know how to get this information to humanitarian organisations. This is one reason why it is important to understand how humanitarian organisations work.

This doesn't mean that journalists end up working 'for' humanitarian organisations. It simply points out that information contained in good reporting can help communities in need – if journalists and media organisations know how to get that information to the right place. We saw how that can work in earlier case studies, in which journalists (whether professional, community, or citizen journalists) – provided information both to humanitarian organisations (for example in Haiti with Internews' ENDK) or to the public (for example in Indonesia with Jalin Merapi), who could then help people in need.

The information in an assessment can be a useful resource for journalists. It can highlight story ideas and community needs that journalists can then report on, and help provide essential information to communities.



Radio Absoun station manager, Mahamad Daoussa, works as a tech during a live radio show in Iriba, in eastern Chad.

Just as importantly, assessment results will help explain what decisions get made about where aid is delivered – and they can help highlight any gaps that are not met. This is also true if the assessment itself has gaps – maybe there are places the assessors didn't travel, important questions they didn't ask, or key issues they missed. Journalists can also help explain to communities what is happening and not happening – how the assessments are taking place, why they're important, and what should or should not happen next.

Journalist Roles: After the Needs Assessment

Journalists continue to play a vital role after a needs assessment is finished.



Even when an assessment is done, situations change. Journalists can get information much faster than most humanitarian organisations – that’s their job. This means good journalistic reports help keep everyone up to date with new needs that emerge after the assessment is finished.

Journalists’ role in promoting accountability is also critical. Identifying needs through an assessment is one thing, but if those needs are not met by the humanitarian sector within a reasonable timeframe after the assessment is complete, then journalists also need to highlight this.

The Most Important Role: Journalists in the Community

Finally, *assessments are only one kind of information*. There is an enormous amount of information that *is not captured by assessments that is just as important*. This can include what communities think about their situation and the aid response, how they may be getting assistance other than from aid organisations, how they are helping each other, and what suggestions and recommendations they might have for humanitarian organisations or their own government.

Communities need to raise their own voice and tell their own stories – this is a crucial part of the humanitarian response, but it is not something that needs assessments can include. Documenting these stories is an important part of the journalist’s job.

Assessing Local Information Ecologies

Needs assessments often have gaps. A common one is the failure to assess the *information* people need, the information they already have, the channels they use, and (most importantly) trust and which communication channels they have access to in order to speak with aid providers. How do communities find out what they need to know? What’s the best way to reach them with information and to hear what they have to say?

Despite the importance of answering those questions, little systematic attention has been given in traditional humanitarian response operations to the information and communication needs of disaster-affected people. This failure to effectively engage local communities not only unlinks them from the aid response, but it also undermines the effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian operations.



Sheikh Bashir Ahmed, 80, listens to his radio at Ifo refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya. Ahmed told Internews that he takes his radio with him everywhere, and especially likes to listen to the prayer broadcasts.

What is GEO?

The Global Emergency Overview (GEO - <http://geo.acaps.org>) mobile application is designed to improve access for emergency relief workers to up-to-date information and analysis on crisis impact, needs, and response gaps, and to create shared situation awareness at the early stage of a disaster.

This will eventually improve the effectiveness of humanitarian operations, including addressing the information and communication needs of disaster-affected communities.

GEO consists of a web interface as well as apps for mobile telephones and tablet computers on both iOS and Android platforms.

Journalists need to try to understand how communities get their information. Local media are one way, but there are others, including through religious institutions, from friends and family, over the phone, online, or from government or humanitarian organisations, to name a few. If journalists have an understanding of this, they can get a better idea of what information is already out there and point communities in the right direction to find out more. They can also amplify information that is already available.

Information needs assessments can help both journalists and humanitarian organisations. There are some examples of this in practice. In 2011, Internews, through the *infoasaid* project, worked with key bodies in the UN³¹ to add questions on information and communication to needs assessments. As a result, four questions on

³¹ The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Needs Assessment Task Force (IASC NATF; see below for more details on the IASC.

information access have been incorporated into the Multi-Cluster Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA)³².

The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS)³³ also now includes a specific section on the media and telecommunications landscapes in some of the disaster needs analyses (DNAs) they produce. Internews and ACAPS have also developed GEO, a mobile app to share the content developed in the DNAs that also can be of great use to journalists.

Internews and other organisations are part of a sustained effort to highlight the need for better information and communication in humanitarian responses. A key network involved in this effort is the Communicating with Disaster-Affected Communities (CDAC) Network, which provides resources, research, and input to support international humanitarian organisations in working more effectively with local media³⁴.

This work includes not just understanding what information communities need, but also a focus on helping local media recover after a disaster – for example by repairing radio towers or printing presses – so that they can help provide communities with information in the response effort³⁵. This manual is part of changing and improving practice in this area.

More and more humanitarian organisations understand that journalists and local media play a critical role in filling information gaps in emergency response, but there is still a long way to go to make sure this role is strengthened as effectively as possible.

32 See <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/multi-clustersector-initial-rapid-assessment-mira-approach-process-methodologies-and-for-more-detail>.

33 See www.acaps.org. ACAPS is a consortium of three humanitarian organizations, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Merlin, and Handicap International.

34 See www.cdacnetwork.org/.

35 For example, see CDAC Haiti's efforts: <http://cdac-haiti.org/en/content/what-cdac>.

TAKEAWAY 8

What Happens in a Humanitarian Response:

Journalists need to understand what happens in humanitarian responses, including the following:

- *National and international humanitarian crisis response systems and policies*
- *Humanitarian crisis response phases – relief, recovery, and rehabilitation – what happens in each, and how journalists can use phases to support better reporting*
- *Needs assessments: what they are, and how they are useful for journalists*
- *The roles journalists play as one part of the 'information ecology' that communities try to access*

Humanitarian Response: Key National Actors

The Need for Research

One of the biggest factors in a crisis response is the role, capacity, and approach of the national government or, in the case of refugee crises, the host government. If the national government has prepared for disasters and its institutions are strong (and not too damaged by the disaster itself), this is a major boost to communities' ability to recover and get back on their feet.

But of course every country has a different system, and it is impossible to produce a manual that can provide an overview of all the national government disaster response scenarios. This means that it's up to journalists themselves to ensure that they have a good grasp of key issues and contacts in the country concerned.

Some of this key information may be provided by the national government itself, whether that is a particular ministry or an institution dedicated to disaster response. Some may be provided by leading national non-government organisation (NGO) umbrella groups or coordinating bodies. Some may be collated by the United Nation's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (see below for more on UNOCHA). And of course local media outlets and journalists may have some of the contacts needed.

It is incumbent upon journalists to gather this information from all possible sources to be able to do their jobs. Individual journalists and media outlets should be sure to have the necessary information at their fingertips, regularly review their contacts and their knowledge of how their country has organised the national humanitarian response, identify gaps, and devote time to filling them. At the minimum, they should know the following:

- *The main office or agency responsible for overseeing and coordinating the response effort, if as often happens one has been especially established³⁶*
- *The roles of national government offices and ministries*
The role of the military, if relevant
Local government roles and responsibilities
Leading non-government organisations, especially any working within national-level NGO coordination bodies or with local-level representatives or partners

³⁶ For example in Pakistan for the 2005 earthquake and the 2010 floods, this was the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). In Aceh, Indonesia, for the 2004 earthquake and tsunami, it was the Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi NAD-Nias (Agency for the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Aceh and Nias, BRR). In its own response to the tsunami, Sri Lanka set up the Task Force for Relief (TAFOR) and the Task Force for Rebuilding the Nation (TAFREN), among others.

- Others working in the response effort, ranging from community groups to religious organisations, businesses, unions, charities, and so on

The details that journalists need to know for each organisation include, for example, the following:

- Who are the main contacts for media enquiries?
- What is the organisational structure? Is it private, public, voluntary?
- What is the organisations' mandate? For example, if it's a government agency, what legislation or regulations established it, what is it legally required to do, and who does it report to – a president, a minister, a parliament?
- What work does it do within the humanitarian realm – does it focus on coordination? On health or housing? On education?
- In which areas of the country does it work or have local partners?

It is especially important for journalists to understand how different agencies and organisations communicate. Does the military coordinate with the local government? Do the different ministries coordinate with one another? Who has the final say? Who are the most appropriate people for journalists to talk to?

It's also crucial to understand where the money is coming from. Where do the national and local governments get the funds for the response? What part of that funding comes from the national budget, and what comes from international donations?

All of these details will help in humanitarian response reporting. If a journalist or a media outlet does not have this general information easily available, then researching it should be a priority.

TAKEAWAY 9

Key National Actors

Journalists should have a strong grasp of the following in the national humanitarian response:

- The roles, individuals and contacts for:
 - ▶ relevant national ministries;
 - ▶ national and local government agencies;
 - ▶ the national military (if relevant);
 - ▶ humanitarian NGOs;
 - ▶ human-rights NGOs;
 - ▶ local charities;
 - ▶ business foundations; and
 - ▶ religious organisations;

Plus, others as relevant (e.g., lawyers' associations if legal or human-rights issues are significant, etc.)

- A strong understanding of national humanitarian response policies, including accountability and decision-making processes
- A strong understanding of national humanitarian response funding
- A strong understanding of any national government agreements that form the basis for international participation in the response effort
- A list of key contacts in all of the above

Humanitarian Response: Key International Actors



International Humanitarian Response: Who's Involved?

Who's Who?

There are a large number of international organisations involved in humanitarian crisis response, and no one crisis is exactly the same as another. Some organisations will be very active in one crisis and less in others.

It is crucial for journalists to know who these organisations are; their roles, mandates, and responsibilities; and

something of their goals – what they exist to achieve. It is also crucial to know how they organise and coordinate together, and how they raise funds.

In all cases, international organisations can legally begin operating in a country only if the national government requests them to come and they establish an agreement. Journalists must know the basis of this agreement and the key points of liaison between the national and international bodies. Usually at the top level this is between a key government body (for example a presidential office or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the United Nations top representative, explained in more detail below. Individual organisations may



Aden Hassan Tarah, 24, a reporter for Kenya's Star FM radio station, interviews Ahmed Mohamed, 40, a recent arrival to Dadaab, about his experience being tortured by the Ethiopian military, and about life as a refugee at the Ifo Extension camp in Dadaab, Kenya on August 7, 2011. Tarah fled fighting in Mogadishu with his family when he was four years old, and has spent the majority of his life living at Dadaab, the world's largest refugee camp.

also need a relationship with a particular ministry or other official body to be able to work.

With a large number of organisations working in different areas and targeting different needs, the situation is often very confusing, and it can be hard for the communities affected by crisis to understand who all the actors are, especially in areas where international organisations have not previously operated. Journalists have to understand this if they are to report effectively on international humanitarian aid efforts.

We will look at several humanitarian actors in detail below. But first, a quick introduction.

International humanitarian organisations include the following:

- The UN system, usually led on the ground by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)³⁷.
- UN organisations and agencies, including for example the World Food Program (WFP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF), UNOCHA, and others. The Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. This includes the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), which are two different parts of the same movement; and the National Societies.
- International non-government organisations (INGOs). There are many different types of INGOs, including Western, non-Western, secular or humanist, and faith-based INGOs, among others. Some raise money from the public, some from governments, and many from both sources.

Overall coordination happens through the *cluster system*, where organisations working on the same sector, for example health, meet to coordinate all aid in health-related assistance.

Donor organisations also often have representatives on the ground during a humanitarian crisis response. These include *donor governments* and *multilateral donors* like the World Bank. Donor governments include Western and, increasingly, non-Western governments.

³⁷ The HCT is a strategic and operational decision-making and oversight forum established and led by the HC. Composition includes representatives from the UN, International Organization for Migration (IOM), international NGOs, and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement. Agencies that are also designated cluster (i.e., sector) leads should represent the clusters as well as their respective organizations. The HCT is responsible for agreeing on common strategic issues related to humanitarian action.

The UN in Humanitarian Crisis Response

The United Nations

The United Nations was established on 24 October 1945 by 51 countries committed to preserving peace through international cooperation and collective security. Today, nearly every nation in the world belongs to the UN: membership totals 193 countries.³⁸

This manual assumes that journalists are aware of the basic role and mandates of the United Nations, including the General Assembly and the Security Council. For those who want to explore this further, see www.un.org/Overview/uninbrief/about.shtml.

UN Humanitarian Response Structures

A UN humanitarian response must be requested by the relevant national host government to be established. The UN has specific structures to support its emergency response work.³⁹

The **Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)** is the primary overall mechanism for humanitarian assistance. It is a unique inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development, and decision making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners. Its membership includes nine UN agencies, organisations, and offices, along with the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the World Bank, and three consortia of INGOs and voluntary organisations. Some of these organisations are full members, while others are standing invitees.⁴⁰

³⁸ See <http://www.un.org/Overview/uninbrief/about.shtml>.

³⁹ These are different from UN structures for other activities (for example, peacekeeping or development activities), although several of the same organisations overlap in both.

⁴⁰ For more detail, see <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/downloadDoc.aspx?docID=5712>.

The IASC establishes policies, decides strategy, and provides guidelines that frame UN humanitarian activities in a crisis response. It includes several working groups, task forces, and other bodies, which work on particular issues⁴¹. (These include, for example, how to coordinate humanitarian needs assessments.⁴²)

The **Emergency Relief Coordinator**, who is also the Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, or the UN's top humanitarian official, chairs the IASC. At the time of this writing, Baroness Valerie Amos holds this post.

Within a country undergoing a humanitarian crisis, the *UN Humanitarian Coordinator (HC)* is usually the top UN official in the emergency response. If the UN already has a *Resident Coordinator (RC)* in the country (established to oversee development and other programs before the crisis took place), this person will usually also take on the role of Humanitarian Coordinator. There are a number of different ways this role can be filled or established, not always using the title 'Humanitarian Coordinator', but still aiming to fulfil the relevant functions⁴³.

The HC (or RC) decides to establish a *Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)*. The HCT is made up of Country Directors or Country Representatives of humanitarian organisations in the nation where the crisis is taking place. The HCT's size is limited, and it can include UN organisations, INGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent, and others. The HCT sets agreements on common objectives, priorities, coordination, and allocation of resources⁴⁴.

⁴¹ For more detail, see <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/downloadDoc.aspx?docID=5709>.

⁴² For more detail see <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/pageloader.aspx?page=content-subsidi-common-default&sb=75>.

⁴³ For example, a special UN mission – established in support of a political transition, such as in East Timor after 1999, in Kosovo, and elsewhere – will have a Special Representative of the Secretary-General as the top official. The SRSG's deputy will then often take on the Humanitarian Coordinator role in such situations.

⁴⁴ For more detail, see <http://onerresponse.info/Coordination/ClusterApproach/publicdocuments/Forms/DispForm.aspx?ID=48>.

UN Organisations

The UN includes several different organisations⁴⁵ with specific areas of focus in humanitarian response. They draw their authority from the UN system, which is established by all member states. Some UN organizations focus on humanitarian crisis, some on development issues, and many of them, in different ways, on both⁴⁶.



- **UNOCHA** (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, www.unocha.org) is, as the name suggests, 'responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies' and coordinating – but not directing – the overall effort. This includes helping to establish and support the cluster system, compiling and sharing information, and managing some emergency funding, among other tasks.



- **UNHCR** (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, www.unhcr.org) 'leads and co-ordinates international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide. Its primary purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees'.



- **WFP** (World Food Program, www.wfp.org) provides emergency food aid, 'saving the lives of victims of war, civil conflict and natural disasters'. WFP also plays a longer-term role in many countries where food insecurity prevails, not just in times of crisis.



- **UNICEF** (United Nations Children's Education Fund, www.unicef.org) focuses on children's rights, both in emergencies and in development contexts. This includes work on child survival and development, basic education and gender equality, child protection, and HIV/AIDS and children.

⁴⁵ Some of these organisations are UN agencies; some are Programmes; some are Funds, and so on. This manual doesn't go into the detail of the UN's structure; to check where each organization fits, see <http://www.un.org/en/aboutun/structure/>.

⁴⁶ A 2010 study by ALNAP found that the UN had 49,500 staff involved in humanitarian response work in 2008, 89 per cent of them national staff, and a humanitarian field budget of USD 6.2 billion, although money provided by donors specifically for humanitarian response is far lower than this figure (ALNAP, The State of the Humanitarian System: Assessing Performance and Progress, A Pilot Study: www.alnap.org, www.alnap.org/pool/files/alnap-sohs-final.pdf).



- ▶ **WHO** (World Health Organization, www.who.int) coordinates public health programs such as the provision of immunization, health education, and essential drugs.



- ▶ **UNOPS** (United Nations Office for Project Services, www.unops.org) is 'a central resource for the United Nations system in procurement and contracts management', undertaking a wide range of logistics work essential for any large-scale humanitarian response.



- ▶ **UNDP** (United Nations Development Program, www.undp.org) 'is the United Nations' global development network'. Its main areas of focus include promoting democratic governance, poverty reduction, environment and energy, and campaigns combating HIV/AIDS. In humanitarian crises, it focuses especially on recovery (including early recovery) and prevention.



- ▶ **UNFPA** (United Nations Population Fund, www.unfpa.org) 'promotes the right of universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and aims to reduce maternal mortality'.



- ▶ **FAO** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN, www.fao.org) focuses on food security, and aims 'to make sure people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives' by raising nutrition levels, increasing agricultural productivity, and raising rural living standards.



- **UN HABITAT** (United Nations Human Settlements Program, www.unhabitat.org) primarily works to develop solutions to problems in human settlement (overcrowding in cities, for example, or secure land tenure). During and after a crisis, this can include support for land title systems for displaced communities.



- **OHCHR** (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, www.ohchr.org) supports individuals and assists states to uphold human-rights standards, and aims to build partnerships with civil society and UN agencies.

All of the above UN bodies are full members of the IASC (except OHCHR, which is a 'standing invitee',⁴⁷ UNMAS, which nevertheless coordinates one of the working groups, and UNOPS). Other UN organizations that sometimes play a role in humanitarian responses can include the following:



- **UNESCO** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, www.unesco.org) aims to 'create the conditions for dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples, based upon respect for commonly shared values'. Focus areas include education; using science and policy for sustainable development; social and ethical challenges; and fostering cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. A focus on information and communication often includes activities in support of press freedom and community media.



- **UN Women** (United Nations Entity for Gender Empowerment and the Equality of Women, www.unwomen.org) combines four previous UN bodies. Its goals include the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, women's empowerment, and equality between men and women.

⁴⁷ Separately, OHCHR is also the location of the Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons, also a standing invitee: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IDPersons/Pages/Mandate.aspx>.



- ▶ **ILO** (International Labour Organization, www.ilo.org) is 'responsible for drawing up and overseeing international labour standards...[and] brings together representatives of governments, employers and workers to jointly shape policies and programmes'.



- ▶ **UNMAS** (United Nations Mine Action Service, www.mineaction.org) 'collaborates with 13 other UN departments, agencies, programmes and funds to ensure an effective, proactive and coordinated response to the problems of landmines and explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions.'



IOM - OIM

- ▶ **IOM** (International Organization for Migration, www.iom.int) often takes on roles similar in stature to UN agencies in humanitarian responses on the ground. However, it is not part of the UN. First established to assist in the resettlement of displaced populations in Europe after World War II, it is now a multilateral organization with 146 member countries. It "works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people.' International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is the largest humanitarian network in the world⁴⁸. Its mission is to alleviate human suffering, to protect life and health, and to uphold human dignity, especially during armed conflicts and other emergencies. It is present in every country and supported by millions of volunteers. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is dedicated to preventing and alleviating human suffering in warfare and in emergencies such as epidemics, floods, and earthquakes.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is neither part of the UN nor an INGO. It is unique, and in many ways its history marks the foundation of international humanitarian principles.

There are three parts to the movement:

- *ICRC, the International Committee of the Red Cross*
- *IFRC, the International Federation of the Red Cross/Red Crescent*
- *The National Societies that exist in 180 countries.*
The IFRC is the Federation of the National Societies.

These are all separate organizations but are committed to the same seven fundamental principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality.⁴⁹



The **ICRC** upholds humanitarian values in *conflict crises*, including war and complex emergencies. Its 'exclusively humanitarian mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. It directs and coordinates the Movement's international relief activities during armed conflicts'.

The ICRC was the original organization of the Red Cross Movement, established in 1863 after its founder, Dr Henry Dunant, was confronted with human suffering caused by the wars taking place in Italy. The founding of the ICRC was a major step towards widespread recognition of the need to develop, recognise, promote, and defend universal humanitarian principles. The movement is based in Switzerland.

The ICRC has the role of 'the guardian and promoter of international humanitarian law', drawing on the 1949 Geneva Conventions that protect civilians in conflict. In a humanitarian crisis that involves conflict, the ICRC facilitates or provides direct relief for civilians affected by the fighting; provides links between family members who have been separated; and advocates for all parties to follow humanitarian law.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ ICRC – The Movement www.icrc.org/eng/who-we-are/movement/overview-the-movement.htm.

⁴⁹ Initially it was only called 'Red Cross'; however, the 'Red Crescent' name and emblem were subsequently added. On different occasions there have been discussions on whether to add or change the emblems in the interests of inclusion; see <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/emblem-history.htm>.

⁵⁰ See www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/publication/p0963.htm, or visit www.icrc.org for more detail.



The **IFRC** upholds humanitarian values in *crises without conflict*, for example after natural disasters. It was established at the end of World War I to promote coordination between National Societies.

IFRC activities cover three core areas:

- Disaster response and recovery, with an emphasis on disaster preparedness
- Development, especially in health including HIV/AIDS, climate change, and others
- Promoting social inclusion and peace, including integrating marginalised communities and cross-generational dialogue⁵¹

In a humanitarian response, the IFRC office may include representatives from the federation, and from overseas individual National Societies that have come to work on the response effort; for example, the IFRC may be working on the response, and the British Red Cross may also be working from the same office.

National Societies typically include staff and volunteers throughout a national territory, and this reach provides much of the strength of the RC Movement in a humanitarian response.

National Societies are, however, established over many years to work on areas outside of humanitarian crisis, commonly including community-based health, first aid training, youth and volunteer activities, and

disaster preparedness⁵². A National Society may be called Red Cross or Red Crescent, depending on the terms predominantly used in the country in question.

What Is an International Non-Government Organisation (INGO)?

INGOs are separate from government and business. They are not part of the government in power, nor are they owned or bought and sold like a private business. They can get funding directly from the public, from government (as grants or in other forms), from multilateral organisations (like the UN or the World Bank), or from private foundations.⁵³ They are registered as 'nonprofits' or 'charities' in their home countries, which means they must use all their money for their work, not for private gain (different home countries have different rules and names for registering INGOs).

There are several different types of INGO⁵⁴. Most have typically come from Western countries, but there are increasing numbers of INGOs from elsewhere. Types include the following:

► **Confederations, federations, alliances, networks:** Some INGOs are in fact several

⁵² See www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/the-movement/national-societies for more details.

⁵³ Sometimes INGOs have separate business arms that raise money and donate their profits back to the INGO.

⁵⁴ The ALNAP study identified 235 INGOs active in humanitarian work 2008, with budgets ranging from USD 250 million per year (six INGO networks or federations were in this category) to under 10 million per year (179 INGOs were in this category). The total money spent on humanitarian activities by INGOs in that year was USD 5.7 billion, which covered almost 113,000 staff, 95 per cent of them national (ALNAP, op. cit.). The six biggest INGOs, by budget and staff numbers, are CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Oxfam, Save the Children, and World Vision International. There are in addition countless very small INGOs that may appear in only one or two locations.

⁵¹ See www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do.



organisations, with head offices registered in a number of countries. They can share the same general name but have different offices on the ground.

For example, there may be one office for Oxfam UK, another for Oxfam Australia, and so on. So when covering a story, it may be important for journalists to recognise that just because two INGO workers on the ground may both work for 'Oxfam', they may in fact have different offices and programs.

- ▶ **National INGOs:** These have a single head office registered and based in only one country. For example, the Norwegian Refugee Council works across the world but has a single head office in Norway (unlike, for comparison's sake, the various Oxfam offices in different countries).
- ▶ **Service-based and rights-based:** Service-based INGOs aim to deliver material needs to communities, including food, water, health care, shelter, and so on. Rights-based INGOs aim to defend human rights as a final goal – while they also often deliver material needs like food or water, they see this as only one aspect of people's rights.

Their programs usually include campaigns to defend and promote human rights more broadly.

- ▶ **INGO mandates:** Many INGOs base their goals and work on international charters (such as the International Declaration of Human Rights). Others explicitly draw on religious faith as inspiration. These are examples of organisational mandates, described in more detail below.
- ▶ **Other issues and themes:** Many INGOs are also part of networks that come together around specific issues or themes. There is, for example, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP, www.hapinternational.org), which aims to improve organisations' accountability to humanitarian principles, goals, and to affected communities; the Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS, www.acaps.org), which aims to improve needs assessments; the Emergency Capacities Building project (ECB, www.ecbproject.org) which aims to improve the speed and quality of humanitarian response; and the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA, www.theqbha.org), which aims to improve rapid responses to humanitarian needs among member British organisations. There are a range of other examples.

Profiles of Selected INGOs

Below are profiles of a few selected INGOs. While by no means exhaustive, this list is representative of some of the largest INGOs that often operate in humanitarian contexts.

They are grouped according to whether they are 'combinations' (federations, etc.) of several organisations or whether they are based in only one country. Most can be described as 'rights-based' in their approach. As noted, several draw their mandates from international secular principles, while others draw from religious principles.

The profiles below are largely taken from the websites of the organisations themselves; they are not produced separately by Internews.

Confederations, Federations, Alliances, Networks, Secular Mandates



- **ActionAid** says: 'We help people fight for the rights that they are denied ... [and] take action together to hold their governments to account, and we give local organisations our support where they need it'. Its focus includes emergencies and conflict, food rights, women's rights, governance, and HIV/AIDS. ActionAid International's office is in South Africa, with national organisations in several other countries. (www.actionaid.org)



- **CARE International** is a confederation of 12 separate, nationally based CARE organizations. Its goal is to help 'tackle underlying causes of poverty so that people can become self-sufficient.... [E]mergency relief is an important part of CARE's mandate, since natural and manmade disasters can drive otherwise self-sustaining populations into poverty and can often eradicate years of development work'. (www.care-international.org)



- **International Rescue Committee (IRC)** 'responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises and helps people to survive and rebuild their lives'. Areas of work include emergency response relief, governance and rights, women (including gender-based violence), health care, advocacy, and refugee resettlement, among others. The IRC has headquarters in the US, UK, Belgium, and Switzerland. (www.theirc.org).



NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

- **Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)** 'promotes and protects the rights of people who have been forced to flee their countries or their homes within their countries'. Core humanitarian crisis activities include emergency food security; information, counselling, and legal assistance; camp management; and advocacy, among other areas. It is based in Norway, describes itself as a foundation, and currently works in around 20 countries. (www.nrc.no).



- **Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)** is 'an international movement made up of 19 associative organizations', each based in its own country. It 'provides emergency medical assistance...in nearly 60 countries to people whose survival is threatened by violence, neglect, or catastrophe', and also pursues a strong advocacy role. (www.msf.org)



- **Oxfam** is 'an international confederation of 15 organizations working together in 98 countries', and says '[w]e work directly with communities and we seek to influence the powerful to ensure that poor people can improve their lives and livelihoods and have a say in decisions that affect them'. Oxfam's areas of focus are development, emergencies, campaigning, advocacy, and policy research. (www.oxfam.org)



- **Save the Children** is an alliance made up of 27 different national Save the Children organizations, which work in more than 100 countries. Its vision is 'a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation'. Areas of work range across child protection, child rights, disaster risk reduction, and emergencies, among others. (www.savethechildren.net)

Faith-Based Mandates



- **Caritas International** says: 'Our work is about ensuring the poorest and most marginalized are the driving force in our emergency response, sustainable development and peace building'. Areas include emergencies, peace and reconciliation, economic justice, climate change, HIV and AIDS, and Women and Migration.

The umbrella Caritas Internationalis brings together 165 national members, with headquarters in Vatican City. (www.caritas.org).



Islamic Relief Worldwide 'is an international relief and development charity which envisages a caring world where people unite to respond to the suffering of others'. Founded in the UK, it operates in 25 countries and has 15 affiliate or 'partner' organizations worldwide. Areas of work include emergency relief and disaster preparedness, health and nutrition, orphans and child welfare, and education, among others. (www.islamic-relief.com)

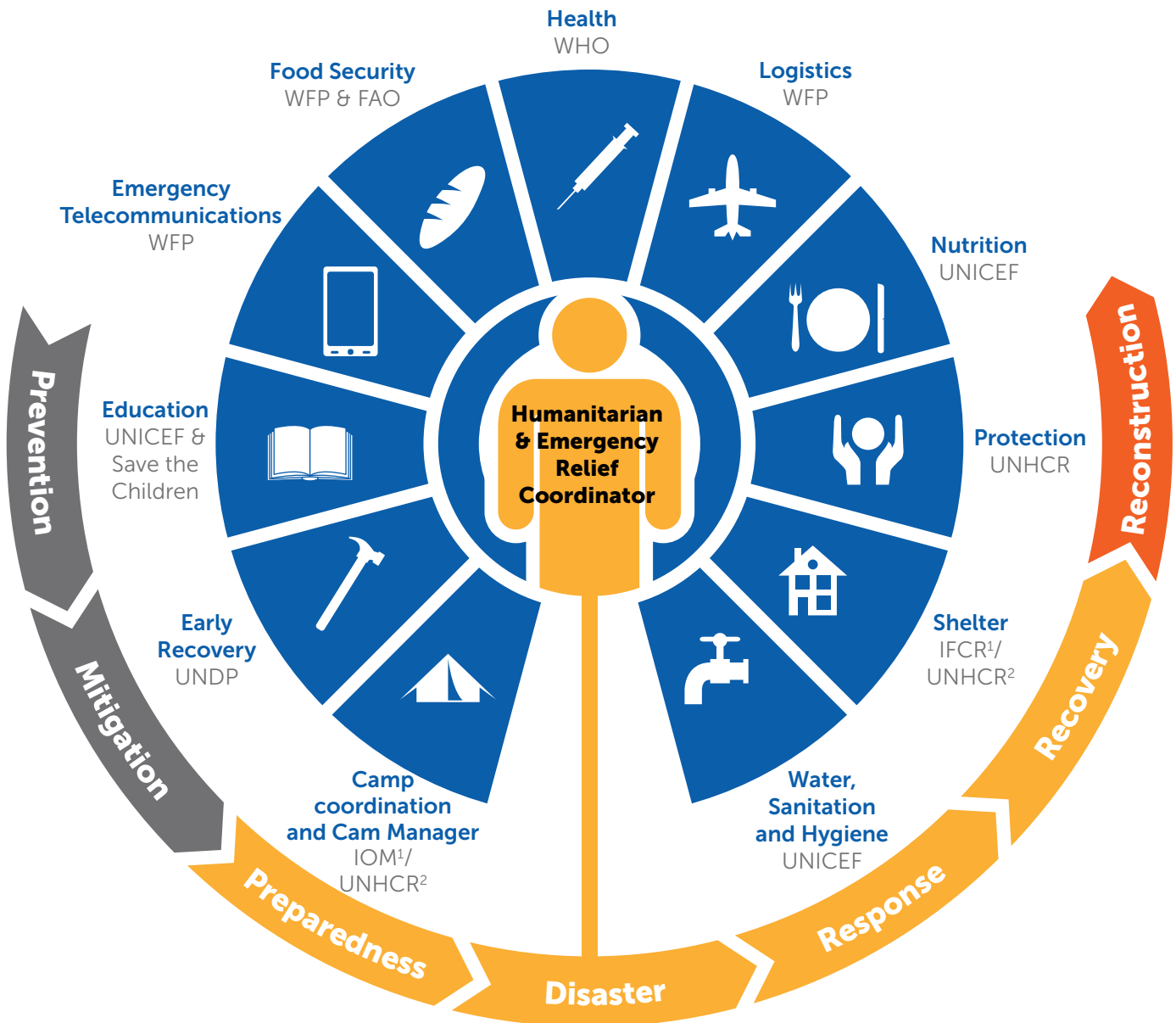


- **Muslim Aid**, based in the UK and 'guided by the teachings of Islam, endeavours to tackle poverty and its causes by developing innovative and sustainable solutions that enable individuals and their communities to live with dignity and by supporting initiatives that promote economic and social justice'. Its areas of focus include disasters and emergencies, shelter and construction, education, and several campaigns, among others. (www.muslimaid.org)



World Vision

- **World Vision International** 'is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice... regardless of religion, race, ethnicity or gender' and 'consists of numerous national entities around the world, grouped in what is informally referred to as the World Vision "partnership"'. (www.wvi.org)



Coordination in the Chaos: The Cluster System

In a humanitarian crisis, communities need all kinds of help: food, medical care, shelter, safety and security, clean water. The needs quickly become more complex: education for children, livelihoods for parents, help with trauma, etc. Time is short, requirements are urgent, and systems like roads or communications are often damaged. It is complicated, difficult, and sometimes

dangerous work that cannot be tackled by any one organization. Some organizations are experts in food, others in health, others in provision of water and sanitation or education. In any crisis response scenario, there can be many, many organizations trying to provide support – sometimes numbering in the hundreds.

Without coordination, it is impossible to direct relief where it is required without missing groups in need, repeating the same efforts, and wasting resources. Will the right aid reach the right people? Will some people get nothing, while others get too much, and others get



the wrong support that doesn't help at all? Coordinating a humanitarian response is essential. But with so many needs, and so many organizations with their own different, independent ways of working, it can be a challenge.

What is the Cluster Approach? ⁵⁵

Overall coordination happens through the cluster system, in which organisations working on the same sector, for example health, meet to coordinate all aid in health-related assistance. Under this system/approach, organizations gather according to their focus area: Health organisations form the Health Cluster, education organisations the Education Cluster, and so on. An organization that works in both areas will join both clusters.

The cluster system was set up to try and achieve more coordinated emergency response efforts after a review of failures in effective humanitarian response following the 2004 Asian tsunami. This major reform of UN humanitarian coordination, known as the Humanitarian Reform Agenda, introduced a number of new elements to enhance predictability, accountability, and partnership. The cluster approach was one of these new elements. The cluster approach was established by the IASC and first used in response to Pakistan's earthquake in 2005.

⁵⁵ <http://clusters.humanitarianresponse.info/about-clusters/what-is-the-cluster-approach>

The cluster system is led by the UN, often together or in liaison with the national government. There are also other networks and alliances that coordinate on a smaller scale. Clusters are established as part of an international emergency response, based on an analysis of humanitarian need and coordination capacity on the ground, and in consultation with national partners. The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator should recommend the activation of clusters based on stipulated criteria⁵⁶.

Cluster Leads

Each cluster has one or more lead organisations, usually – but not always – a UN organization. National government representatives sometimes co-chair clusters. NGOs and INGOs operating in the country generally join as participants. Leads and co-leads are organizations that have the appropriate skills and expertise, and are large enough to provide predictable and reliable coordination support.

The IASC has defined cluster areas and cluster lead organisations at the global level. Often the same cluster and cluster lead are set up during a crisis response on the ground at the national level – but not always, as we will see.

⁵⁶ <http://clusters.humanitarianresponse.info/activate-and-deactive-clusters>

Cluster Areas and Global Cluster Leads⁵⁷

Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)

Oversees the management of camps for displaced persons.

Lead: **UNHCR** – for refugees, and IDPs* from conflicts
IOM – for refugees and IDPs in natural disasters

*IDP stands for internally displaced person, someone who has been forced to leave her home but has stayed in the same country. A refugee is someone who leaves his home to another country.

Early Recovery

Works across other clusters to make sure recovery activities are planned in each area from the early stages.

Lead: **UNDP**

Education

Oversees the provision of education to children.

Lead: **UNICEF/Save the Children Alliance**

Emergency Shelter

Oversees the provision of emergency shelter. This can include moves to transitional shelter after the relief phase.

Lead: **UNHCR** – for IDPs from conflicts
IFRC* – for IDPs from natural disasters

*IFRC is a 'convener' rather than a 'lead'. This is because its own rules allow it to take on some roles but not the full responsibility that a 'lead' organization holds.

⁵⁷ See <http://onerresponse.info/Coordination/ClusterApproach/publicdocuments/GCC-Contact%20List-March2011.pdf> for more detail. Some of these areas were established before the cluster system. Some documentation will describe some areas as clusters; in other documentation, some may be referred to as 'sectors' or 'areas', not 'clusters'. The manual will not get into this level of internal detail. For the purposes of a humanitarian response on the ground, these groups are activated as 'clusters.'

Emergency Telecommunications

Oversees the provision of telecommunications necessary for the relief effort. (This does not mean telecommunications for the entire civilian population, but rather for humanitarian organizations, whether international, government, or national NGO).

Lead: **WFP** (while WFP does not 'specialise' in telecommunications as its main mandate, it has the extensive logistical capacity, including communications, that are necessary for food distributions)

Food Security

Oversees measures to establish food security. This means both emergency food distribution and restoring agricultural production and can also involve food markets.

Lead: **WFP/FAO**

Health

Oversees measures to provide emergency medical care and establish or re-establish health care capacity (hospitals, clinics, etc.)

Lead: **WHO**

Logistics

Oversees and coordinates shared logistics efforts. This can include air transport of aid and personnel (plane, helicopter), ground transport (trucks), and so on.

Lead: **WFP**

Nutrition

Nutrition is not just about providing food. Treatment for those suffering from malnutrition, especially vital for young children on whose mental and physical development it can seriously impact, requires very specific measures.

Lead: **UNICEF**

Protection

Protection does not mean providing armed security guards. It means using all methods to ensure that civilians are safe during the crisis and the emergency response. It is not just a single issue but rather 'cuts across' all other areas. For example, camp management includes providing latrines. But if the latrines are far away and dark at night, this potentially increases the risk that women and girls can be attacked when they go there. Protection aims to promote measures across the entire crisis response to help keep vulnerable groups safe.

Lead: **UNHCR**

Protection sub-clusters

Because there are many different vulnerable groups and issues that affect safety and security, the Protection Cluster also has several sub-clusters, each with its own lead

Child Protection sub-cluster: Focuses on measures to protect children from risk, whether at school, at home, in camps, or separated from their families.

Lead: **UNICEF**

Gender-Based Violence sub-cluster: Focuses especially on violence that affects women and girls.

Lead: **UNICEF/UNFPA**

Housing, Land, and Property sub-cluster: focuses on housing, land, and property issues, in part because they can affect vulnerability and risk. People without access to their houses or land are already at greater risk, because they have lost their 'base'. Disputes over housing, land, and property can also create greater conflict, and so increase levels of risk and danger.

Lead: **UN-HABITAT**

Mine Action sub-cluster: Land mines create long-term risk to all social groups, including farmers, children, and others. Mine action includes education on how to avoid the risks of land mines, and efforts to remove them.

Lead: **UNMAS**





A Syrian woman walks outside a stretch of tents set up for Syrian refugees who have fled to neighboring Lebanon, Friday, June 15, 2012.



Rule of Law and Justice sub-cluster: Recognises that strengthening rule of law is fundamental to providing protection. This includes professional and effective police behaviour, effective courts, and so on. It is almost inevitably a long-term development process that also underlies urgent needs in a humanitarian response.

Lead: **UNDP/OHCHR**

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

Focuses on measures to provide services and promote behaviour essential to all aspects of WASH. This can include providing clean drinking water, promoting the use of latrines instead of open fields, etc.

Lead: **UNICEF**

Working Groups, Task Forces, and More

There are also a number of areas of activity in a response that are not designated as 'clusters', but are rather 'cross-cutting themes'. This means that they focus on issues that need attention within each cluster, a little like 'early recovery' or 'protection', but often with a more specific focus.

These are not clusters, but rather are working groups, task forces, and so on. They do not have global leads but rather 'global focal points', several of them INGOs. Briefly, they are the following:

CROSS-CUTTING THEME	GLOBAL FOCAL POINT
Age	HelpAge
Environment	UNEP
Gender	UNHCR/IMC/Relief International/UNICEF
HIV/AIDS	WFP/UNHCR
Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support	UNICEF/ACT

A view of the tent camp set up outside of Arssal in northern Lebanon, which borders Syria as seen on Friday, June 15, 2012. These tents were set up by a main mosque on a hillside to accommodate the increasing number of Syrian refugees fleeing across the border.



Cluster Deployment⁵⁸

The cluster approach is the main system for coordinating an international humanitarian response. However, it is not used exactly the same way in each crisis. Not every global cluster will be set up at the national level, and different organizations may be designated as the lead. Decisions about which clusters are established will depend on the humanitarian need and on which organisations are working on the ground.

How Clusters Are Established and What They Do

The UN Humanitarian Coordinator and the Humanitarian Country Team get agreement from organisations working on the response as to which clusters are needed in a given country and who will lead them. The IASC approves this decision.

An international organisation leads a cluster. National government representatives often co-chair cluster meetings, because they have ultimate responsibility for humanitarian efforts in their country. Journalists should know which government departments are on each cluster and which official represents that department.

The cluster is the *link* between the national and international humanitarian efforts. It *does not decide*

⁵⁸ For more detail on the information below, see [http://onerresponse.info/Coordination/ClusterApproach/publicdocuments/IASC%20Guidance%20Note%20on%20using%20the%20Cluster%20Approach%20to%20strengthen%20Humanitarian%20Response%20\(November%202006\).pdf](http://onerresponse.info/Coordination/ClusterApproach/publicdocuments/IASC%20Guidance%20Note%20on%20using%20the%20Cluster%20Approach%20to%20strengthen%20Humanitarian%20Response%20(November%202006).pdf), at <http://onerresponse.info/Coordination/ClusterApproach/publicdocuments/Forms/DispForm.aspx?ID=25>

the national humanitarian policies of the government. The goal is rather to make sure the international response works alongside government policies.

Several cluster activities may provide key information and/or set the context for humanitarian reporting stories. Cluster activities include the following:

- *Make sure all relevant humanitarian partners are included in each cluster and that information about relevant activities is shared.*
- *Coordinate with government, local NGOs, and other relevant actors.*
- *Facilitate needs assessment with participation of relevant organisations.*
- *Plan what happens next in the aid response. This includes helping to decide what funds to seek from donors⁵⁹ (see 'Module 11. Donors and Funding', below).*
- *Make sure the response meets relevant standards (see 'Module 12. Walking the Talk', below).*

Finally, a cluster lead is also the 'provider of last resort'. This means if there is a vital humanitarian need that no one else can meet, the organisation that is in the lead must meet that need. For example, if UNHCR leads the Camp Coordination Cluster, a camp needs more tents, and no one else can provide the tents, UNHCR has the responsibility to do this. However, this responsibility may have practical limitations; for example, if there is not enough money to pay for the tents, or if security problems on the road make it too dangerous to transport them to where they are needed, then the tents cannot be delivered.

⁵⁹ This includes preparing the Common Humanitarian Assessment Plan and requests for donor funding (e.g., the flash appeal and the consolidated appeal).

Why Is the Cluster System Important for Journalists?

It is not the job of every journalist to follow every decision by every cluster – if that happened, journalists would spend all their time in cluster meetings and never have time to talk to people in the community and report on what is happening there. However, it is important for journalists to understand what the clusters are, what they do, and why. Understanding the cluster system means understanding the key ways in which the international humanitarian response works, which helps journalists to understand the strengths and limitations of the relief effort.

Clusters are also great sources of information. They help produce and share reports, including needs assessments, that can give hard facts and most current data on what is happening. As cluster members specialise in specific areas of operation, they also have specialised information to offer journalists. Members of the Health Cluster should be able to offer journalists excellent contacts that can help provide information on health issues; the Education Cluster will have contacts for information on schools, and so on.

Cluster meetings are not press conferences, and therefore not open to journalists. However, it can be useful for journalists to introduce themselves to cluster leads and some key organizations that are involved in the area of humanitarian work that the journalist is covering.

Journalists, Clusters, and Dialogue

As local journalists have intimate knowledge of their own communities, they can often get information about what is happening faster than the cluster system can. Sometimes it can take a long time for key information to reach the heart of the humanitarian



A woman waits to be seen by a doctor at a free clinic in Gouroukoun IDP camp, near Goz Beida, Chad.

information machine – journalists are usually much faster at this. If journalists can use the cluster system not only to get information, but also to share the information they have from community sources, this exchange can help improve the humanitarian response.

If a journalist understands and makes contact with organizations in the cluster system, she can do the following:

- Get better access to information.
- Become aware of a greater range of possible stories to cover.
- Help hold the humanitarian response accountable by reporting on its strengths and limitations.
- Use the system to share crucial information with humanitarian organizations.

UNOCHA

UNOCHA is a key organization for journalists to be aware of and to create relationships with during a humanitarian response. The role of UNOCHA includes the following:

- Holding press conferences and public information events, sometimes including visits for journalists to crisis response areas. The UN spokesperson for humanitarian responses is usually within OCHA.⁶⁰
- Gathering and disseminating crucial information, including needs assessments, situation reports, humanitarian bulletins, press releases from humanitarian organizations, UN announcements, and so on. In each humanitarian response, UNOCHA will establish a dedicated website (check www.humanitarianresponse.info). This will have an enormous amount of information for the entire humanitarian response, and a lot of this will be crucial for journalists.

⁶⁰ This is usually but not always the case. For example, a UN peacekeeping or political transition mission will have its own spokesperson's office.



- Providing coordination support for the clusters, including contact names, emails, and phone numbers.
- Managing some emergency response funds (see 'Module 11. Donors and Funding', below).

At the international level, UNOCHA is headed by the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator. In any given response, UNOCHA acts as the 'Secretariat body' for the Humanitarian Coordinator, who is the most senior United Nations official in a country experiencing a humanitarian emergency. This means that OCHA provides support in coordination, information management, advocacy, and resource mobilization.

In some emergency responses where another UN organization already has extensive operations, it may take the lead in these roles rather than UNOCHA and the HC. For example, UNHCR has overall coordination responsibilities in the Somali refugee camps in Dadaab, Northern Kenya.

TAKEAWAY 10

Key International Actors

Journalists must be able to clearly identify which international actors are involved in a humanitarian response. They must be clear about why they are important for journalists, both as information sources and in potential information-sharing cooperative relationships that can improve the humanitarian response.

This includes an understanding of the following:

- The UN and its agencies; ICRC and IFRC; IOM; key INGOs
 - Key international-level UN humanitarian structures, including the role of the IASC and ERC
 - Key national-level UN humanitarian structures, including the Humanitarian Coordinator (or equivalent)
 - The cluster system, including its role, its international structure, its national structure, and how it's deployed in a single country
- The role of UNOCHA and its importance for journalists*
The roles, structures, and mandates of all of these organisations and networks

11

Donors and Funding

Whose Money?

It is vital for journalists to know *where* the money comes from for a humanitarian response; *why* it's being given; and *how* it's managed and spent. It's a complicated task, but a necessary and very relevant one, to ensure that funds allocated for emergency response are effectively and efficiently spent for the intended purpose. In their role as “watchdogs”, journalists play a critical part in making sure this takes place and holding those responsible to account if it doesn't.

There are many sources of funding, many different ways it is managed, and different conditions on how it can be spent.

The UN has its own methods of raising money, which are often used to fund the UN, INGOs, and NGOs. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has a different fundraising stream. INGOs can get funding

from several sources: donations from the public; from government agencies in their own countries; from private foundations; as well as from funds administered by international organizations (such as the UN, the World Bank, or others).

It is impossible to cover all these areas in detail. However, there are some general features of the funding landscape in a humanitarian response that journalists should know about.

Types of Funding

- **Bilateral funding:** *These are funds given by one donor government to the national government where the crisis is taking place. The governments involved and the conditions of these funds are different in every case, so cannot be discussed in detail here. However, journalists in a crisis response need to have a clear idea of which governments are providing funds for humanitarian aid.*



Students work on homework at an internet café in Dagahaley refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya. Over 10 percent of long-term refugees in Dadaab said they had access to information using the internet.

Types of Funding: UN and Red Cross/Red Crescent

United Nations

When a rapid crisis happens, the UN usually launches a *flash appeal* within about a week. This appeal asks for immediate money from donors for the humanitarian response, for activities lasting from between three to six months. The flash appeal is launched by the HC, generally in consultation with the IASC, the humanitarian country team, and ideally with the national government.

UNOCHA generally administers the finance for humanitarian emergencies in the UN system. There are three main types of funds: ⁶¹

- **Multilateral funding:** These are funds that combine money given by several different donors into one amount. When donors give to a multilateral fund, they give to an organization that administers that money. The organization will have criteria on how the money should be spent – for example, to help in the relief effort or the recovery effort. It will then administer that money and give it to humanitarian organizations to do the work. Multilateral funds may be managed by UNOCHA, the World Bank, or other multilateral bodies.
- **Private donations:** This can include anything from donations by individual citizens to religious groups, foundations, or businesses. They can go directly to a single organisation or to a multilateral fund.

- **CERF (Central Emergency Response Fund)**

This is money already donated **before** a crisis response, so that humanitarian organizations can be ready and react more quickly. It is used for both sudden emergencies and long-term on-going crises that are not getting enough funds. CERF has up to \$500 million in total and is administered by UNOCHA's head office in New York. Most of the money comes from governments.

When an emergency begins, the HC can request immediate funding from CERF, which can go to UN organisations, INGOs, and others. UNOCHA will have criteria for the work that needs to be done and will disburse money to organizations that meet these criteria.

⁶¹ For more detailed information, see <http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/humanitarian-financing/overview>, <http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/humanitarian-financing/pooled-funds>, and <http://ochaonline.un.org/humanitarianappeal/webpage.asp?MenuID=91968&Page=1483>.



- **ERF (Emergency Response Funds):**⁶²

CERF is managed by UNOCHA in UN headquarters. ERF is managed by UNOCHA in the country where the emergency is taking place, and is under the authority of the HC.

The ERF gives money quickly, usually with an upper limit of \$250,000 to \$500,000 per organisation or activity, and often for activities over a short-term period of up to six months. The total amount for all organisations is usually under \$10 million. This money comes mostly from governments, but it can also include transfers of money from other already-established funds and some private donations.

In some countries, the ERF may have a different name (for example, 'Humanitarian Response Fund'). But it is still the same fund, run in the same way.

- **CHF (Common Humanitarian Fund):** The CHF is also managed at the country level. It pays for activities that are planned ahead in the response, which will require time for a detailed planning and assessment phase and will therefore take slightly longer to implement. The ERF pays for rapid activities that start as fast as possible, while the CHF pays for activities that are planned a little later to meet specific researched needs.

Each cluster makes the plans for its area. A cluster will identify all the projects required to meet the humanitarian needs and how much it will cost in each area (food, health, etc.). The plans from all the clusters are combined into a **Consolidated Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP)** in each emergency.

The UN then asks for these funds through a **Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP)**. The CAP is the total amount of money requested from donors for the CHF.

Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement

- **Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF):**⁶³

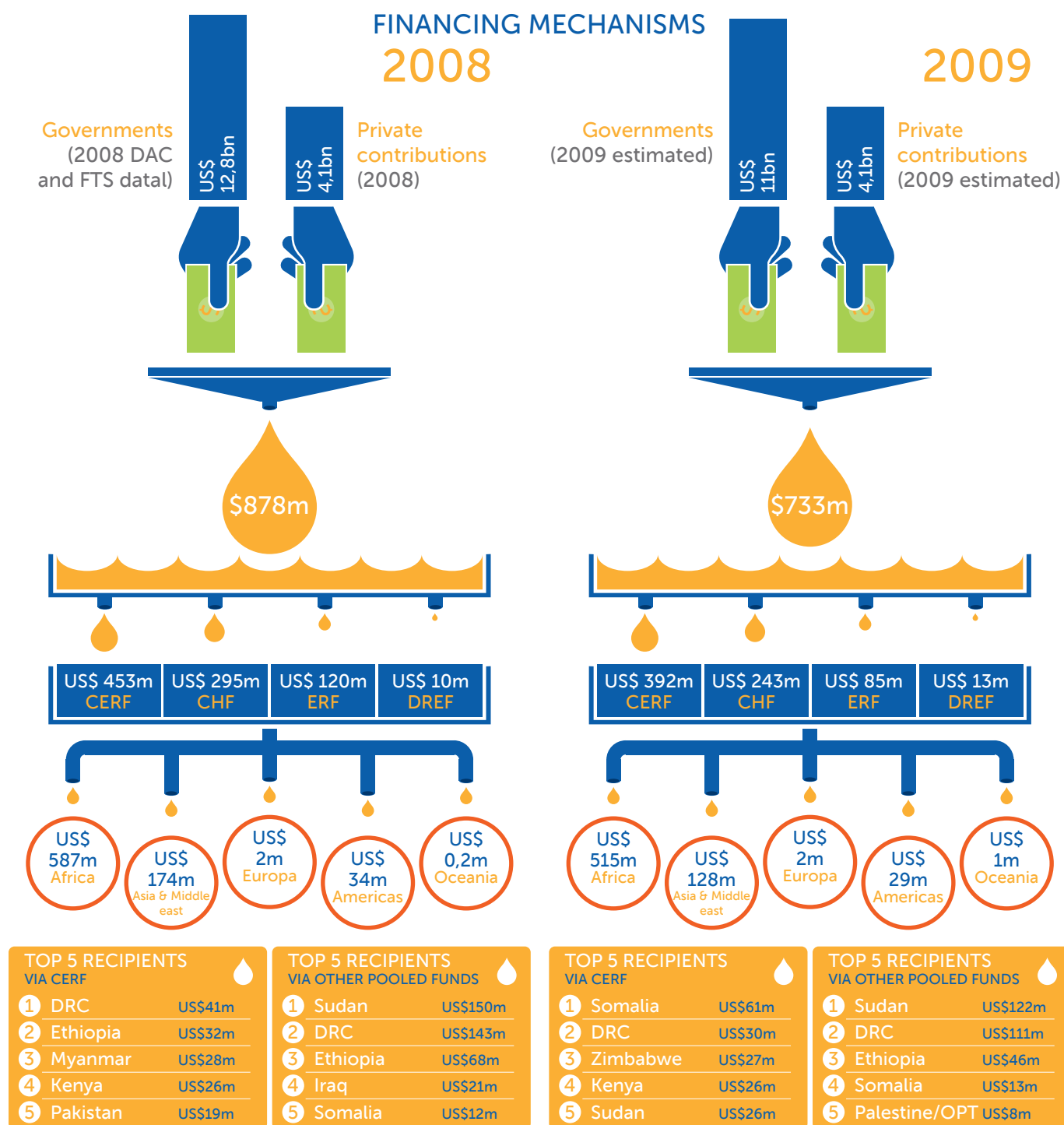
The RC Movement does not participate in UN funding. Instead, the DREF is operated by the IFRC to provide relief in disasters. This money is raised not for each emergency, but with an annual appeal for overall donations.

The ICRC also launches annual appeals to raise funds for emergency responses, along with its other work. If the needs increase during the year, it will also ask for more funding.⁶⁴

⁶² For more detail, see <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/report/profile-emergency-response-funds>.

⁶³ See <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/disaster-management/responding/disaster-response-system/financial-instruments/disaster-relief-emergency-fund-dref/>.

⁶⁴ See <http://www.icrc.org/eng/who-we-are/finances/index.jsp>.



The following comparison of the amount raised in these funds in 2008-09⁶⁵ can give a useful picture of these funds:

These are the main overall funds for humanitarian emergency response.

⁶⁵ From <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/financing-mechanisms.gif>.

International Humanitarian Donors

Governments are still the biggest donors to humanitarian response. They will give money to the UN and Red Cross/Red Crescent funds. They will also often give money directly to the government of the country experiencing the emergency (bilateral funding) or directly to INGOs, NGOs, or other organizations. A government will often set priority areas for what it will fund – one may prioritise health, another food, and so on – and will then give money to organisations and activities working in these areas.

Below are some examples of donor governments' funding agencies.

'Traditional' donors

- **United States of America:** *The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)* is responsible for humanitarian aid within USAID, the United States development agency. It responds to natural disasters, provides humanitarian assistance in conflict and other crises, and also works in mitigation and management to reduce the risk of natural disasters. It is possible that other US government entities may provide funding to humanitarian response; however, OFDA is the channel dedicated to this assistance. (www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance)
- **European Union/European Commission:** *The Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department of the European Commission (ECHO)*, formerly known as the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office, is the European Commission's department for overseas humanitarian aid and protection. It provides funds for humanitarian relief outside

the European Union, through the UN, NGOs, the ICRC, and others. The funds come from EU member states; however, those states may also provide funds directly to the relief effort under their own governments' programs. (ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm)

- **United Kingdom:** The UK's *Department for International Development (DFID)* leads the government's humanitarian aid response and also works closely with large INGOs based in the UK. In addition to providing aid, DFID also at times deploys staff as advisers and experts to the field. A recent 2011 review of the UK's humanitarian assistance has led, among other things, to DFID putting greater emphasis on resilience, i.e., improving efforts for communities to be better able to withstand disasters. (www.dfid.gov.uk/What-we-do/Key-Issues/Humanitarian-disasters-and-emergencies)

There are a number of other government donor agencies frequently active in humanitarian response, including Danida (Denmark), AusAID (Australia), CIDA (Canada), and Sida (Sweden), to name a few. Humanitarian assistance may also be dispersed directly through foreign ministries or embassies in the country experiencing the emergency.

Thirty-seven donors are also members of 'Good Humanitarian Donorship', an informal network that supports and promotes a set of donor standards, the 'Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship'. (www.goodhumanitarianandonorship.org)



Humanitarian
Operations on Panay
Island, Philippines.

DAVIDSHUB

'Nontraditional' donors⁶⁶

For several decades, Western governments have provided most of the funds for humanitarian response and have dominated discussion on how this aid should work and what it should achieve. Most of the largest donors are represented in the *Development Assistance Committee (DAC)* of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which has 24 members.⁶⁷

This situation is now changing, as other countries start to increase their funding for humanitarian relief work. Some of these new players are China, India, Brazil, Arab Gulf states (especially Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Kuwait), and some Central European countries. These donors are sometimes described as 'nontraditional donors', 'non-DAC donors', or 'emerging donors'.

⁶⁶ For detailed reviews and analysis, see www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/GHA-non-DAC-donors-humanitarian-aid1.pdf, and www.csis.org/files/publication/110214_White_EmergingPowers_Web.pdf.

⁶⁷ See www.oecd.org/document/38/0,3746,en_2649_34603_1893350_1_1_1_100.html.

The number of 'non-traditional' donors reporting their donations to the UN was 127 in 2010: They gave USD 622.5 million. Saudi Arabia was the largest 'nontraditional' donor that year. In many cases – for example in the 2010 Haiti earthquake, or the 2010 Pakistan floods – the single largest donors were 'nontraditional' countries.

An increase in the number of 'non-DAC' or 'nontraditional' donors may lead to significant changes in the humanitarian system, just as the rise of those same countries' influence is changing global economics and politics. Many of these donors have different approaches to funding from traditional donors. They may, for example, give more aid directly to national governments than to the UN; give grants in return for access to resources; or not make traditional distinctions between 'humanitarian' and 'development' aid.

Multilateral Donors

Apart from some UN funds, there are several other multilateral donors. These include the World Bank, various regional banks like the Asia Development Bank, and other regional bodies (such as the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa).

The World Bank

The World Bank is one of the most high-profile multilateral donors. It is not specifically a humanitarian emergency funder; however, it does provide emergency funds in some cases and support activities targeting conflict and fragile states in which humanitarian concerns are frequently high. It is likely to play a role in recovery and rehabilitation phases. The World Bank comprises two separate institutions: the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), and the International Development Association (IDA). It is a multilateral organisation with 187 member countries and provides loans, credits, and grants, mostly to national governments. (www.worldbank.org)

Tracking International Humanitarian Funding

Within a country, the UN OCHA website will provide general information on fundraising and financial expenditure. In some cases, there may be nationally based projects to track humanitarian funding and transparency; journalists should ensure that they are familiar with these.

At the international level, UNOCHA manages the Financial Tracking Service (FTS), which follows money donated and spent in detail. (<http://fts.unocha.org>)

The OECD's DAC also includes data on humanitarian fundraising and spending. (www.oecd.org/department/0,2688,en_2649_33721_1_1_1_1_1,00.html)

Global Humanitarian Assistance (operated by the private company Development Initiatives) provides data including fundraising and spending. (www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org) It also provides analysis of that data and is also open to receiving queries for information.

Finally, institutions and governments in many donor countries frequently have their own tracking and analysis programs that can allow journalists to review spending by various donors.

TAKEAWAY 11

Donors and Funding

Journalists must clearly understand key issues in international humanitarian funding:

- Common sources for humanitarian funding
- Primary funding mechanisms, including flash appeals, Common Humanitarian Fund, bilateral and multilateral mechanisms, and so on Primary international donors, including 'traditional' and 'nontraditional'
- Resources available to track donor funding
- An awareness of how this knowledge can inform humanitarian reporting and the critical role journalists play in financial accountability in a humanitarian response

12

Walking the Talk: Principles and Declarations; Mandates and Conventions; Standards, Codes, and Guides

Humanitarian Law, Principles, Standards

There are a number of general principles and guidelines that are important to a humanitarian response. There are also specific laws, charters, conventions, standards, and declarations. A thorough understanding of these can help journalists target their reporting better.

For example, if during a conflict a hospital is attacked and patients die, that's a tragedy that causes humanitarian suffering. But it is also *a violation of*

international humanitarian law: It should have legal consequences for the perpetrators of the attack. Your audience needs to know this.

In a crisis that does not include conflict, standards and rules are still important. If assistance is being delivered, but it's not enough to limit suffering, then the aid may fall short of important standards. If a journalist knows what the standards are, then she is better equipped to ask pertinent questions and produce a more comprehensive story. The relevant declarations, charters, and standards help journalists focus on who is *responsible*, who is *accountable*, and whether *universal humanitarian goals* are being met.

Universal Humanitarian Principles

Humanitarian Principles

These principles express the values that underpin humanitarian responses:⁶⁸

- ▶ **Humanity:** Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for human beings.
- ▶ **Neutrality:** Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious, or ideological nature.
- ▶ **Impartiality:** Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class, or political opinions.
- ▶ **Operational independence:** Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military, or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief

Along with broad humanitarian principles, humanitarian actors also often have codes of conduct. These aim to put the principles into action. The leading code of conduct has been developed and adopted by

the RC Movement and several INGOs. These are its main points:⁶⁹

1. The humanitarian imperative comes first.
2. Aid is given regardless of the race, creed, or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
3. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
4. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.
5. We shall respect culture and custom.
6. We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.
7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
8. Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
9. We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
10. In our information, publicity, and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects.

Again, these points can help inform journalists' coverage as references to see whether these standards are being met.

68 Definitions from OCHA: http://ochanet.unocha.org/p/Documents/OOM_HumPrinciple_English.pdf.

69 See <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/code-of-conduct-290296.htm>.



Eleanor Roosevelt and United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Spanish.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Conventions

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

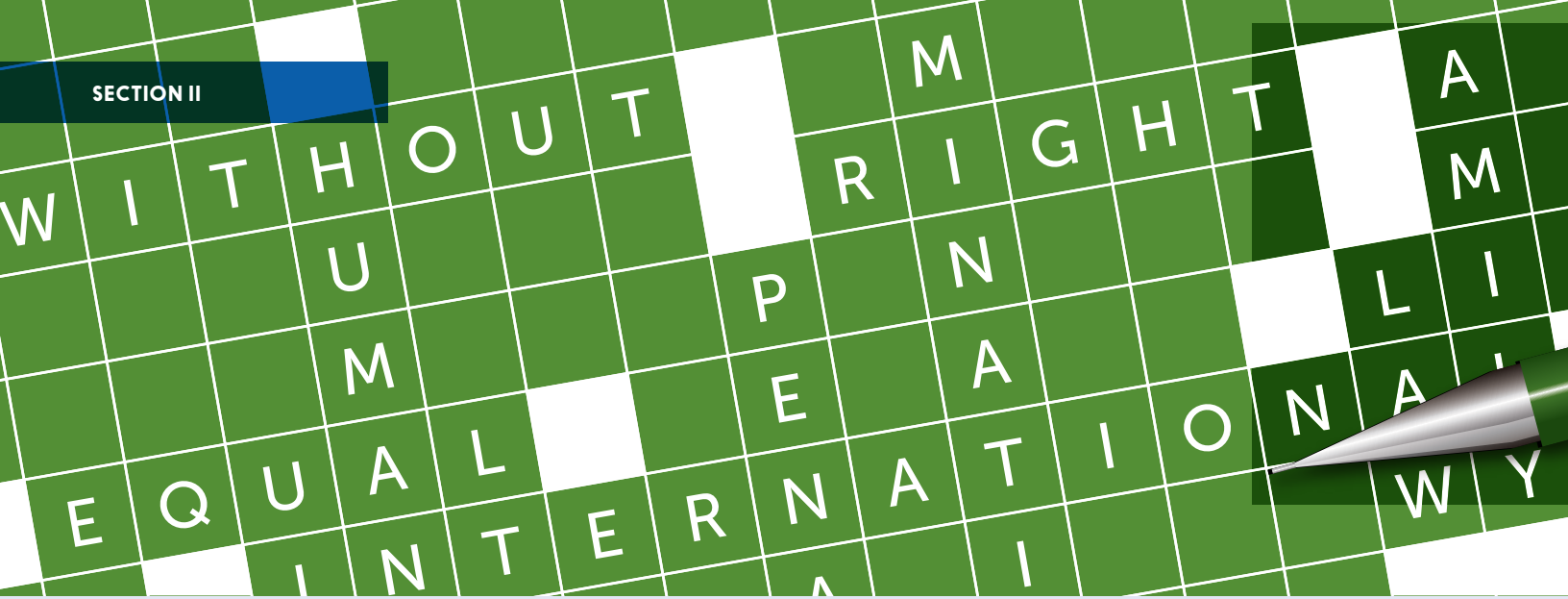
The UDHR is the first document that aims to outline the rights of all human beings. It has 30 articles, which have been elaborated in subsequent international treaties, regional human-rights instruments, national constitutions, and laws.⁷⁰ The UN General Assembly adopted the UDHR on 10 December 1948, (now commemorated as international Human Rights Day). It arose directly from the abuses experienced during the Second World War and remains the key reference

document for reporting on human-rights defence and human-rights violations.⁷¹ Any journalist reporting on humanitarian issues should understand the UDHR in detail.

Two covenants were added to the UDHR: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols. Together they make up the International Bill of Human Rights. After the covenants had been ratified by a sufficient number of individual nations, the bill *took on the force of international law*.

⁷⁰ See www.un.org/Overview/rights.html.

⁷¹ For other rights reporting resources, check Internews' Speak Up, Speak Out: A Toolkit for Reporting on Human Rights. This aims to help journalists and others learn the basics of reporting on women's and other human-rights issues. It combines background information on international human-rights mechanisms; guidelines on producing nuanced, objective reporting on rights issues; and practical exercises that walk users step by step through the production of a solid human-rights story. See www.internews.org/our-stories/program-news/speak-speak-out-toolkit-journalists-reporting-human-rights-issues.



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 1:

- ▶ All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2:

- ▶ Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it is independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3:

- ▶ Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4:

- ▶ No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5:

- ▶ No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6:

- ▶ Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7:

- ▶ All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8:

- ▶ Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9:

- ▶ No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10:

- ▶ Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11:

- ▶ Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.
- ▶ No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed

than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12:

- ▶ No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13:

- ▶ Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
- ▶ Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14:

- ▶ Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
- ▶ This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15:

- ▶ Everyone has the right to a nationality.
- ▶ No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16:

- ▶ Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
- ▶ Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
- ▶ The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17:

- ▶ Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
- ▶ No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18:

- ▶ Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19:

- ▶ Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20:

- ▶ Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- ▶ No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21:

- ▶ Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- ▶ Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
- ▶ The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22:

- ▶ Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23:

- ▶ Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- ▶ Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
- ▶ Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
- ▶ Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24:

- ▶ Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25:

- ▶ Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- ▶ Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

**Article 26:**

- ▶ Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- ▶ Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- ▶ Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27:

- ▶ Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- ▶ Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28:

- ▶ Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29:

- ▶ Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
- ▶ In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
- ▶ These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30:

- ▶ Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

The Geneva Conventions

The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols are international treaties, which contain rules limiting the barbarity of war. They protect people who do not take part in the fighting, such as civilians, medics, aid workers, and journalists. The Conventions also protect those who can no longer fight, such as wounded, sick, and shipwrecked troops, and prisoners of war. They apply to conflicts both between national states, and civil wars within national states.

The Conventions are a key part of international humanitarian law (also known as the ‘law of war’ or ‘law of armed conflict’). If serious violations are taking place, the Conventions call for measures to end and prevent them. The Conventions have been acceded to by 194 countries and enjoy universal acceptance.

The ICRC has a unique role as the ‘guardian’ of the Geneva Conventions, in that the Conventions *specifically give ICRC the mandate* to offer services to parties in a conflict (a ‘right of humanitarian initiative’). The ICRC’s mandate also includes promoting respect for humanitarian law and its implementation in national laws.⁷²

In accordance with international humanitarian law, journalists engaged in assignments in areas of armed conflict must be respected and protected, as long as they do not take action adversely affecting their status as civilians.

ICRC Journalist Hotline⁷³

The ICRC operates a hotline enabling journalists, their families, and the media organizations they work for to request assistance if they are wounded, detained, or missing.

⁷² See www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/genevaconventions

⁷³ See www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/publication/p0394.htm.



The freedom of journalists to exercise their profession falls outside the terms of reference of the ICRC. However, the humanitarian issues involved in their disappearance or captivity in wartime or their detention in situations of internal disturbance and tension are matters that do concern the ICRC.

Sphere Standards

The Sphere Standards⁷⁴ are the primary initiative aimed at ensuring that all aspects of humanitarian aid – whether food, shelter, medical care, and so on – reach a minimum quality. A crisis is not a reason for people to receive poor-quality or inadequate assistance.

Sphere is composed of three elements; a *handbook*, outlining minimum standards; a *process of collaboration* among humanitarian organizations; and an *expression of commitment* to quality and accountability.

The Sphere Handbook is a set of guidelines that set out the *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response*. They aim to represent ‘best practice’.

⁷⁴ See <http://sphereproject.org>.

The handbook includes a *Humanitarian Charter*, which asserts the rights of those affected by a humanitarian crisis; *Protection Principles*, which aim to help keep vulnerable people safe in a crisis; and *Core Standards* for humanitarian action.

Most of the handbook comprises detailed technical minimum standards for humanitarian relief – for example, minimum standards for provision of water and sanitation, food security and nutrition, shelter, health care, etc. This means that journalists can check the technical standards in a response – something as simple as whether there are enough toilets in a camp or whether emergency shelter meets the standards described.

The fact that *standards are universal* is of key importance. No one likes to be in an emergency camp, and many people will complain that conditions are not good enough. That can be their *perception* – but if the camp is below the Sphere minimum, then it is a *fact* that it is below standard, which informs more robust reporting. If camp residents complain despite the fact that the camp is meeting minimum standards, then this is also an important fact to include. Sometimes meeting standards is impossible – because of lack of resources, time, or serious obstacles. If this is the case, journalists can set about finding out what solutions are proposed to raise the standard of the response to the required level.

The Sphere Standards mean journalists can ask clear questions and define factually whether basic humanitarian needs are being met or not. Sphere provides a wealth of technical information that can inform and guide accurate reporting on the complexities of humanitarian aid. The handbook also includes an annex of all the key documents that inform the Humanitarian Charter – including the declarations, conventions, and standards already outlined.

You can download or order the book in several languages from the website: <http://sphereproject.org>.

Joint Standards Initiative

Over the past 20 years, the humanitarian sector has grown into a multibillion-dollar enterprise and consequently has become increasingly professionalised. With this has come the creation of a variety of standards and accountability mechanisms to ensure that humanitarian assistance is high quality, which is especially important given that crisis affected people are often vulnerable and voiceless. Whilst the early 1990s saw an absence of standards, the current situation may pose the opposite problem, with at least 70 standards initiatives now in existence in the humanitarian sector.

In response to the perceived confusion, lack of awareness, and inconsistent application of standards, three of the leading standards initiatives (Humanitarian Accountability Partnership [HAP], People in Aid, and the Sphere Project) have launched a process to seek greater coherence for users of standards in order to ultimately improve humanitarian action to people affected by disasters.

This pioneering collaborative effort is called the Joint Standards Initiative (JSI) and has the potential to significantly improve quality and accountability across the sector (www.jointstandards.org).

Other Guidelines and Principles

International Disaster Relief Law (IDRL)

In a disaster, there can often be legal problems that make a response slower than it needs to be. Too many regulations and red tape at the central or local government level or inadequate regulation at those levels are common factors in slowing the flow of aid.

In 2007 the states that are parties to the Geneva Conventions, and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, adopted the International Disaster Relief Law (IDRL) Guidelines. The development of IDRL was led by the IFRC.⁷⁵ The guidelines are not a treaty or a convention. But they can help journalists understand what legal issues may affect the humanitarian response and what can be done about those issues.

Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

These Guiding Principles address the specific needs of internally displaced people worldwide. They identify rights and guarantees relevant to the protection of people from forced displacement and to their protection and assistance during displacement as well as during return or resettlement and reintegration.⁷⁶

TAKEAWAY 11

Principles, Mandates, Conventions, and More

Journalists should understand key mandates, principles, and related issues that underpin the understanding and operation of humanitarian responses, including the following:

- Core humanitarian principles and their application in practice
- Fundamental international covenants and declarations that frame humanitarian work, especially the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva Conventions
- Sphere Standards, including both their purpose and process
- Other key principles, including Sphere and Joint Standards Initiative, IDRL, and Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement
- Knowing where to look to find other similar relevant documents
- Understanding how these resources inform, frame, and strengthen humanitarian reporting, including their use in identifying violations, lines of accountability, and potential consequences for those violations

⁷⁵ See <http://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/idrl/idrl-guidelines/>.

⁷⁶ See <http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/d2e008c61b70263ec125661e0036f36e> or <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/57jpgL.htm>.

Dealing with Trauma, Safety and Security



13

Stress and Trauma

What Is Stress, What Is Trauma?

Sometimes journalists who cover a crisis feel like they must hide their emotional reactions, or that they should be strong enough that the crisis shouldn't affect them emotionally. This is a mistake – and sometimes it can be dangerous.

Distress in the face of tragedy is an ordinary human response, not a weakness. Like the physical trauma of an injury, emotional trauma has impact.

Traumatic stress doesn't happen only in a large-scale crisis. There are many common causes. They can include witnessing the serious injury or unnatural

death of another person; traffic accidents; interpersonal violence (for example, child abuse, sexual assault, domestic violence, and criminal violence), natural disasters, war, combat, and other violent conflicts.

Traumatic stress isn't necessarily caused by just one event. It can accumulate over time and can cause severe emotional problems if we don't know how to respond in a productive way. People who do not experience an event directly can still become traumatised if they interact closely with others who have experienced it. This is secondary trauma.

Most of us will experience traumatic stress during our lives. People who do might be upset for several weeks following a traumatic event, and some take longer to recover than others. For most people, symptoms begin to ease after a few weeks, and they tend to recover



without treatment. Being upset, shaken, or emotionally disturbed by tragedy is a normal human reaction. Most people recover without treatment. But under certain circumstances, exposure to extreme events may cause the far more serious reaction of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). We need to recognise when this might be happening and know where to seek treatment.

According to the American Psychiatric Association, to be diagnosed with PTSD, the person must have been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present:

- *The person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others.*

- *The person's response to the trauma involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror.*

The Dart Centre's Frank Ochberg tells patients suffering from PTSD that there is nothing abnormal about it. 'It is a normal reaction to abnormal events. Anyone could have PTSD, given enough traumas', the psychiatrist says. PTSD needs specialised treatment. To recover from PTSD, people need to recognise it, know what kind of help to get, and know where to find it.

There are measures that can help prevent trauma and measures that can help it heal. If we know how to recognise the signs of traumatic stress, including PTSD, and understand how to respond to it better, we can help support recovery both for ourselves and our colleagues.

What Are the Signs of Trauma?⁷⁷

Traumatic stress can change an individual's perception and memory. It generally does this in three key ways:

- ▶ **Re-experiencing the event:** Memories of what happened won't go away. At the most extreme, these become flashbacks or recurring nightmares. Some journalists describe this as being 'haunted' by the trauma they have experienced.
- ▶ **Hyperarousal:** Some people might become jumpy and develop a short temper with those close to them. Small incidents such as a child crying or an ambulance siren might trigger memories of the traumatic event.
- ▶ **Avoidance or numbness:** Sometimes people affected by trauma avoid situations or stimuli that remind them of what happened. Some people may have a tendency to overuse alcohol or drugs to numb psychological pain, or they might become distant and emotionally detached from close relationships.

77 From ICFJ's Disaster and Crisis Coverage. Potter, D., and Ricchiardi, S., Disaster and Crisis Coverage, ICFJ. Available at <http://www.icfj.org/resources/disaster-and-crisis-coverage>.

Reactions to Traumatic Stress

The reactions below are a common response to traumatic stress, but that doesn't mean they're permanent. If we recognise them, that can help recover from them faster:

- Shock
- Irritability
- Sleeplessness
- Anger
- Guilt
- Grief
- Sadness
- Emotional numbing
- Feeling of helplessness
- Difficulty feeling happy or loved

Other reactions are less common and often more serious. They may require support from a doctor or mental health professional:

- Panic episodes/irrational fears
- Terrifying nightmares
- Inability to concentrate
- Paralyzing nervousness
- Fear of losing control/going crazy
- Sense of worthlessness/shame/loss of self-respect
- Self-blame
- Dependency on alcohol or drugs

There are other reactions that are also less common and may be serious. The most serious are psychotic symptoms, which may show up as hallucinations or bizarre thoughts or images.



Radio Sila's camp correspondent, Usna Omar Arabi, (left) makes an interview in Djabal refugee camp.

Reporting for Recovery⁷⁸

In a crisis, whole communities can be affected by traumatic stress. The way the media reports on that crisis can help communities' recovery – or can exacerbate the situation. If reports intrude on people's grieving; if they show only suffering, destroyed bodies, and destroyed families; if they lay blame on one group or another for the crisis from the very first days or hours, they can cause more damage.

⁷⁸ Unless otherwise indicated, the material below is drawn from the booklet *Tragedies and Journalists: A guide for more effective coverage*, DART Center, 2003. Available at http://dartcenter.org/files/en_tnj_0.pdf.

Here are some tips for reporting that treats communities with respect and can contribute in some way to their recovery from traumatic stress.

Tips for writing about individual victims:

- **Focus on the person's life.** Find out what makes or made the person special: personality, beliefs, hobbies, family and friends, and likes and dislikes. Treat the person's life with care.
- **Always be accurate.** Check back with the victim or victim's representative to verify spellings of names, facts, and even quotes. When you first talk to a victim, he or she may be confused or distracted and make some mistakes. Double-checking can ensure accuracy. It may also provide you with additional information and quotes that you can use.
- If the victim has died, **use quotes and anecdotes from the victim's relatives and friends** to describe the person's life, especially those that tell how the person had overcome obstacles. These emphasise life, courage, and success in struggle, all qualities the community needs in time of bereavement. Seek current photos of the victim (but always return them as soon as possible). This way you know what the person looked like in life.
- **Use simple, unadorned words** to tell the story, not melodrama. Avoid words and terms such as 'closure', 'rest in peace', or 'a shocked community mourns the death'. These emphasise suffering. The community and family are the people who should decide the expressions to use to commemorate someone they lost, not the journalist.
- **Use relevant details** that help describe victims as they live or lived, and provide images of their lives. (For example: 'Johnny loved to play the guitar in the evening to entertain his family, but it also helped him escape the stress of his job as a sheriff's deputy'.)
- **Avoid unnecessary gory details** about any victim's death. For example, after the United States Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, some reporters chose not to reveal that body parts were dangling from the trees near where the explosion took place. Publicizing details like that, whether as words or photos, can make the trauma worse.

Tips for covering traumatic events in your community:

- Understand that your coverage of a traumatic event will have an impact on your readership, viewers, or listeners. Remember that **the tone of your coverage may influence the tone of the community's reaction** to it. Media outlets should establish policies that affect your coverage: For example, consider coverage of public memorial services for the victims instead of private funerals. If you do decide to cover private services, then call the funeral home or talk to the family to ensure that you will not intrude.
- Stories about individual victims, in the tips above, are also stories about the community where they live and lived. **Tell stories about the victims' lives, not just their death or suffering**, including their favourite hobbies, what made them special – and the effect of their lives on the community. Some newspapers, for example, have produced 'Portraits of Life', 'Portraits of Grief', or segments called 'In Tribute', after a large-scale tragedy, telling affirmative stories about the lives of people who died.



- **Provide forums** in your coverage for what people are thinking, especially a place for community members to encourage one another. Suggest ways that others in the audience can also help out to solve a problem or meet a need. This goes to the heart of humanitarian response reporting: Media can inform other people about how to get help, including from one another.⁷⁹
- **Report on how people help one another**, including acts of kindness, throughout the recovery process. This can provide hope for the community.
- **Constantly ask yourself** these questions: What does the public need to know? And how much coverage is too much? If the community has moved on from a story and begun another step in recovery, the media should, too.
- Most importantly, **a community is much more than the disaster that affects it**. Coverage that focuses only on the disaster and doesn't include the rest of a community's life and how its people respond to one another misrepresents the real truth of that community and damages its self-image.

⁷⁹ Frank M. Ochberg, M.D., chairman emeritus of the Dart Center Executive Committee, says, 'Journalists and therapists face similar challenges when they realize their subjects are at risk of further injury. Techniques may differ, but objectives are the same: to inform about sources of help.'

Reporting for Recovery: Victoria's Bushfires

Marysville and Kinglake, in Victoria, Australia, are two of the towns that were worst affected by the 2009 bushfires. This story from *The Australian* reports on official commemorations of two individuals, and at the same time tells the story of how their communities are recovering. It is part of the newspaper's in-depth bushfire coverage, archived at www.theaustralian.com.au/in-depth/victoria-bushfires; several other Australian media outlets have similar bushfire story archives.⁸⁰

2009 Victorian bushfire heroes cited⁸¹

By: Adam Shand
June 11, 2012 12:00AM

BUSHFIRE survivor Leigh Jowett said his mother Elsie, who died last week, would look down with pride at the news of his inclusion in the Queen's birthday honours list.

Mr Jowett, one of four Victorians recognised for their contribution in the wake of the 2009 Black Saturday fires, was made a Member of the Order of Australia for his services to Marysville, where 34 residents died in the inferno.

Mr Jowett's house was not destroyed and even his cat returned home days after the fire, he said. So he stayed in Marysville working tirelessly to help survivors piece their lives together. He helped relaunch the local footy

club, the Marysville Villains, which hadn't played for 28 years, and even supplied the goalposts for the team's home ground, Gallipoli Park. "We only won one game last year and we're yet to win one this year, but it's coming by the end of this season," he said yesterday.

A close mate, Bruce Ackerman, who worked alongside Jowett, was also made a Member of the Order of Australia.

Jowett says the honour is recognition of the whole town's resurgence. "It's an honour for all of us, all the people who pulled together to make sure this community had a future," he said.

Jane Hayward from nearby Strathewen was also made a Member of the Order of Australia for her work with schoolchildren and their families.

Cameron Caine, a police officer from another devastated town, Kinglake, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) for his efforts in saving several lives on the day of the fires.

Constable Caine has continued his work for the community in the years since and as president of the Kinglake Football and Netball Club is credited with rebuilding the spirit of the entire district. Constable Caine said he would like to give a piece of the medal to the many people who had contributed to Kinglake's rebirth. He said that the football club had been a rallying point for residents. "There's been a great turn-out at home games. People have come not just for the footy but to share the ups and downs of what they have been through," he said. Constable Caine's mother, Pam, said she was proud of her son's efforts but was surprised at the honour. "I didn't think he was that good," she said.*

With AAP

*Note: Australian audiences will clearly understand that this is an affectionate joke, not a criticism.

⁸⁰ See for example *The Age* (<http://www.theage.com.au/national/bushfires>), ABC (<http://www.abc.net.au/melbourne/bushfires>), among others.

⁸¹ See <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/in-depth/queens-birthday-honours-2012/victorian-bushfire-heroes-cited/story-fne95kwp-1226390536028>.

Interviewing and Trauma⁸²

The suggestions below on how to interview people affected by trauma are taken and adapted from DART Centre's *Tragedies and Journalists: A guide for more effective coverage*;⁸³ ICFJ's *Disaster and Crisis Coverage*,⁸⁴ and Anne Nelson with Dr Daniel Nelson.⁸⁵

One of the toughest decisions for journalists is how to cover victims, survivors, and eyewitnesses to catastrophic events.

When crisis strikes, ordinary people find themselves thrust into the media spotlight during one of the most difficult times of their lives. They may be in shock or grieving; they may be waiting to hear about the fate of a loved one. Suddenly, cameras, microphones, and tape recorders are being thrust at them.

On the other side of the equation, journalists have the responsibility to tell the story and to help the public understand the tragic event. How do we balance truth-telling with minimizing harm to vulnerable people?

Many journalists may already have experience covering crises and traumatic events. This has its own challenges, of course, but for civilians suddenly hit by a crisis, the situation is dramatically different. They have just had their world turned upside down. They don't fully understand what has happened. They



are subject to the orders and direction of others – emergency responders, police, and others – and can do little to gain personal control over the chaotic situation.

Simpson and Cote⁸⁶ offer these tips for a journalist's general approach:

- *Respect the person's efforts to regain balance after a horrible experience.*
- *Anticipate emotional responses, and allow the subject to make decisions about stopping or temporarily halting the interview or filming.*
- *Listen carefully. Go over the main points of the interview with the subject before leaving.*

⁸² Journalists working with vision – photographers, TV journalists, video documentary makers, and so on – have additional considerations and issues they need to take into account. These are not covered here but are included in the DART Center reference.

⁸³ DART, *op. cit.*

⁸⁴ ICFJ, *op. cit.*

⁸⁵ *Dealing with Trauma: Practical Suggestions for Journalists Covering Catastrophe*, Anne Nelson, Columbia Graduate School of Journalism, and Dr Daniel Nelson, M.D., University of Cincinnati School of Medicine.

⁸⁶ ICFJ, *op. cit.*



Fatima Kharwutli, sitting next to her father, displays damaged family documents that were saved in a fire that broke out in their apartment last week in the Shatila camp of Beirut, Lebanon, on Monday, February 11, 2013. The Kharwutli family are Syrians from Idlib province but fled the violence for Lebanon. Working only as a painter, Mr. Kharwutli is barely able to sustain his family of eight people and chose to stay in Shatila because of the relatively low rent cost. MSF has provided approximately 4000-5000 people with non-food items including blankets and cooking sets in the Shatila camp, assisting Palestinians and Syrians fleeing the violence in Syria.

The following are tips for interviewing survivors of traumatic events:

- ▶ **Dignity and respect.** Always treat victims and survivors the way you would want to be treated in a similar situation. Journalists will always seek to approach survivors, but they should do it with sensitivity, including knowing when and how to back off.
- ▶ **Clearly identify yourself.** For example: 'I am Joe Hight with *The Oklahoman*, and I am doing a story on Jessica's life'. Don't be surprised if you receive a harsh reaction at first, especially from parents of child victims. However, do not respond by reacting harshly.
- ▶ **Ask permission.** You may ask a potential interview subject, 'Would you like to tell me about it now?' If he or she says no, you should accept it. You may

leave your business card and an opening for them to speak to you later. A person who is not ready will not be able to tell her story in a coherent way; the information will be fragmented.

- ▶ **Give a sense of the parameters of the interview if the person agrees to talk.** This includes the time frame ('I'd like to talk to you for a few minutes', or 'I'd like to ask you a few questions'. If you need to move on after a short interview, this can help ensure that the interviewee doesn't feel abandoned.
- ▶ **Tone of voice, body language, and location.** A traumatised person will probably be slower to process language and may ask you to repeat questions, or even to write them down. They may forget much of what you say but remember the tone of voice you used to say it.
 - ▶ *Adopt a posture that shows empathy. If it is a long, seated interview, you may consider sitting beside the person. Leaning slightly forward expresses openness. Crossed arms and crossed legs can be interpreted as closed or hostile. Some people find it helpful not to make eye contact, but to look at the same abstract spot on the floor or the wall that the interviewee is looking at.*
 - ▶ *Offer to move to another place for the interview if it makes the interviewee more comfortable. If, after you start the interview, crowds of spectators or other journalists push in, think about ways to alleviate any distress the interviewee is experiencing as a result. This may include offering the option of terminating the interview or relocating. You cannot always control or influence the behaviour of other journalists or bystanders – but you can be respectful in your own conduct.*

- ▶ **Respectful and sensitive questions.** Don't project. You can say you're sorry for the person's loss, but never say, 'I understand' or 'I know how you feel', because you probably don't. Don't be surprised, especially when covering acts of political violence, if a subject responds to you by saying, 'Sorry isn't good enough'.
 - ▶ *Psychologists say that a less direct approach is sometimes better, for example: 'What do you want people to know about what happened?' Give the choice of what to say to the interviewee. Tread carefully. You should be helping the person to articulate her own story, and to legitimate it.*
 - ▶ *Avoid pat responses. These include, 'It could have been worse', or 'You're lucky...'. Respect silence. If a subject asks, 'Why did it happen?', do not try to give a direct answer. An appropriate response is an echo: 'Yes, why did this terrible thing happen?' If they express denial, don't challenge it. Denial is a legitimate and useful stage of the grieving process.*
 - ▶ *Don't overwhelm with the hardest questions first. Begin with questions such as, 'Can you tell me about Jerry's life?' or, 'What did Jerry like to do? What were his favourite hobbies?' Then listen! The worst mistake a reporter can do is to talk too much.*
- ▶ **Show empathy, not detachment.** This does not mean you should become emotional or upset yourself. Empathy is not so much about joining a person in his emotions, but instead about appreciating and validating those emotions.
 - ▶ *If the interviewee cries, this is not necessarily a harmful thing. Again, if they feel exposed in a public setting, try to find privacy. You may proceed if the interviewee is willing. Carry paper tissues at all times, and offer them as a caring and practical gesture.*
 - ▶ *Don't expect any single reaction. Different people manifest trauma in different ways, ranging from the stoic and wooden to the hysterical. Do not judge the condition by the reaction. Remain respectful.*
- ▶ **The missing.** Be especially careful when interviewing relatives of anyone who is missing, and try to clarify that you are seeking to profile the missing person's life, not to write her obituary. If you're unable to contact the victim or survivor, try calling a relative or the funeral home to request an interview or to obtain comments. If you receive a harsh reaction, leave a phone number or your card and explain that the survivor can call if he wants to talk later. This often leads to the best stories.
- ▶ **Ending the interview.** Be supportive. End up with a warm handshake when possible, with thanks and comforting words, such as, 'I wish you well'. Consider a follow-up call after a week or so, especially after a long interview, to say, 'I just wanted to see how you're doing'. Sometimes people will feel violated or show anger, even if you haven't done anything wrong. It can be their experience talking, not their reaction to you. Examine your conscience. If it is clear, move on.

Scenes show daily life in Mogadishu, Somalia on the 23rd October, 2013.



Journalists and Trauma⁸⁷

The DART Center emphasises that ‘no one is above having a human reaction’ – including journalists.

We’ve looked at what traumatic stress is, and how it can affect individuals including journalists. In fact, journalists face unusual challenges when covering mass tragedies. They may often be a first responder to a violent event. They interact with victims dealing with extraordinary grief. Journalists who cover any beat that regularly involves tragedy often build a needed and appropriate professional ‘wall’ between themselves and the trauma-affected people they interview. But this same wall may prevent journalists from reacting to their own exposure to tragedy – even when they need to react.

Al Tompkins of the Poynter Institute for Media Studies wrote on 15 September 2001: ‘Journalists’ symptoms of traumatic stress are remarkably similar to those of police officers and firefighters who work in the immediate aftermath of tragedy, yet journalists typically receive little support after they file their stories. While public-safety workers are offered debriefings and counselling after a trauma, journalists are merely assigned another story’. Reactions may follow phases or stages. In the initial stage of covering a disaster, many journalists feel a surge of energy. Their brains flood their systems with stress hormones and adrenaline. They focus on the task at hand and push themselves beyond their normal limits. (Other considerations, like paying bills and attending to family needs, may fall by the wayside.) After a period of some days – varying from person to person – the adrenal glands are depleted. This often leads to an energy slump and a feeling of mild depression, which is frequently temporary.

The suggestions below combine tips from DART and ICFJ on how to take care of yourself when reporting in the field: **Know your limits.** If you’ve been given a

⁸⁷ The suggestions below on how to take care of yourself and colleagues when experiencing traumatic stress are taken and adapted from the DART Center op. cit., ICFJ op. cit., and Internews training material.

troublesome assignment that you feel you cannot perform, politely express these concerns to your supervisor. Tell the supervisor that you may not be the best person for the assignment. Explain why. A good supervisor needs to understand and respect this.

- ▶ **With your supervisor, set limits on your time in the field.** If you know an assignment has a definite time limit, it can become easier to manage and deal with the stress it involves.
- ▶ **Take breaks.** A few minutes or a few hours away from a challenging situation can help to relieve your stress.
- ▶ **Talk to someone you trust about the incident.** This may be an editor, a colleague, a friend, or a family member, but you must trust that this listener will not pass judgment on you. It might be someone who has faced a similar experience.
- ▶ **Keep life as normal as possible.** Eat regularly and get enough sleep, whenever possible.⁸⁸ Eat healthy food and exercise regularly – otherwise you may become physically ill as well as face pressure from stress. If you are religious, attend a house of worship. Most importantly, spend time with your family and friends.
- ▶ **Learn techniques to deal with stress.** Try deep-breathing and relaxation exercises. (One recommendation is to ‘take a long, slow, deep breath to the count of five, then exhale to the count of five. Imagine breathing out excess tension

and breathing in relaxation’.⁸⁹) Learn and practice meditation. Write about what’s happened. Replace horrible images with positive ones. Go to social and cultural events, including music and other performances. Establish a daily routine that includes physically and emotionally healthy habits. Adopt a hobby that you genuinely find interesting. Visit places of natural beauty. Find out which of these or other activities are helpful for you.

- ▶ **Most importantly, realise that you are a human being and that you must take care of your mind.**⁹⁰ Admit your emotions. Recognise that your problems may become overwhelming – and if that happens, do not hesitate to seek professional counselling, especially if distress continues beyond three or four weeks.
- ▶ **Be patient.** Journalists, doctors, relief workers, and others who have first-hand experience with catastrophe report that there are often medium-term psychological effects. It may take nine to 12 months to resume functioning normally, and this period can be prolonged if there is no chance to work through, or ‘metabolise’, the experience. Taking protective measures early on can lessen the aftershocks.

Critically, there are several things you should *not* do, including the following:

- ▶ Isolate yourself
- ▶ Bottle up your emotions
- ▶ Drink alcohol or caffeine in excess
- ▶ Go without sleep or eating for long periods of time

88 If you have trouble sleeping, don't watch television news for an hour before trying to go to sleep. Read something, preferably boring. Studies suggest that very small doses of melatonin (1-3 mg), available over the counter, can be helpful. Another aid is Benadryl, an over-the-counter allergy medication, taken in 25-50 mg doses. This can help for up to four to five days. Do not resort to alcohol to help you sleep – as noted above, it does more harm than good. If your sleep is consistently prevented and disrupted by negative thoughts, you may want to talk to your doctor, who can prescribe mild medication to help.

89 The Eastern Connecticut Health Network, from DART Center, *op. cit.*

90 You may also be able to ‘self-test’ your level of trauma through this service: <http://www.conflict-study.com/home.html>



Sharifo Moxamed, 45, poses for a portrait upon arriving at Ifo refugee camp in Dadaab, Kenya on August 8, 2011. To get to Dadaab, Moxamed walked for 33 days from Diinsoor, Somalia with her husband and three children. When asked how she stayed motivated to keep walking with little food and water, she just pointed to her young children.

Support Your Colleagues

It's also important to keep an eye out for your peers and realise when they might need help. You can help if you do the following:

- Take time to let someone who's been through a bad time tell their story.
- Ask them open questions. Don't interrupt or come back with your own experiences.
- Don't tell them you know how they feel. You can't.
- Don't put down their experience and imply that they need to pull themselves together.

Thought Patterns

Ways of thinking can help journalists manage traumatic stress better – or they can cause more problems.

Some journalists feel guilt because they fear they are advancing their careers through others' misfortunes. But doing your job well is essential to the crisis response – it's why we have this training manual. Helping people to tell their stories in a respectful and empathetic way can be therapeutic for the affected. And we know that helping people to access physical aid is vital to rebuilding their lives.

Remember that most people do recover from tragedy, whether to a greater or a lesser degree, and go on with their lives. Even in the case of people experiencing great distress and bereavement, the prognosis for most of them is very good.

Many journalists and others might get the feeling that they are 'peripheral'. They may compare themselves with colleagues who take on 'heroic' roles and feel useless. But journalists who are not on the front lines should know that supporting the overall effort is immensely valuable. Stories also move quickly into different phases, each of which may require different skills and sources.

Journalists may feel that they aren't 'entitled' to emotional reactions if they are not directly affected by a catastrophe. But as we've seen, many may experience secondary trauma due to their reporting. Their work may not allow them to distance themselves from the disaster as much as the general population.

Your job is important – and the way you think about it, and react to it, is important, too, for your own well-being.



Words or Actions?

Journalists fulfil a critical role in a disaster response scenario, just as other emergency responders do. But sometimes they are faced with the question of whether to provide aid to injured victims or to help in the evacuation before emergency responders arrive. Sometimes there are other, urgent needs beyond getting the story, and simply doing one's job as a journalist might be considered morally wrong – by you or by the public.

This is not an easy issue, and every situation will be different. Below are two case studies that may help explore this issue and how you can respond to it.

Case Study: Photojournalist's dilemma⁹¹

It was Monday around noon, after Hurricane Katrina blew through New Orleans. There was word of flooding in the Lower Ninth Ward, and Ted Jackson, a veteran photographer for the Times-Picayune, went to check

it out. As he crossed a bridge, he spotted women and children stranded on a porch, pleading for help as water rose around them.

Yelling across the deep floodwaters that separated them, Jackson learned that they had been clinging to porch railings for hours to keep from drowning. "I was trying to find some way to help them off that porch, and that definitely took priority over taking pictures," he later recalled.

The photographer faced a dilemma as he realized he had no way of getting to them. "I also knew that my editors – and the world – needed to see what was happening here. I knew this would be a tough picture to shoot. I didn't want to make the situation worse or add to the family's trauma ... I tried to become invisible, moving to the side and diverting their attention away from me. I then quickly raised my camera," wrote Jackson in a piece for the fall 2007 Nieman Reports. (www.nieman.harvard.edu/reportsitem.aspx?id=100148)

He raced back to the newspaper, dropped off his memory cards, and rushed back to the bridge with an inflatable

91 From ICFJ, op. cit.



boat and rope. The porch was empty. Rescuers were on the scene, but none had seen the family.

“In my mind I could see the little girl slip beneath the water and the others losing their composure and following her. It felt as if my chest was caving in as I assumed the worst. Could I have done more? Did I do the right thing?” Jackson recalled.

The ethical quandary the photographer faced during coverage of Katrina in August 2005 was not unusual for journalists covering a crisis. When do they put down cameras and notebooks and pitch in to help?

Months later, a Times-Picayune reporter found the family safe in Houston, Texas. A group of teenagers had rescued them with a fishing boat.

“I couldn’t wait to talk to them. I had so many demons to quell,” wrote Jackson in his Nieman piece. On the phone, one of the women asked why he left them that day. He told her he returned with a rope and a boat. “Oh, I didn’t know that,” the woman responded. Then, she asked Jackson for a favour: “Can we get a copy of the picture? We’d like to have one to keep.”

Case Study: When humanity trumps journalism – covering the 2009 Black Saturday Bushfires in Victoria, Australia⁹²

This is a case study interview on media coverage of Victoria’s worst bushfires, which took place in 2009. It’s part of a study by the University of Melbourne’s Centre for Advanced Journalism:

At about 10 o’clock that morning, one of our reporters came over and said there was an opportunity to go into Flowerdale [a town affected by the bushfires].

The police at the roadblock told us to get out of the way and let the residents go ahead. And as we waited, a guy came out of the Flowerdale hotel and jumped into the back seat. He was a resident of Flowerdale. He’d been in the pub. He wasn’t drunk but you could tell he’d had alcohol. And he said, “Can you take me to my house?”

Straightaway we said we can but you should know we’re the media. We told him we were going to be filing reports and taking photos and if that didn’t sit well with him, he’d have to find another way.

He’s like, “No, no, that’s okay.”

He was clearly distressed and bewildered, and it looked like he hadn’t slept since Saturday, to be honest. We kept asking him if he was okay.

I was thinking, how do you go about interviewing this person or getting their story, without being offensive? Let’s face it: the guy is going to see if his house is still there.

[Reporter] simply passed back his little recorder and microphone and put it on the seat and he said, “I’ve turned that on. If you want to, you’re welcome to pick

⁹² Available at <http://blogs.crikey.com.au/contentmakers/2009/11/19/humans-first-journalists-second-the-journalism-of-black-saturday/>.

it up and say whatever you like as we're driving in. We'll turn it off if you like." But [the resident] said, "No, leave it on."

I felt comfortable with that approach. If he wanted to tell his story, it might be cathartic for him. It sat well with me on a moral level and on a media level because I thought, well, he probably will pick up the microphone – which he did – and he basically started saying, "That used to be the store there" and pointing out landmarks and saying things like, "That's Robbo's house. Shit, I hope he's alive" and stuff like that.

I started to well up, and I was filming as well. I was filming not [the resident] but what we were looking at.

He was saying how the fire was upon him and he'd given up hope. His girlfriend had taken the kids and

dogs somewhere safe and then barged through the police roadblocks to get him.

Everyone was gone, and he went into his house and poured himself a bourbon and was going to see it out on his couch, knowing full well he was going to burn to death. I started thinking about this and it started affecting what I was doing as a media person.

I was becoming quite emotional about it. He decided to take us through the most highly populated part of Flowerdale.

All the houses were absolutely levelled and you could see the police tape on them, which we assumed meant it was a crime scene as well because someone had probably passed away there.



Scenes show daily life in Mogadishu, Somalia on the 23rd October, 2013.

He was overcome with emotion. He obviously must have known some of the people.

It wasn't an interview any more. It was just streams of consciousness – what he was thinking.

Then he said, "If you turn right here, that's my street." His house was about the sixth along. And we pulled up and he started wailing. It's hard to describe how he was wailing and crying.

On the video we published you can hear me, because I started crying. I couldn't help it. I was overcome with what I was seeing. Everything hit me at once.

We got out of the car and I put my arm around him and I turned the camera off and I said, "I know it doesn't mean shit, but I'm really sorry."

So there was another moral question: what do I do now? So I said to him, "I want to turn the camera back on, but I certainly won't if you think that in any way that either now or down the track you won't want this to be recorded."

It's a tough question I guess, because how can he know how he's going to feel down the track? But he said, "No, no. It's okay."

So I felt like I did the right thing.

He started rummaging through stuff and he said, "That's the couch where I was sitting with my scotch."

We hadn't planned any of this. We hadn't planned to take someone to see their home.

So it was all ad hoc. And [the resident] then said, "I'd like to go to Kinglake to see my father's house and see if some of my mates are there."

Quite frankly, in my head it was a no-brainer. I didn't give a shit about work anymore.

I was, like, we're taking this bloke wherever he wants to go. And I answered on behalf of both of us and said, "Yes, of course."

The last thing I would want to feel we did was use this person. I knew we had an amazing story, but I also wanted to make this guy's life better that day. That's why it was a no-brainer.

[They travelled to Kinglake, where they discovered the father's house had been destroyed and he'd been injured, but survived.]

[... Edited out...]

[During the day they did a live cross, and it started with the audio of the resident wailing when he saw his home destroyed.]

Q: Did he mind that being used?

No. That was put to him. He didn't mind. He made it clear many times during the day that whatever we wanted to do, that was fine. We kept checking in, but he did make that very clear.

[Resident] thanked us on air. He said that what we had done had given him great peace of mind to see the people in Kinglake he thought were dead. I took a lot of pride in that. I thought there's no right or wrong, or rhyme or reason, in what's going on, but this guy's not pissed off, and that's a start.

Back at Yea I made sure he was okay and actually gave him a hug and gave him my number said if I can help, give us a call.

Your Support Networks

It can be helpful to step back, and reflect on how you manage the possibility of traumatic stress in your own work. The questions below are just a chance to think and reflect on your own experiences

- *Have you noticed traumatic stress in others – your colleagues, or members of the community? How did they show it? What kind of support could they get?*
- *Have you experienced traumatic stress before? What happened? How did you recover?*
- *Do you know what strategies work for you? Spending time with family, physical exercise, meditation, activities that bring relief? What are they?*
- *Do you have any ‘release valves’ that might cause problems – for example, occasional reliance on alcohol?*
- *Do you have support networks that you can rely on if and when you need them? What friends, colleagues, or personal contacts can you talk to? If you haven’t approached someone before, can you think of someone you would be able to approach?*
- *Does your management support journalists’ needs around potential traumatic stress? What could they do better? Can you talk to them about this?*
- *Do you know where to find professional care, and any other support resources, if you ever need it? How can you find this out?*

Supporting Staff

In a crisis response, good editors, managers, and supervisors provide leadership, guidance, and support under pressure. This is usually the most critical element for successfully covering a crisis response and looking after reporting staff. If you’re an editor or a manager, it’s essential to spend some time thinking about how to organise the best-quality coverage, as well as about how you can support your staff at the same time. If you’re a journalist, it’s important to think about how management supports you – and if you and your colleagues can offer any suggestions on ways it could be done better. This is true for freelancers as well.

The DART Center has some tips for managing journalists who cover traumatic events, which have been slightly adapted below.

As managers and editors, you need to remember the following:

- *Everyone in your newsroom may be affected differently. Some may be affected immediately, while others will take days, weeks, months, or even years to see the effect. The journalists who either claim or seem to be the most unfazed by the event may, in fact, be affected the most. Others may have developed mechanisms to help them deal with tragedy, and they may have minimal effects.*
- *Personal problems will exacerbate an individual’s reaction. For example, a staff member who is going through a divorce may be affected more than others.*



- *Your staff members may show signs when they have been particularly affected. Tiredness, irritability, and lashing out are three common ones, whether they occur inside or outside the newsroom. Encourage supervisors and reporters alike to listen and watch for them.*

You can take specific steps to help support your staff, including the following:

- ▶ **Create a supportive newsroom** environment. A 'macho' culture is often common, in which journalists feel they have to prove how strong they are, but this helps no one.
- ▶ **Rotate your staff** in and out of the crisis response zone. Even the most 'superhuman' reporter needs a break; he can't keep going for the full duration of the crisis. It helps staff to know that their time in the field has specific limits, which can give them the chance to decompress.
- ▶ **Hold regular debriefs**, especially when staff come back from the field. Journalists very rarely get the chance to talk about what's happened, and this can be an important way for them to process what they may have experienced, and also for supervisors to make sure they're aware of any important issues that may have emerged. Staff based in the office, who do not see the crisis in the field but nevertheless still deal with it every day, may also benefit from debriefs now and then.
- ▶ **Appoint a person to monitor the staff's well-being** who can make recommendations to you if needed. She might attend news meetings, talk one-on-one with staff, or follow up on any tips that someone might be struggling.
- ▶ **Offer individual counselling**, and make sure people know this is available. It can help if this is anonymous, so journalists can contact counselling support on their own without needing to tell anyone about it first.
- ▶ Plan staff meetings to **explain available resources**, tone of coverage, what staff members

can do to help themselves and one another, and possible outlets, such as peer support. Do not expect staff members to reveal intimate details about themselves during these gatherings.

- ▶ **Encourage your staff.** You can do this in person at meetings, in one-on-one discussions, through emails, on bulletin boards, or through memos. Tell them about the importance of their work and the impact it is having. Share positive letters, notes, or phone calls from the community about the coverage staff is producing. Share tips to alleviate stress. Provide reminders about what's happening – even what day and date it is and what events are taking place.
- ▶ **Encourage staff to do things to help themselves.** Post and share their own tips on bulletin boards and include them in memos and emails.
- ▶ Supervisors also must acknowledge the responsibility of sending reporters and photographers, especially younger and inexperienced ones, into potentially dangerous situations. They should **seek ways to protect their journalists and advise them** of appropriate precautions.
- ▶ **Organise essential training as soon as you can.** This can include training on managing stress and trauma; on security in hostile environments; or – like this one – on humanitarian response reporting.

Many of the most important measures to manage coverage can be put in place long before a crisis occurs. The ICFJ has several recommendations to this end, including the following:⁹³

- *Develop a specific plan about what to do in a crisis response. Assign people in your organisation to develop this plan, and **practise** it. The plan should include the following:*
 - ▶ *A compilation of contact information for all staff, including a map of home addresses. If a disaster strikes, the people who are closest can be called first and sent to the scene. It also means you can find staff and check that they're OK in the event of a disaster, and send help if they need it.*
 - ▶ *An outline of when and how to notify staff and in what order. Be sure the plan includes personnel outside the newsroom, including advertising, circulation, production, and top executives. Some plans give everyone an assignment and a place to report in the event of a disaster.*
 - ▶ *Contact information for emergency response officials, major public institutions, and independent experts on disaster-related topics.*
 - ▶ *Contact information for support personnel (freelancers or other news organizations outside the disaster area) who might be needed to supplement the newsroom's staff.*
 - ▶ *Contacts for renting emergency equipment on short notice (for example, spare cameras, or power generators)*
- *Recommendations to management to strengthen production and coverage include these measures:*

93 Please see ICFJ, *op. cit.*, for the full list of recommendations.



- ▶ *Make sure everyone knows who is in charge of what area. In particular, one person should take charge in the newsroom and another person in the field (presuming that there are multiple people at the scene).*
- ▶ *Provide everyone with access to a management contact list. It should be sorted in order of priority so it's clear whom to notify first for what action or event. If, for example, a journalist in the field notifies the person she needs to notify once something happens, then that person should know whom to pass the information on to. It is exhausting and counterproductive to decision making if everyone ends up notifying everyone else of every event.*
- ▶ *Assign a reporter in house to work the phones. While crews are in transit, get as much information as possible from any and all sources and be sure to pass it on to journalists in the field. Over-communicate this information; it's better than letting things fall between the cracks.*
- ▶ *Back up everything, on site and off site! All data must be safeguarded.*

TAKEAWAY 13

Stress and Trauma

Journalists should do the following:

- *Recognise common symptoms of stress and trauma in affected communities and individuals*
- *Understand how positive reporting can help support communities' recovery, just as poor or insensitive reporting can increase the damage*
- *Be able to implement journalistic practises that respect community dignity, support recovery, and avoid inflicting secondary trauma*
- *Understand that trauma and stress of journalists themselves must be taken seriously and recognise likely causes*
- *Recognise common signs of trauma in themselves or in colleagues*
- *Understand strategies and processes that can help avoid trauma and stress, or support recovery when it occurs, for both themselves and colleagues*
- *Understand concrete measures that media outlets can take to better support their own staff when reporting on traumatic events and issues*

What Makes a Productive Field Trip?

The stories you tell and the information you share are vital in a crisis response. To tell this story right means you need to go to the affected communities as quickly as possible when a crisis hits.

Preparation is key, both for media outlets and for individual journalists.

Media Preparedness

A newsroom or media outlet that plans for a crisis *ahead* of time will be far more effective at covering a crisis when it hits. Many parts of the world are vulnerable to a range of crises, and many places endure successive crisis events owing to vulnerable geographic locations, seasonal factors, etc. Media outlets can use this knowledge to prepare their systems and staff to prepare and respond better when the time comes. ICFJ's Disaster and Crisis Coverage has several recommendations to this end, including the following:⁹⁴

- *Develop a specific plan about what to do in a crisis response. Assign people in your organisation to develop this plan, and **practise** it. The plan should include the following:*
 - ▶ *A compilation of contact information for all staff, including a map of home addresses. If a disaster strikes, the people who are closest can be called first and sent to the scene. It also means you can find staff and check that they're OK in the event of a disaster, and send help if they need it.*

⁹⁴ Please see ICFJ, *op. cit.*, for the full list of recommendations.

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Field Reporting

- ▶ *An outline of when and how to notify staff and in what order. Be sure the plan includes personnel outside the newsroom, including advertising, circulation, production, and top executives. Some plans give everyone an assignment and a place to report in the event of a disaster.*
- ▶ *Contact information for emergency response officials, major public institutions, and independent experts on disaster-related topics.*
- ▶ *Contact information for support personnel (freelancers or other news organizations outside the disaster area) who might be needed to supplement the newsroom's staff.*
- ▶ *Contacts for renting emergency equipment on short notice (for example, spare cameras or power generators)*



Radio Sila journalist Rachat Hassom Taha, 30, works as a tech during a live radio program in Goz Beida, Chad. In February, Hassom was awarded the 2011 prize of excellence in journalism in a national competition organized by the Chadian High Council of Communication (Haut Conseil de la Communication, HCC) to recognize the hard work of local journalists.

- Recommendations to management to strengthen production and coverage include these measures:
 - ▶ Make sure everyone knows who is in charge of what area. In particular, one person should take charge in the newsroom and another person in the field (presuming there are multiple people at the scene).
 - ▶ Provide everyone with access to a management contact list. It should be sorted in order of priority so it's clear whom to notify first for what action or event. If, for example, a journalist in the field notifies the person she needs to notify once something happens, that person should know whom he needs to pass the information on to. It is exhausting and counterproductive to decision making if everyone ends up notifying everyone else of every event.
- ▶ Assign a reporter in house to work the phones. While crews are in transit, get as much information as possible from any and all sources and be sure to pass it on to journalists in the field. Over-communicate this information; it's better than letting things fall between the cracks.
- ▶ Back up everything, on site and off site! All data must be safeguarded.



Women wait with their babies to be seen by doctors at a free clinic in Gouroukoun IDP camp near Goz Beida, in eastern Chad. When I heard about giving birth in a hospital on Radio Sila, it was the first time anyone suggested that to me" says 37-year old Achta Abakar Ibrahim, a Darfur refugee and mother of ten. "My first six children I had at home, and although thanks to God I didn't have any serious problems it was just so much easier in the hospital. There they know what can go wrong and that made me so much more confident".

Plan Your Trip

A journalist's field trip must be part of an overall newsroom plan to cover the crisis story. It is essential to see the situation on the ground, to hear and share people's stories – but that in itself is not enough. The reporter's work must also include broader research, including finding sources for information about aid and policy decisions being made at the highest levels. These perspectives might be included within the same story as eyewitness coverage, or they may be included across several stories you and your media outlet produce.

In preparing for a field trip, look at the rest of the coverage that is taking place, and decide the following:

- *What are the issues you need to cover?*
- *Who is your audience?*
- *What do they need to know?*
- *What research do you need to do before you go?*
- *Who do you need to talk to on the ground, and how can you contact them?*

Reports about humanitarian crisis and response should place community needs at the centre of the story. They may follow a particular theme, for example, the cluster themes of health, shelter, food, and so on. Or they may focus on a particular situation that is impacting on

the community and that involves elements of different themes. For example, insecurity on the roads may impact on medicine and food supply to a community; waters left behind weeks after a flood may destroy pasture for livestock and increase the risk of disease.

Remember that different audiences have different needs. Identify the information your target audience must have.

If you are targeting a directly affected audience, this information might include the following:

- *The most up-to-date details on the crisis and response*
- *What people need to know to best protect the safety of themselves and their families*
- *Details of when and how humanitarian assistance will begin to arrive and how to access it*
- *How to locate loved ones if they have been separated*
- *Information about when and how the immediate situation is expected to worsen or improve*

If you are targeting an indirectly affected audience, your information might include the following:

- *What happened where*
- *Who the affected people are and what they are experiencing*
- *How the crisis is affecting the country or region as a whole*
- *Who is providing support*
- *How members of the audience can help out*

Ask yourself the questions your audience needs to know – and then plan your trip to best be able to answer them.

Prepare for the Field

Research the story. If your media outlet is large and well-organised, your colleagues may cover some of the areas needed for full coverage, with some focusing on government representatives, some researching expert reports, and others covering particular emergency responders. If your outlet is organised in this way, then your colleagues can provide you with a lot of the detail that you need. However, if your outlet is much smaller, then you may need to do a lot of this research yourself.

If the disaster or crisis has just happened, you don't need to wait several days to do research first – you need to go to the scene as fast as you can! However, even if you need to leave for the crisis area as quickly as possible, you still need to spend at least a few minutes preparing your trip to make sure it's effective. Below are some tips to make sure this happens.

Focus on some basic questions to help organise your visit, including these:

- *Which story or stories will you cover on this visit? This will help decide to exactly which locations you travel, and the sources you prioritise.*
- *What background research is available – recent surveys and assessments, reports and articles by other journalists?*
- *To whom do you need to speak on location? Identify individuals including government officials, community and civic leaders and representatives, NGOs, and local journalists.*
- *How can you contact them – through colleagues, headquarter offices, or local networks? Gather any contact lists you can find, both of people in the location to which you are travelling, and of organizations or individuals that may not be in the area, but that may help you find people as you go.*

- *Do you need a local fixer or guide? Where can you find one – through colleagues, local NGOs, or social networks?*
- *What's your schedule, including travel time there and back? What transport is available?*
- *How much money do you need to take? This is especially relevant if local banking services have been disrupted by the crisis.*
- *What communications are functioning – mobile phone, landline, Internet connectivity, high-frequency radio?*
- *Are there any security concerns that you need to be aware of? What communications protocols do you need with your home base? Are there support and information services that can help with this? (For example, if the UN is involved, it may have security advisories.)⁹⁵*
- *Do you have any maps? Find them! Even if they're a bit out of date, or if the crisis has changed the situation, maps are enormously useful. Online maps and GPS navigators may not be available in areas where connectivity has been cut.*

Essential Supplies

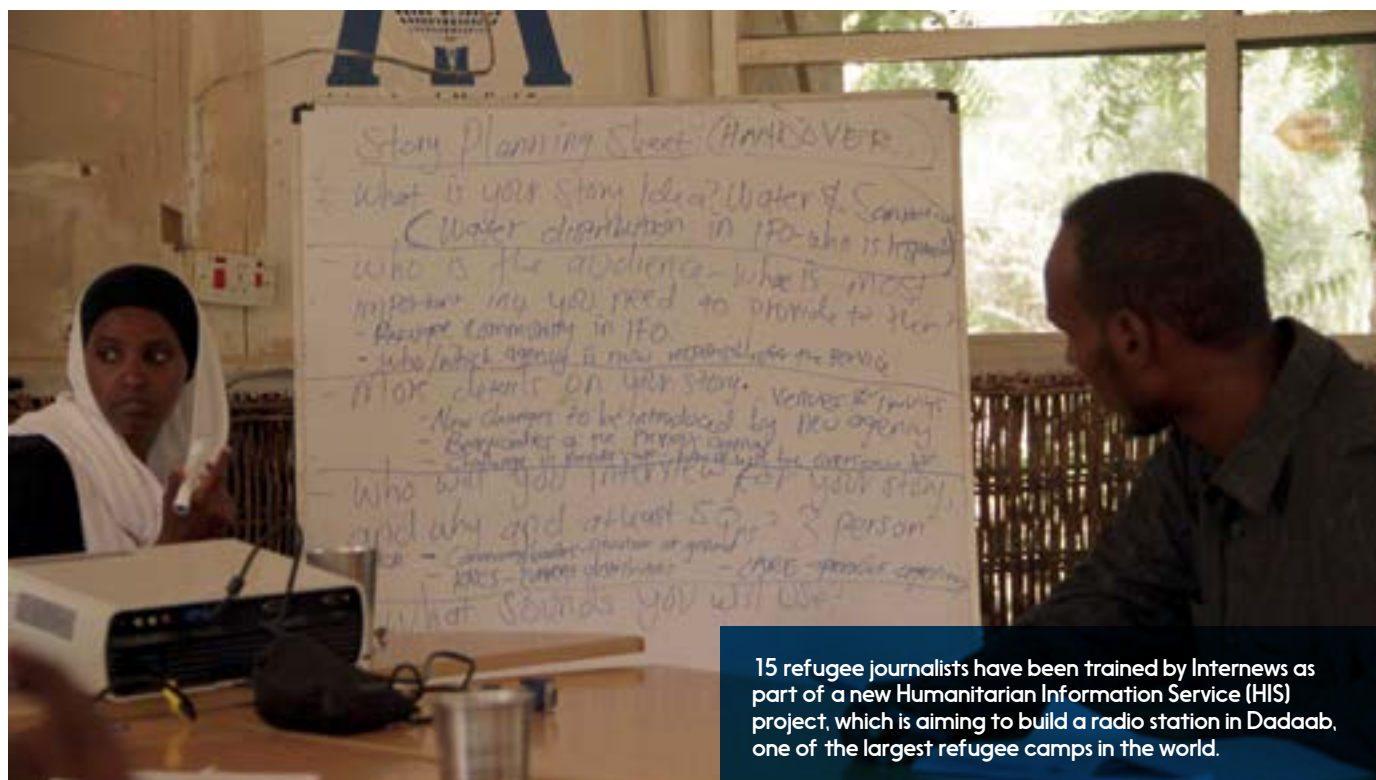
In almost all crisis response settings, you need to be as self-sufficient as possible. You can't rely on others providing you with essential supplies – especially because those affected by the disaster often urgently need those same supplies to a much greater degree. Call ahead to ask what you need to bring for yourself, and find out if you can bring anything to help others as well.

All journalists need to make sure they have everything they need. Below is an indicative list of common needs.⁹⁶

- ▶ **Work supplies:** phone, phone card, camera/recorder, laptop computer, batteries, chargers for all electronics (with car adaptor), several notebooks, pens, business cards, contact lists
- ▶ **Critical needs:** water, food (such as high energy/protein bars), toiletries, personal medication, hand sanitizer, wipes, battery or crank-powered radio, compass, maps
- ▶ **Seasonal supplies:** sunscreen, bug repellent, hat, boots, packable rain jacket, fleece pullover, hand/feet warmer packets
- ▶ **Further useful supplies:** binoculars, knife or all-purpose Leatherman tool, large and small plastic bags, rubber bands, heavy-duty tape, thermometer
- ▶ **First-aid kits.** All journalists should carry a first-aid kit, either as individuals or in a group, and be trained in first aid (see 'Safety and Security', below). At a minimum, a kit should include the following:
 - ▶ Sterilised bandages in a variety of sizes, including triangular bandages and medium and large dressings
 - ▶ Disposable latex gloves
 - ▶ Small plastic airway device or tubing for breathing resuscitation
 - ▶ Scissors
 - ▶ Safety pins
 - ▶ Plastic bags
 - ▶ Flashlight or, preferably, a headlamp
 - ▶ Adhesive tape
 - ▶ Porous tape
 - ▶ Triple antibiotic ointment

⁹⁵ See 'Module 15, Safety and Security', below.

⁹⁶ ICFJ, op. cit.



Use Your Skills

Do the basics! A crisis response is almost inevitably an unfamiliar situation – the crisis has changed everything, including the way people react to one another and to reporters. This means your basic journalism skills need to be in top form to get the information you need and to tell the story.

- ▶ **Go early.** Get to your location as early as you can, or the afternoon before you intend to start your work. Spend a little time getting a feel for the location by talking to local people, asking logistical questions you may have (for example about transport, food, accommodation, security), and organizing your work plan.
- ▶ **Talk to anyone and everyone.** You never know who is going to help your story. In addition to your prearranged meetings, talk to local people about your topic. Stop in a lunch place and order a coffee; talk to the staff casually to see what you can learn. Once you have a sense about what the public is

thinking, you might pick two solid questions and do a 'vox pop' on your story.

- ▶ **Take excellent notes.** Particularly in an extreme situation, it's easy to forget details. Make sure your notes thoroughly record what people say, and include the names and contact details of everybody you speak with. It will be extremely difficult to find them after you return to your office. Double-check phone numbers, name spellings, profession, age, where individuals live, and more. Put a date and location at the top of every notebook page. It's worth emphasising these basics – your notes are your most vital resource.
- ▶ **Record the details.** Take a moment to look around and write down as many details as you can find: colours, sounds, smells, actions, emotions, everything. These small details will help you recreate the scene so your audience can better understand what the location looks like, what is happening, and how people are dealing with the situation.



Research and Information Tools

The ever-expanding availability of new media technologies means that journalists have many new tools at their disposal to follow and research a crisis response, with more emerging regularly. As has been documented frequently, many of these are the fastest sources of information when a crisis strikes. It is not practical to note all, or even most of them, here. However, at minimum, journalists should be familiar with the tools below.⁹⁷

- **Twitter.** The micro-blogging site is one of the fastest sources of information in a rapidly changing scenario. It allows journalists to conduct targeted searches on a specific event, follow key hashtags, and identify individuals who both

produce and share information from a wide range of sources.

- **Facebook.** Groups or networks of individuals frequently establish pages for particular goals. This can be to share information on an event or to provide peer support (for example, pages for journalists and/or communities in conflict zones to share information and tips).
- **RSS feeds.** Journalists can collate updates and reports from media organisations, individual bloggers, and others using RSS, so that all updates arrive at a single place, such as Google Reader.
- **News alerts.** Search engines including Google, Yahoo, Bing, and others provide targeted services that gather media coverage from across the world on topics that you select, which can also be delivered to individual email accounts.
- **LinkedIn.** LinkedIn is a professional employment social network that can help journalists find individuals with specific expertise on a given area,

⁹⁷ Some training resources on these and a range of other tools also exist online; for example, see <http://www.newsu.org/social-media-search>.



or research more detail on individuals already identified.

- ▶ **Email lists.** In any crisis response, key organisations (for example UNOCHA) will manage email lists that send updates at regular intervals. All journalists need to identify and join relevant email lists.
- ▶ **SMS lists.** In some situations, organisations will run SMS lists. These may provide security updates from security services or police, news services by subscription from the telecommunication company, humanitarian updates, and more. Journalists need to find out what lists are in operation and subscribe to any that are relevant.
- ▶ **Blogs.** Individual bloggers, as well as blogs hosted by organisations, can be invaluable sources for information, discussion, and networks. Blog aggregators, and curation services such as Global Voices, can help when searching for individual bloggers and the stories that they highlight.

Develop Your Sources

As is the case for all good journalism, reporting on a crisis response depends heavily on developing and maintaining excellent relationships with your sources. The matter of good sourcing becomes more important than ever in crisis situations where all potential sources are under extreme pressure. Government workers, aid organization representatives, and community members themselves usually have less time and tolerance for dealing with reporters and can sometimes become suspicious that journalists may be after a 'quick headline' rather than dedicated to reporting in detail. Journalists need to pay close attention to developing and sustaining these key relationships – ideally from even before a crisis hits.⁹⁸ It's important for journalists in crisis-prone countries to cultivate in advance the kinds of contacts that may be able to facilitate access to better, faster information when a crisis is at hand.

⁹⁸ For more on cultivating contacts before a crisis, see ICFJ, *op. cit.*

Getting access to speak to government ministries, affected populations, and humanitarian agencies is not always easy. Often a mixture of bureaucratic protocol, a lack of trust, and other factors can prevent or dissuade people from providing quotes or sharing even basic information to journalists. As far as possible, journalists need to understand these limitations and work to them – it can sometimes be frustrating, but getting annoyed or angry is not the solution.

Understand the protocol. Most government ministries, humanitarian agencies, and even local civic organizations have a protocol for how information is shared and by whom. Not everyone is mandated to provide you with a comment. Some simple steps will help journalists maximise their time and effort and get the information they need.

First, journalists must identify who has authorization to speak (many ministries and agencies have a media liaison or spokesperson), then contact that person, and ask them what the procedure is for getting information and quotes on the record.

Journalists must make sure they access as many relevant contacts as they can. Sometimes government ministries, the United Nations coordinating offices, or other relevant actors that coordinate disaster relief compile these contacts in a book or a resource guide.

Maintain relationships. Getting contact names and numbers isn't enough. It is important to maintain sources by developing 'give and take' relationships with your contacts, where both sides benefit from sharing information (while maintaining journalism ethics, of course). Ways of doing this can include the following:

- ▶ **Face-to-face meetings.** Meet your intended contact in person, so you can better get to know him and he can get to know you. Unless it is prearranged, don't go to your first meeting with the intention of getting an interview. Go to simply learn more



about the person, his work, his organization, and so on. Bring your business card, and share useful information about your own work and areas of interest. Make sure you get the individual's personal contact details to follow up later.

- ▶ **Regular phone calls.** Don't call your sources only when you need specific information for a story. Call to say hello, and ask them 'How are you doing?', 'How's your work?', 'Is there anything you think people should know about?' or to offer them your own updates on topics of mutual interest.
- ▶ **Organised contact lists.** These should be both online and offline, but kept secure. Keep a book or a folder with people's business cards in a system that's easy to use, for example under humanitarian topics, lead agencies, geographic regions, etc.
- ▶ **Email lists.** As mentioned above, these can be great information sources and a good way to keep up on what is happening in the humanitarian community, to develop new story ideas, and to understand and stay in touch with the issues that your contacts engage with every day. Get your name and contact details on as many email distribution lists as possible. Stay updated and stay connected!



- ▶ **Joint field visits.** Work on identifying opportunities to visit the field with your contacts. This gives you an inside perspective on their work and interests, and it gives you an interesting scene to include in your reporting. If you are planning to visit a local area to cover a humanitarian crisis, invite a contact to join you and give some perspective. For example to cover a medical story, bring or meet on location a doctor, a government health specialist, a health NGO representative, or a first aid worker.
- ▶ **Get feedback.** Keep your contacts involved in your reporting. Call them to run ideas by them. Send them copies of the coverage you produce and ask for their feedback. What do they think of the story's accuracy? What other suggestions do they have?
- ▶ **Share information.** When you go to the field and hear perspectives from communities or workers on the ground about humanitarian crisis issues, share that information with relevant agencies, ministries, and other contacts. Let them know how people feel about their work and what kinds of feedback you are picking up from their constituencies and communities.

TAKEAWAY 14

Field Reporting

Journalists should do the following:

- *Understand and commit to principles for effective and ethical humanitarian crisis response reporting*
- *Be able to implement steps required for an effective reporting field trip*
- *Understand and explore relevant and practical research tools, including online tools*
- *Review and begin implementing good journalism practice in developing sources*
- *Know how to effectively plan interviews*

Safety and Security

Security Risks and Hazards

This module draws on the following material: On Assignment: *A Guide to Reporting in Dangerous Situations* by the Committee for the Protection of Journalists;⁹⁹ ICFJ's *Disaster and Crisis Coverage*; and *Reporting for Change: a Handbook for Local Journalists in Crisis Areas*, by the Institute for War and Peace Reporting.¹⁰⁰

Crises and crisis responses are frequently chaotic and unstable, and can pose safety and security risks for journalists and others – especially if the crisis is a complex emergency involving armed conflict.

Journalists must take serious measures to protect their safety and security. Again, this is a complicated area that needs dedicated training and support resources. This manual introduces just a few of the key needs and issues and points to where extra resources can be found.

Safety and security needs vary dramatically by context. Sometimes journalists are specifically at risk; sometimes they are subject to the same risks as everybody else in the area.

Many groups can pose safety and security risks to journalists:

- *Military forces*
- *National government agencies (police, intelligence, etc.)*
- *Foreign state agencies (in border conflicts)*
- *Militant groups*
- *Rioting groups or vigilantes*
- *Criminals*

⁹⁹ On Assignment: *A Guide to Reporting in Dangerous Situations*, CPJ. Available at http://www.cpj.org/Briefings/2003/safety/journo_safe_guide.pdf.

¹⁰⁰ *Reporting for Change: a Handbook for Local Journalists in Crisis Areas*, IWPR, 2004. Available at <http://iwpr.net/reporting-change-handbook-local-journalists-crisis-areas>.

- Political and business interests
- Hostile social groups (for example, if the presence of a journalist, or the reports she produces seriously challenge or question local customs in places where this may prompt a violent response)

Hazards can also vary greatly, including but not limited to the following:

- Harassment
- Ambush or roadblock
- Arrest
- Kidnapping
- Torture
- Targeted killing
- Landmines
- Heavy weapons fire (mortars, bomb blasts, etc.)
- Suicide attacks (either directly targeting journalists, or to which they are exposed in their line of work)

Different individual journalists also face different levels and types of risk, even in the same location. An international journalist does not face the same situation as a national journalist; a journalist visiting a crisis or conflict zone from the capital city does not face the same situation as a local journalist who lives in the area and has to interact with local groups on a daily basis. In any conflict zones civilians and journalists alike may be injured or killed by non-conflict related events like accidents (especially road accidents) or illness.¹⁰¹

101 While some of these hazards are heightened in a conflict zone, it's important to note that they also exist away from conflict – for example government harassment of journalists. CPJ notes that '[E]ven all the risks of reporting in a conflict zone comprise only a small part of the risks journalists face worldwide. In fact, for every journalist killed in crossfire, three are targeted for murder. ... Many of the murdered journalists were investigative reporters uncovering stories about government corruption, organized crime, or human rights abuses'.

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) points out:

'[T]he journalists who are most at risk are often local reporters. They, and their news companies, often cannot afford body armor or expensive training courses. Some of them live with daily risks. Some of them are also employed by foreign media companies. CPJ strongly urges all news organizations to ensure that journalists and others working for them (including local freelancers, stringers, and fixers) are properly equipped, trained, and insured.' All of these risks require serious precautions, adapted to each journalist's circumstances, to make sure they stay as safe as possible.

A first step is to assess and analyse the risks individual journalists face. Which of the groups or institutions noted above operate in the crisis response area? Which ones pose a risk to journalists? How does that risk show itself – in which hazards? Journalists and media outlets need to carefully discuss and evaluate these issues, as a first step to preparing a security plan.¹⁰²

102 See CPJ, *op. cit.*, p. 53 for more detail.

Journalist Safety Measures

Steps to stay safe need to be embedded in each journalist's work mode, and in the way each media institution operates. Here are some key points, drawn from CPJ, ICFJ, and IWPR. Please see those publications noted previously, and the references they list, for further resources.

IWPR recommendations for journalists:

- ▶ **Be prepared:** Get the training you need, and make sure you have first aid and safety equipment.
- ▶ **Be informed:** Know the territory you are travelling in, as well as your companions or fixers. Do your homework thoroughly before you leave.
- ▶ **Be calm:** Ensure that you are in a good physical and mental condition;
- ▶ **Prioritize your life:** Never put the story above personal safety. No story is worth a human life. To put that more crudely, a dead journalist can't report.

Learn First Aid!

And carry a first-aid kit. A two-day course can help you save lives, including even your own. As IWPR says:

'During a war, many more people die of disease and wounds than in actual combat. After serious accidents or injury, the first five minutes often decide whether someone will live or die. A two-day first aid course can teach how to deal with major blood loss, wounds, broken bones, burns and other eventualities. It means you can help yourself and others, too'.¹⁰³

Basic Rules for Good Security Practice

First of all, *talk* to people who know the area, and find out as much as you can about the situation and how to approach it. Your colleagues, your contacts, and your guides can all be great sources of important information.

- *Decide the best way to travel: what vehicle, which route, and with which companions, guides, or escorts. Sometimes it is safer and more effective to travel in convoy. Sometimes it is better to travel inconspicuously in a typical taxi or other local vehicle.*
- *Stay in touch with editors/supervisors, colleagues, and others who need to know. Establish a protocol to communicate your activities, and check in regularly at defined times.*
- *Work in a team of at least two people.*
- *Always carry journalist ID with you and identify yourself as a journalist (unless there is a **very** good reason not to). Discuss this decision with your editor and colleagues first.*
- *Never carry a weapon.*
- *Beware of empty roads. They may well be empty for a reason, and not safe.*
- *Wear clothes that clearly show you are not a combatant: Khaki or faux army fatigues are a bad idea. Avoid clothes that might make you too obvious a target, including very bright colours that are easily visible from a distance. And, remember, a large camera lens from a distance can look like a weapon. If unsure, take it off or carry it in a bag.*
- *Behave respectfully to local customs. In some settings, disrespectful behaviour or poor comportment can create security risks of their own.*

¹⁰³ IWPR, op. cit., p. 249



- *Avoid or minimise use of any substances, including alcohol, even during evening hours. Unstable situations do not respect regular working hours!*
- *Don't follow anyone thoughtlessly to a conflict front-line, even if other journalists, soldiers, or aid workers are going there. Think first: Do you need to be there? You are not a war reporter. For humanitarian reporting, the story is almost always somewhere other than the front line, in places where civilians have congregated away from the fighting.*
- *Learn to recognise heavy weapons, small arms, and landmines, and how to approach them. Learn the difference between incoming and outgoing fire. (This usually requires specialised training.)*
- *At riots and demonstrations, don't use prominent signs or lights identifying yourself as media. Never get between a crowd and the security forces. Park any vehicles away from the event (so they don't get damaged), and have a clear escape route to get back to your vehicle. Try to get above the crowd (e.g., on a rooftop).*

Hostile Environment Training

In the past decade, several training programs have emerged to provide skills for journalists in hostile conflict zones. Most are delivered by specialist organisations with security backgrounds. They cover areas from recognising heavy weapons fire, to

approaching roadblocks, to strategies to follow in case of abduction.

Many training programs target international correspondents. However, local journalists often face much different sets of threats, especially if they live in the same area as those posing a risk (security forces, militants, criminal networks, or others). The experience of your colleagues is the single most important resource here: Experienced journalists have already survived many of these risks. Talk to them.

Several organisations (including Internews) have developed training programs that build on the experiences and security realities of specific countries and locations. Training programs are not always available and often not cheap. But they are one way to improve journalist safety in hostile environments. Journalists can do the following:

- *Talk to managers about providing staff training, and research what training is available.*
- *Talk to journalists who work or have worked in the environment to find out what strategies they use and what suggestions they have.*
- *Share these strategies and suggestions with colleagues!*

Protective Equipment

This can include gas masks, flak jackets, and more. If specialised equipment seems appropriate to the situation on the ground, check with your media institution and journalist support organisations to see if they are available.

Health Insurance

It is often a struggle in many countries for journalists to gain adequate health insurance. In conflict zones, it's even more important. See what's available and, if it's not, see whether journalist support organisations can you help obtain it.

Media Institutions and Journalist Safety and Security

Journalists' most important resource to guarantee their safety and security is support from their own media institutions, and their editors, managers, or supervisors. Media outlets need to develop their own security plans and processes to back up and support the steps outlined above.

CPJ says: 'For managers, the safety of their journalists should be paramount. This means discouraging unwarranted risk-taking, making assignments to war zones or other hostile environments voluntary, and providing proper training and equipment'.¹⁰⁴

Media Institution Support

Editors and managers need to make sure critical support is provided. Some of the most essential measures come down to simple coordination:

- Stay in touch with journalists in the field, with regular check-ins. As CPJ says, 'Editors at home should always know their journalists' schedules in detail, and at least one trusted individual in the field should know a journalist's itinerary'. Assign one or more people to help share information with journalists on the ground, including seeking and passing on any security updates.
- Provide support logistics as much as possible. This can include organizing transport and accommodation; making sure money, medicines, and other supplies are available; and so on.

- Make sure contingency plans are in place if something goes wrong. This includes knowing whom to contact on behalf of journalists in the field (security officials, doctors, lawyers, family members, etc.), and under what circumstances they are to be contacted.
- Communicate clearly and emphasise safety. CPJ points out: 'Editors should never push a journalist to visit an area that he or she deems too dangerous; likewise, a journalist should not travel into a dangerous zone without advance clearance from a supervising editor'.¹⁰⁵

Editors, managers, and owners also need to make sure journalist staff get support they need *ahead* of time. This includes the following:

- Insurance for journalist staff, including medical evacuation
- Training (in hostile environments, and in first aid)
- Equipment (this may include body armour and other equipment, as appropriate)

This is necessary both for permanent staff and for freelancers or stringers – who often spend the most time in a conflict-affected area, and may also live there.

In some circumstances, owners may not provide some or all of these elements. In others, the costs may simply be too much for small media operations (some hostile environment training courses can cost \$2,000 or more). In both cases, editors and managers need to work with reporting staff, and possibly with media support organisations, to push for these resources to be provided as far as possible as a matter of urgency.

¹⁰⁵ CPJ also notes: 'In many nations, especially countries with active intelligence services, journalists should consider being cautious when using telephones. Moreover, using e-mail to communicate may not be secure either. Some journalists may choose to encrypt their e-mail to communicate with editors and others, but the security of encryption programs remains debatable, and sending encrypted text is likely to raise a red flag to anyone who might be monitoring you'.

¹⁰⁴ CIP, *op. cit.*, p. 3

Further Safety and Security Resources

Measures to protect journalist safety and security are essential – but nothing can take away the risk. As CPJ says: ‘No set of principles, no training course, and no handbook like this one can guarantee any journalist’s safety. Indeed, as we worked with editors, reporters, and others to compile this guide, we heard frequent concerns that some journalists might gain a false sense of security from training courses or safety manuals’.

Journalists in dangerous situations must constantly re-evaluate risks and know when to back down. Terry Anderson, CPJ honorary co-chairman and former Associated Press Beirut bureau chief was held hostage for nearly seven years in Lebanon. He says: ‘Always, constantly, constantly, every minute, weigh the benefits against the risks. And as soon as you come to the point where you feel uncomfortable with that equation, get out, go, leave it. It’s not worth it. There is no story worth getting killed for.’ These notes on journalist safety and security are drawn from three main resources. Each of them also lists further resources that can provide more support for journalist safety and security measures. They are already indicated in the footnotes but are repeated here:

On Assignment: A Guide to Reporting in Dangerous Situations. Committee for the Protection of Journalists, 2003 (updated). See www.cpj.org/Briefings/2003/safety/journo_safe_guide.pdf. This includes a list of resources for freelance journalists.

Reporting for Change: A Handbook for Local Journalists in Crisis Areas. Institute for War and Peace Reporting. See <http://iwpr.net/reporting-change-handbook-local-journalists-crisis-areas>.

Disaster and Crisis Coverage. International Center for Journalists. See www.icjf.org/resources/disaster-and-crisis-coverage.

TAKEAWAY 15

Safety and Security

Journalists should do the following:

- Be able to conduct initial reviews of prominent security and safety risks that have the potential to impact their work in the field
- Understand and review key measures and potential strategies to protect their security while working, at both the individual and institutional level
- Develop individual security plans in outline
- Be aware of other resources that can support their safety and security in a conflict
- Understand the importance of pursuing this need on an on-going basis

16

Strategies for Long-Term Coverage

After the Emergency

As we saw in Section II, a crisis doesn't end with the immediate relief phase, which focuses on simply saving as many lives as possible. A community and society's recovery and reconstruction is just as important. Reporting on these efforts poses different challenges from those of reporting on the relief phase. The needs may appear less urgent – affected communities will have food, shelter, and medical care at a minimum (if they do not, the relief phase has by definition not ended). Recovery and reconstruction as outlined in Section II cover different processes and needs, take a lot longer, and involve getting key institutions up and running again. This means the stories are less obvious, often more complex, and less dramatic, particularly for outside audiences.

However, coverage is at least as vital in this phase as it is during the relief phase. Affected communities still need information and participation to help drive forward the recovery and reconstruction. Outside audiences – whether national or international – also need to know what is going on. The recovery and reconstruction efforts need to maintain a high profile in media coverage, otherwise it risks falling off the agenda of government and fund-raisers. If that happens, or if for any other reason the recovery phase or reconstruction phase does not go well, affected communities run the risk of

Lutheran World Federation information officer, Mohamed Sheikh Ibrahim, 31, speaks with a megaphone and tells new arrivals in Hagadera refugee camp that they will soon be relocated to another camp. Internews reports that 60 percent of new arrivals need more information about shelter. Megaphone and community network methods currently used to disseminate information do not reach everyone.



never fully recovering from the impact of the disaster. That would leave them vulnerable to risking even more profound impact if and when another disaster occurs.

It's vital for journalists to think carefully about what recovery really means for communities. It doesn't just mean buildings are repaired and jobs re-established – although that's often highlighted in the 'dominant paradigm' of crisis reporting (outlined in Section I). A healthy post-crisis community is one that has not only recovered key elements of its existence but has also improved in certain aspects:

- **Physical:** This may include improved buildings, roads, ports, schools, etc.
- **Economic:** This may include more robust markets, factories, farms, transport, tourism, banking system, etc.



Recovery, Reconstruction, and Media Coverage

The most prominent media outlets typically focus on news – usually dramatic stories that are happening right now. How can they report on the ‘slower’ and less dramatic stories of recovery and reconstruction? Will people want to know about them? It can be a real challenge, and it’s important to think seriously about these questions and make sure they’re part of each individual journalist’s practice and the practice of their outlets.

Recovery and reconstruction phases can take years. But some practical reporting approaches can help ensure that they remain part of the news agenda. These include the following:

- ▶ **Emotional:** This may include new strategies for dealing with trauma and PTSD – and issues of depression, grief, and violence – for individuals, families, and larger groups.
- ▶ **Social:** This may include healthy social relations, social services including schools and hospitals, and a feeling of the community working together and looking after its members.

Most of all, communities must be *better prepared for the next disaster* – and, ideally, they can make sure it doesn’t end up a disaster at all. It’s important for journalists to think seriously about these questions and make sure they are reflected as part of each individual journalist’s coverage and the coverage of media outlets.

- ▶ **Focus on accountability.** Why did the disaster happen? Are the government, the national response effort, and the international response effort meeting their obligations? How is the money being spent? Stories on accountability and other related areas often have great news value. At the same time, they can still include a wide variety of humanitarian information for affected communities.
- ▶ **Highlight lessons learned – or not learned.** As well as tracking the recovery and reconstruction efforts themselves, journalists can ask the question, Are we ready for the next disaster? This of course is also a form of seeking accountability: asking governments, communities, and other organizations what they’re doing to make sure people don’t suffer in the same way again. As well as news stories, a ‘lessons learned’ approach can also include stories that show how communities themselves successfully apply their experiences to ‘build back better’.



A boy walks past the ubiquitous reminders of the need for Palestinian statehood in the Shatila camp of Beirut, Lebanon, on Tuesday, February 12, 2013. Thousands of Palestinians from Syria and Syrians have fled the fighting in recent months, most notably around Damascus. Many have sought refuge in neighboring Lebanon and in the Shatila Palestinian camp in particular because of its low rental costs.

- **Use anniversaries and significant dates.** These often keep key issues on the agenda. Anniversaries can include dates a year or two years after the disaster; other significant dates may be religious celebrations or other commemorations taking place among affected communities. Journalists and outlets need to think about the best way to make sure these dates are used effectively to target community needs and to maintain the profile of the response.
- **Tell individual and community stories.** Telling the story of a single person, family, or community, how they've struggled or recovered, can be a powerful way to communicate what's still happening amidst recovery and reconstruction efforts.

In news media, with specific formats and tight deadlines, *how* a story is told often decides whether it gets told at all. The story angle is crucial; and so is the story *format*.

Story Angle and Story Development

A range of techniques, especially in the realm of investigative journalism, can help to enhance the quality and profile of post-emergency coverage. ICFJ¹⁰⁶ highlights several:

- **Probe for patterns:** Look closely at the extent of the damage caused by a disaster. Did some properties survive while others nearby were destroyed? Examine building standards, permits, and maintenance records. Could some of the damage have been prevented?
- **Seek documents:** Search public records for information related to the disaster. For example, after buildings have collapsed in an earthquake, look for previous incidents involving the same type of building, inspection records on building standards, and so forth.

¹⁰⁶ ICFJ, *op. cit.*

- ▶ **Consult experts:** An independent, outside expert can help answer technical questions while at the same time raising questions worth investigating. For example, if a building or a bridge collapses, the newsroom might call on a structural engineer.
- ▶ **Stay on the story:** Keep track of new developments, updates, and corrections. Report what happens to injured survivors and their families. Provide details on damage caused and the estimated cost, which will change over time. Follow official inquiries or lawsuits. Stay on top of relief and rebuilding efforts.
- ▶ **Tap colleagues' expertise:** Different beat reporters can see angles others might have missed. For example, an education reporter might look at how students have been affected; a business reporter could pursue the long-term economic impact.
- ▶ **Archive the coverage:** Interest in major news stories lives on long after the immediate crisis has passed. Create an online home for all stories, video, slideshows, maps, and databases related to the story.
- ▶ **Dig deeper:** Investigate disaster preparedness and prevention. Is government money for disaster preparedness being spent effectively? Is the local infrastructure ready for the next disaster? Are human activities and government policies contributing to environmental problems that will make disasters worse? (See 'Disaster Preparedness' below for more details.)
- ▶ **Look ahead:** Provide information that can keep people safe in cyclical disasters such as hurricanes.

Story Format

Different formats suit different stories. For example, stories on 'lessons learned' may be news stories, features, editorials, personal profiles, or even columnist-style opinion pieces. A focus on stories about individual people usually does not fit a straight 'news story' (although there are exceptions), but can be made very powerful in features format, documentary video, or even as stories community members produce themselves in any medium.

Possible formats can include the following:

- *News reports*
- *Features*

Especially in electronic media:

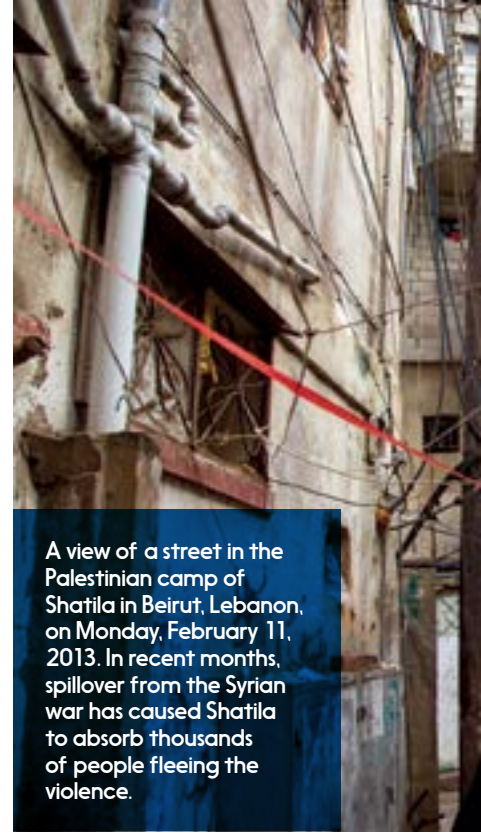
- *Public service announcements*
- *Photo spreads*
- *Dramas*
- *Talk shows*
- *Talkback/phone in*
- *Documentaries*
- *Community-produced segments*

Especially in printed media:

- *Opinion, comment, and editorial pieces*
- *Special inserts*
- *Community-produced pages*

Several other formats may be possible or popular in specific contexts.

Some relatively new formats or channels that are less common in many countries, but hold great potential, include these:



A view of a street in the Palestinian camp of Shatila in Beirut, Lebanon, on Monday, February 11, 2013. In recent months, spillover from the Syrian war has caused Shatila to absorb thousands of people fleeing the violence.

- Live blogs and Twitter feeds capable of providing detailed and up-to-the-minute coverage in ways that more conventional media often cannot. Interactive websites, including maps (see for example the website that continues to monitor Mount Merapi, a volcano that erupted in Indonesia in 2010: <http://merapi.combine.or.id>)
- SMS subscription updates
- Live webcam
- Live information events (for example a music or cultural performance targeting information needs, and that uses media coverage in a mix of information formats)

National and Community Disaster Preparedness

True recovery and reconstruction must mean that communities and societies are better prepared for a next disaster – and can reduce the risk of an event actually becoming a full-blown disaster.¹⁰⁷ This concept is called disaster risk reduction (DRR) and includes the policies and concrete measures that governments, societies, and communities can undertake to reduce future vulnerability.

A strong understanding of DRR can help underpin and frame long-term media coverage.¹⁰⁸ The UNISDR Disaster through a Different Lens: Behind every effect, there is a cause. A guide for journalists covering disaster risk reduction outlines what needs to happen for DRR to take place.

¹⁰⁷ This should not happen only *after* a disaster takes place of course – ideally societies should prepare beforehand so that the chance of any disaster occurring is reduced ahead of time.

¹⁰⁸ DRR is an extensive area that merits its own efforts in journalist training and media coverage. However, this manual is designed to be delivered to journalists in countries where a disaster has already occurred, and in which urgent coverage of the emergency phase of a response is needed. That means that while journalists need a DRR perspective in their work, this should receive further emphasis once the emergency and recovery phases are winding down.



We saw in Section I that hazards like earthquakes or floods are not necessarily disasters in themselves. A disaster happens when these hazards cause suffering for vulnerable human populations. UNISDR highlights the main causes of vulnerability that enable disasters to happen:

- *Poverty*
- *Rapid, unplanned urbanization*
- *Climate change*
- *Environmental degradation*

Possible measures countries and communities can take to prepare for disasters include, for example, the following:

- *Establish **and practice** early warning systems that can reach everyone in a community.*
- *Involve communities at risk in measures to make their own neighbourhoods safer.*
- *Plan urbanization to avoid building in risk areas like dangerous slopes or floodplains, and offer safe lands to low-income families.*
- *Develop schools, hospitals, roads, and bridges to standards and in locations that can withstand hazards.*
- *Establish adequate drainage systems to avoid flooding.*

- *Identify and protect natural buffers such as forests, wetlands, and coral reefs to shield communities from hazards such as storm surge, coastal flooding, and tropical storms.*
- *Manage forests to reduce wildfire risk.*

Media coverage can help highlight the need for these measures. Good reporting can also highlight reasons why DRR measures may not be taking place, for example through lack of awareness, inadequate budgets, corruption, political interests, and so on. Adopting a DRR perspective can help journalists identify a new and diverse range of disaster-related stories: on economic development, land rights, political contests, etc.

Media Institution Preparedness¹⁰⁹

Media outlets need to be prepared for a disaster just as much as any other organisation. Suggestions to this end have already been noted above, from ensuring effective newsroom organisation to staff safety and security measures prepared ahead of time. Every media outlet should conduct a *preparedness audit* that focuses on these issues. Has the media outlet developed a disaster response plan and practised it? Has the outlet organised contact details for staff or made efforts to provide whatever safety and security training, insurance, and other steps are necessary?

A preparedness audit also needs to include physical measures: Does the media outlet have emergency backup power? Emergency food and water supplies? Emergency shelter? All of these are critical in disaster-risk locations.

109 Drawn from ICFJ, *op. cit.*

Media outlets have a crucial, life-saving role to play in a humanitarian crisis response. The more prepared an outlet is, the better it will be able to fulfil that role.

Examples of Follow-up Coverage

Below are some examples of coverage that highlight long-term issues. Two highlight *accountability* (before and after a disaster), another highlights individual preparedness, while a third tells of individuals and communities recovering from a disaster.

1. China's earthquake schools

In May 2008, earthquakes in China's Sichuan province resulted in widespread destruction and reports of around 70,000 deaths.¹¹⁰

This BBC report is from 15 May 2008, a few days after the earthquake:

China anger over 'shoddy schools' ¹¹¹

The shoddy construction of school buildings may be to blame for the high number of child casualties in China's earthquake, according to state media.

Tens of thousands of people have been buried in collapsed buildings following Monday's quake, many of them children.

The China Daily newspaper said questions needed to be raised about the structural quality of school buildings.

¹¹⁰ See http://earthquake.usgs.gov/earthquakes/world/most_destructive.php.

¹¹¹ See news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7400524.stm.



There have been frequent allegations of corruption in China's boom-fuelled construction industry.

Regulations

China adopted strict building codes after more than 240,000 people died in an earthquake in Tangshan in the country's north-east in 1976. There few buildings had been built to withstand earthquakes, and thousands were destroyed.

But BBC correspondents in China say there is concern about corners being cut to siphon off money in the construction industry – especially in rural areas.

In Dujiangyun hundreds of students are feared dead in the rubble of the Juyuan Middle School, where more than 50 bodies have been pulled out.

The school collapsed, but other nearby buildings withstood the earthquake.

One man told the AFP news agency: "I'll tell you why the school collapsed. It was shoddily built. Someone wanted to save money."

One mother told reporters there were doubts about the construction of the school.

“It was built in a very short time. They added one floor at a time, and continued building as they had money for it. So the base was not made for several floors. It was too weak.”

“The whole building collapsed, straight down, hardly without shaking, even,” she said.

And a newly-built primary school nearby also collapsed, leaving 100 children and teachers dead or missing.

Julian Bommer, Professor of Earthquake Risk Assessment at Imperial College, London told the BBC that the issue was one of enforcement.

“Countries in earthquake zones need rigorous inspection regimes to monitor the building regulations they introduce,” he said.

The state-run China Daily newspaper told readers in an editorial that if the school collapses were due to shoddy compliance with building codes the authorities should act with “firm resolve.”

“We cannot afford not to raise uneasy questions about the structural quality of school buildings,” it said.

The BBC’s Dan Griffiths, in Sichuan, says that one effect of China’s rapid economic growth is that some areas of the country have been thrown up with little regard for normal building codes.

And the grief of parents is all the greater, he says, because of China’s one-child policy. “In some towns an entire generation may have been lost,” he says.

The state news agency Xinhua reported that at least 1,000 students were dead or missing at the Beichuan Middle School in the city of Mianyang.

And at another school in Sichuan province’s Qingchuan county where school children were taking a nap when the earthquake demolished a three-story building, 178 children were confirmed dead in the rubble and another 23 were missing, Xinhua said.

At least eight schools have been flattened in the earthquake. But it is unclear whether faulty design or poor construction was to blame for their collapse.

Some schools may have been built before current seismic codes were introduced.

The damage in rural areas is seen in sharp contrast to the relatively light effect of the earthquake on the city of Chengdu.

The city of 11 million people saw little physical damage and a death toll of several hundred. Construction standards on new buildings in the city are thought to have been more strictly enforced than in the countryside.

Structural engineers say schools should always be built to withstand higher stresses because of the vulnerability of children.

But Prof Bommer says the issue of enforcement is a challenge in all societies.

“Regulations are great, but sometimes they can constitute a law without a police force,” he says.

“The other issue is that fresh regulations are not usually retrospective. So new buildings may be safe but the resources are not available to go back and strengthen existing structures which are still in use.”

2. America's earthquake schools

The US state of California sits on the San Andreas Fault and has many densely populated areas at serious risk of a large-scale earthquake. Children in schools are just as vulnerable there as they are in the China example above.

The Center for Investigative Reporting from Columbia University won several awards for *On Shaky Ground*, an extensive investigation into the vulnerability of many of California's schools, which highlighted government mismanagement of this serious risk.

The full report is extremely detailed and includes many innovative ways of presenting and using the data it gathered (including online interactive maps where people can check the status of individual schools). It can be found here: <http://californiawatch.org/earthquakes>. Below is a rundown of several key points contained in the report:

California Watch Releases “On Shaky Ground” – a 19-Month Investigation into Seismic Safety at Public Schools in California¹¹²

Investigation reveals the Division of the State Architect shirked responsibility to fully enforce the law, approving at least 20,000 school building projects without final safety certification

BERKELEY, Calif.—(BUSINESS WIRE) – A 19-month investigation by California Watch, a project of the Center for Investigative Reporting, reveals how the Division of the State Architect has routinely failed

to fully enforce the Field Act, California's landmark earthquake safety law for public schools, allowing children and teachers to occupy buildings with structural flaws and potential safety hazards.

The multi-part series includes a searchable and interactive map to locate individual schools and potential hazards, rich video content, an iPhone app, a coloring book on earthquake preparedness for kids and resources for taking action. It will be published by dozens of print, broadcast, radio, online and multimedia partners Friday, April 7 to Monday, April 10, 2011.

Among the findings presented in the three-part series:

- At least 20,000 school building projects – from minor fire alarm upgrades to major construction of new classrooms – were completed without receiving a final safety certification required by law. A California Watch analysis determined that roughly six out of every 10 public schools in the state have at least one uncertified building project.
- The state architect's office has allowed building inspectors hired by school districts to work on complex and expensive jobs despite complaints of incompetence. Some inspectors have failed to show up at construction sites at key moments.
- The state's top regulators at times have appeared more concerned with caseload management than enforcing the Field Act. To clear caseloads, one state architect ordered what was dubbed “Close-O-Rama” – a mad dash to approve projects as Field Act safe. Even now, the state architect's office has been reclassifying hundreds of projects as simply missing paperwork – without visiting the schools to verify that fixes were made.

¹¹² See <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20110407006987/en/California-Watch-Releases-%E2%80%9COn-Shaky-Ground%E2%80%9D-%E2%80%93-a-19-month-investigation-into-seismic-safety-at-public-schools-in-california>



- A separate seismic inventory created nearly a decade ago shows more than 7,500 older school buildings as potentially dangerous. But restrictive rules have prevented schools from accessing a \$200 million fund for seismic repairs. Only two have tapped the money. The vast majority of the buildings remain unfixed, and the money goes unused.
- As the state architect's office relaxed its oversight, the office became closely aligned with the industry it regulates. Government officials became dues-paying members of a lobbying group for school construction firms; mingled at conferences, golf tournaments and dinners; and briefed the lobbying group's clients at monthly meetings.
- The California Geological Survey redrew the state's official earthquake hazard maps decades ago amid pressure from property owners, real estate agents and local government officials who feared property values would decline inside these seismic hot spots. As the maps shifted, some schools were located in hazard zones one day and out the next.

"This seismic safety project points out glaring weaknesses in the state's system of oversight at a time the tragedy in Japan is still front and center," said Mark Katches, editorial director of California Watch. "And it represents one of our most ambitious, multi-platform efforts to distribute a project to reach the broadest audience possible."

"We began working on this project almost from the day we established California Watch," said Robert J. Rosenthal, executive director of the Center for Investigative Reporting, the parent organization of California Watch. "This series reveals issues that can be addressed and understood before a potential disaster. We hope it leads to reforms that will serve the public interest."

Additional elements include:

- A searchable database of every K-12 public school in California. Readers can search the database by county, town and school to determine proximity to fault zones or other hazards.
- myFault, an iPhone app that uses official maps of seismic hazards in California to identify dangers your home, school or workplace could face during an earthquake. The app also includes an earthquake preparedness checklist about how to prepare yourself and your family for an earthquake, as well as a flashlight on LED flash-enabled devices for use in emergencies.
- "Ready to Rumble," California Watch's coloring and activity book to help prepare kids in the event of an earthquake. Appropriate for kids ages 5 to 10, the book is available in English, Spanish, traditional Chinese, simplified Chinese and Vietnamese. Readers can order the book for their family, school or community group at californiawatch.org/earthquakes/coloring-book.
- A guide to resources for readers to get involved in earthquake safety in their community.
- Videos showing the history of the Field Act, how this California Watch project came together and how regulatory failures have undercut seismic safety at schools.



3. After Hurricane Katrina

In August 2005, Hurricane Katrina hit the United States, causing more than 1,800 deaths, an estimated \$81 billion in damage, and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of local residents.

The newspaper The Sun Herald, based in Biloxi, Mississippi (one of the cities hit hardest by Hurricane Katrina), won a Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the humanitarian disaster. The paper mixed timely investigation and reporting with practical information that was useful to local residents. The Sun Herald has also kept up a stream of post-Katrina reporting on issues related to recovery, working to inform residents about housing, insurance, work, and other important issues that are still plaguing the local community.

Here's one story from The Sun Herald about how some community members have worked together to

help one another recover in 2009 – four years after the hurricane hit.

Healing in trying times¹¹³

By KAT BERGERON

Tough economic times and post-Katrina recovery on the Mississippi Coast have convinced volunteers of the Bethel Free Health Clinic that they will do the right thing Saturday. That's when they dedicate and celebrate with the community the new permanent site for the walk-in clinic opened three days after the 2005 hurricane.

The clinic in Biloxi is a story of good will, perseverance, donations and volunteerism.

The Healing Place, as it is also called, first opened to care for sick and injured volunteers who poured in from across the country to help the Coast dig out of the rubble and begin repairs and rebuilding.

113 "Healing in trying times," Bergeron, K., Sun Herald, 11 March 2009.

It didn't take long for Judy Bultman, the wife of a Bethel Lutheran Church minister who had launched a disaster ministry in the wake of the storm, to also realise the overwhelming need for medical care for locals. When the call went out for doctors and nurses across the country to volunteer at the clinic, they came.

"Free clinics are needed in this community, especially since Katrina, and in just about any community because there is a subset of people who are truly poor and medically needy," said Dr. Ed Crane, a retired Gulfport internal medicine physician who volunteers a day a week at the clinic.

"This is back-to-basics care. We are rendering care where care is needed."

Dozens of doctors and nurses from other states volunteered at the clinic, first located at the Pass Road church. But when the governor lifted the Coast's state of emergency, doctors from other states could no longer be issued temporary licenses to work in free clinics, and centers began closing.

Bethel and several other free Coast clinics persisted, but with fewer volunteer doctors and nurses, the hours were cut. Bethel now has two local retired doctors who are the main physician volunteers, and the clinic is open two days a week.

About 35 patients are seen each day, with the help of a combination of local and out-of-state nurses. Donations of money, supplies and medicine continue to come in from across the country. The sources are broad-based, from individuals, businesses and organizations to churches, doctors and pharmacists.

"But we couldn't do this without the volunteers," said Judith Jones, a retired nurse and the clinic's executive director. "We could use more volunteers, both professional and nonprofessional, but especially doctors and a social worker, so we could open more

hours. Sometimes we have to turn people away and sometimes we don't have enough or the right medicine.

"But I have never felt like the doors would close."

The clinic focuses on immediate and preventative care that will keep people out of emergency rooms. Since opening, the clinic has logged more than 24,000 patient visits, Jones said. Eight months ago it moved from the church to a temporary location in the Covenant Square Drive housing complex.

The permanent location is in the Sun Coast Villa complex, where the city rents the nonprofit charity a building for \$1 a year. A \$163,700 building grant from the Gulf Coast Community Foundation allowed the clinic to expand the existing building, and a Chicago church and office furniture company provided furnishings.

"Most who come through the door are first-time people, some very sick," said Dr. David Clippinger, a retired Gulfport physician who is the clinic's volunteer medical director.

"They have no money. They can't buy the drugs they need, and many have chronic diseases. Sometimes, they need more help than we can give, because they need to see specialists or general surgeons."

Clippinger and Crane admit frustration with the limitations of a free clinic that does not have its own laboratory and which is inconsistent with getting local doctors to take charity referrals for specialty care. But they remain hopeful about affordable lab work, more physician volunteers and a supply of free drugs.

"I will do this as long as my health holds up," said Clippinger. "All it takes is for one person to say 'thanks so much for helping me,' and it is like handing me a \$1,000 bill."



4. The next hurricane

Another article from the Sun Herald in 2008, three years after Hurricane Katrina, highlights lessons learned that people could use as another hurricane season approaches.

Hurricane Evacuation Plan¹¹⁴

Develop a family hurricane preparedness plan before an actual storm threatens your area.

If ordered to evacuate, do not wait or delay your departure. If possible, leave before local officials issue an evacuation order for your area. Even a slight delay in starting your evacuation will result in significantly longer travel times as traffic congestion worsens.

Select an evacuation destination that is nearest to your home, preferably in the same county, or at least minimize the distance over which you must travel in order to reach your intended shelter location. In choosing your destination, keep in mind that the hotels and other sheltering options are likely to be filled quickly.

If you decide to evacuate to another county or region, be prepared to wait in traffic. The large number of people in this state who must evacuate during a hurricane will probably cause massive delays and major congestion

along most designated evacuation routes; the larger the storm, the greater the probability of traffic jams and extended travel times. If possible, make arrangements to stay with the friend or relative who resides closest to your home and who will not have to evacuate. Discuss with your intended host the details of your family evacuation plan well before the beginning of the hurricane season.

If a hotel or motel is your final intended destination during an evacuation, make reservations before you leave. Most hotel and motels will fill quickly once evacuations begin. The longer you wait to make reservations, even if an official evacuation order has not been issued for your area or county, the less likely you are to find hotel/motel room vacancies, especially along interstate highways and in major metropolitan areas.

If you are unable to stay with friends or family and no hotels/motels rooms are available, then as a last resort go to a shelter. Remember, shelters are not designed for comfort and do not usually accept pets. Bring your disaster supply kit with you to the shelter. Find pet-friendly hotels and motels.

If you go to a shelter, bring the following:

- **Water:** one gallon per person, per day.
- **Food:** Non-perishable, needing little or no cooking. Manual can opener. Eating and drinking utensils including paper plates. Ice chest with ice.

114 'Evacuation Plan', SunHerald.com, 20 June 2008.



- **Clothing and bedding:** One complete change of clothing including footwear. Sleeping bag, blanket and pillow (cots for elderly) - cots will not be provided. Rain gear and sturdy shoes.
- **Personal items:** Washcloth, small towel, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, sanitary napkins, tampons, paper towels, toilet paper, towelettes
- **Medications:** clearly marked with your name, dosage, type of medication, and prescribing physician. You must be able to take all medications by yourself. First-Aid kit in a waterproof box.
- **Baby supplies:** Clothes, diapers, formula, bottles, nipples, food, blankets.
- **Important papers:** Name and address of doctors. Name and address of nearest relative not living in area. Identification and valuable papers.
- **Miscellaneous:** Games, cards, toys, battery powered radios, flashlights (no candles or lanterns), batteries, or other reasonable items you may need.
- **Special notes:** Take a bath and eat before you leave home. Register immediately upon entering the shelter. Obey shelter rules. Keep the building safe and sanitary

TAKEAWAY 16

Strategies for Long-Term Coverage

- Understand the need for coverage to continue beyond the immediate emergency response, to include recovery, rehabilitation, and preparedness against the next disaster.
- Explore a variety of formats that can support this goal.
- Explore a variety of investigative and other reporting techniques that can support this goal.
- Gain an understanding of Disaster Risk Reduction as a frame that can inform stories.

Interviews assessed the information needs of people affected by Super Typhoon Haiyan in 2013

Appendices

Glossary¹¹⁵

Journalists will come across a broad range of terms, some not covered in this manual, throughout their coverage. The following initial glossary provides some precise meanings for a selection of these terms. It is taken from UNESCO's *Disaster through a Different Lens*.¹¹⁶

Hazard

A hazard is a physical event, phenomenon, or human activity that can cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption, or environmental degradation. Hazards have different origins: natural (geological, hydro, meteorological, and biological) or due to human actions (environmental or technological).

Disaster

Disasters are a combination of hazards, conditions of vulnerability and insufficient capacity or measures to reduce the negative consequences of risk. A hazard becomes a disaster when it coincides with a vulnerable situation, when societies or communities are unable to cope with it with their own resources and capacities.

Vulnerability

Vulnerability is the degree to which someone or something can be affected by a particular hazard and depends on a number of factors and processes:

- ▶ **Physical:** Unstable locations, closer proximity to hazards, fragile unprotected houses
- ▶ **Economic:** No productive assets, limited income earning opportunities, poor pay, single income revenue, no savings and insurance.
- ▶ **Social:** Low status in society, gender relations; fewer decision-making possibilities; oppressive formal and informal institutional structures; and political, economic and social hierarchies.

¹¹⁵ Reliefweb compiled a very comprehensive glossary of humanitarian terms from existing glossaries and other reference material available to the public, with a focus on their common usage and understanding within a humanitarian context, particularly as relating to natural disasters, complex emergencies and disaster risk reduction (http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/4F99A3C28EC37D0EC12574A4002E89B4-reliefweb_aug2008.pdf).

¹¹⁶ UNESCO, 2011. *Disaster through a Different Lens*. See http://www.unisdr.org/files/20108_mediabook.pdf.

- ▶ **Psychological:** Fears instigated by religious and other belief systems, ideologies, political pressures, mental illness.
- ▶ **Physiological:** Status in life – young, old, adolescent, pregnant, lactating mothers, chronic illness, disability, exposure to sexual violence and harassment, HIV/AIDS and other infections

Risk is the probability of harmful consequences or expected losses (deaths, injuries, property, livelihoods, economic activity disrupted, or environment damaged) resulting from interactions between natural or human-induced hazards and vulnerable populations.

Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) includes all the policies, strategies, and measures that can make people, villages, cities, and countries more resilient to hazards and reduce risk and vulnerability to disasters.

DRR includes different components:

- ▶ **Prevention** integrates all the activities to provide outright avoidance of the adverse impact of hazards and the means to minimise related environmental, technological and biological disasters.
- ▶ **Mitigation** has different meanings for practitioners in the climate change and disaster-management communities, often leading to confusion. For disaster management, mitigation focuses on structural and non-structural measures undertaken to limit the adverse impact of natural hazards, environmental degradation and technological hazards.
- ▶ **Preparedness** activities contribute to the pre-planned, timely and effective response of individuals and communities to reduce the impact of a natural hazard and to deal with the consequences of a potential disaster.

Recovery

Decisions and actions taken after a disaster to restore or improve the pre-disaster living conditions of the stricken community.

Reconstruction

The set of actions taken after a disaster to enable basic services to resume functioning, to repair physical damage and community facilities, to revive economic activities, and to support the psychological and social well-being of the survivors.

Disaster preparedness

This includes activities that contribute to the pre-planned, timely, and effective response of individuals and communities to reduce the impact of a hazard and to deal with the consequences of a disaster.

Disaster recovery and rehabilitation

Decisions and actions taken after a disaster with a view to restoring and improving the pre-disaster living conditions of the stricken community – that is to say, to enable basic services to resume functioning, to repair physical damage to community facilities, and to revive economic activities and support the psychological and social well-being of the survivors while contributing to reduce further risks.

Early warning

The provision of timely and effective information through identified institutions, which allows individuals exposed to a hazard to take action to avoid or reduce their risk and prepare for effective response. Early-warning systems depend on understanding and mapping the hazard; monitoring and forecasting; processing and disseminating understandable warnings to political authorities and the population; and undertaking the right, timely actions in response to the warnings.







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