THE STATE OF THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM

Assessing performance and progress

A pilot study

ALNAP

ALNAP
Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action

Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action

ALNAP is a unique sector-wide network in the international humanitarian system, made up of key humanitarian organisations and leading experts in the field. The broad range of experience and expertise from across the membership is at the heart of ALNAP's efforts to improve humanitarian performance through learning and accountability.

ALNAP Full Members include agencies and individuals from five key constituencies that make up the international humanitarian sector. These are:

- Bilateral and multilateral donors
- UN agencies
- The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
- International and national NGOs and NGO networks/ umbrella bodies
- Academic establishments, research institutions and independent consultants

The ALNAP membership works together to identify common approaches to improved performance; to explore new ways to improve learning and accountability; and to share ideas, lessons and innovations. ALNAP's overall aim is to make an active contribution to solving longstanding challenges facing the sector.

The State of the System report is the latest output of a multi-year programme of research and development focusing on humanitarian performance. For more details and additional resources, visit the dedicated ALNAP website at: www.alnap.org

Humanitarian Outcomes is a team of specialist consultants providing research and policy advice for humanitarian aid agencies and donor governments. To find out more about their work please visit www.humanitarianoutcomes.org

THE STATE OF THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM: ASSESSING PERFORMANCE AND PROGRESS
A PILOT STUDY

Paul Harvey, Team Leader
Abby Stoddard
Adele Harmer
Glyn Taylor

with Victoria DiDomenico and Lauren Brander

Authors
Paul Harvey, Abby Stoddard, Adele Harmer,
Glyn Taylor
with Victoria DiDomenico and Lauren Brander

Managed by John Mitchell with Ben Ramalingam

Cover photograph © UN Photo/Olivier Chassot 2009

Internal design by The Design Unit
www.thedesignunit.com

Cover design by A Fish in Sea
www.afishinsea.co.uk

Printed by Nexus Design & Print on recycled paper

This publication can be downloaded from the ALNAP
website www.alnap.org. For further copies of this
publication, please contact:

ALNAP
c/o Overseas Development Institute
111 Westminster Bridge Road
London SE1 7JD
United Kingdom
Tel +44 (0)20 7922 0300
Fax +44 (0)20 7922 0399
Email alnap@alnap.org

ISBN 978-1-907288-15-9

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Humanitarian Outcomes team would like to thank the wide range of individuals and organisations that assisted and supported this study. They are too many to mention by name but particular thanks to Lauren Brander and Victoria DiDomenico, who provided valuable research inputs and administrative support. Thanks are also owed to John Mitchell, and the ALNAP Secretariat for their support and facilitation throughout the process and to the International Rescue Committee for kindly piloting the survey.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank the 499 people who took time out to complete the survey. This information has been invaluable to our analysis.

We have also had the privilege to interview a total of 89 humanitarian professionals whose experience and wisdom have also shaped the findings of this report. All their names are listed in Annex 3. We have also benefited greatly from the views and feedback of the ALNAP Steering Committee and ALNAP membership who have been actively involved in commenting on the process, method and the content of the report.

And special thanks are due to the Advisory Board, who provided very vital insights and peer review comments on the inception and final reports: Jock Baker, Mia Beers, Mihir R. Bhatt, John Borton, Peter Giesen, Scott Green, Mikael Lindvall, Margareta Wahlström and Peter Walker.

PREFACE

Assessing and reporting on system-wide humanitarian performance has always been a key concern for the ALNAP network. Since it was formed, ALNAP has presented one of the few continuous assessments of performance related issues, articulated in seven successive editions of the Review of Humanitarian Action (RHA). And after the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami of 2004, ALNAP played a central role in the formation and facilitation of the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC), which was the first system-wide evaluation of performance since the Rwanda report.

Since the publication of the tsunami evaluation findings, ALNAP has conducted a series of explorations and discussions on the feasibility, value and scope of an improved mechanism for assessing system-wide performance. At the heart of this effort were a series of network-wide consultations, bringing in the collective ideas and wisdom of the ALNAP membership. In doing so, ALNAP made the most of its unique position as a sector-wide network comprising most of the key actors in the international humanitarian system.

This work was reflected in the ALNAP Strategy 2008–13, which states that ALNAP will develop a 'structured commentary on system-wide performance-related issues and… make a judgement on the progress the system has made in trying to improve performance'.

Over the past two years, as part of this work, ALNAP has developed several parallel and complementary streams of work which aim to monitor, assess and report on performance and also to identify and promote improved ways of working which will result in better performance. The outputs of this work – for example, on impact and innovation – have proved of value in their own right but also as part of a larger vision for assessing and improving system-wide performance.

The State of the Humanitarian System Report represents an early manifestation of this vision. Bringing together much of the work done by ALNAP since the tsunami, this first pilot report provides a baseline and working methodology which will be built upon and improved in subsequent iterations.

An undertaking of this scale and ambition has to rely on genuine collective action and active participation of many different stakeholders and we would like to acknowledge and thank all ALNAP members and others for their inputs, advice and constructive criticism throughout the design and development of this process. The level and quality of support we have received says a lot about the desire of the system to improve its work. Our hope is that this kind of collective action can become a defining characteristic of the way that the sector as whole goes about its business.

Ivan Scott
Head of Programme Performance & Accountability, Oxfam GB. ALNAP Chair

John Mitchell
ALNAP Director

FOREWORD

The ability to monitor and report on performance is increasingly important for any successful sector.

Individuals, organisations or systems cannot improve unless their shortcomings are identified and practical and creative solutions for improvements are put forward.

For sectors with public and social goals, it is essential to assess overall sector performance.
The effectiveness of such endeavours is determined by the collective effort, not just the individual components. Yet, most monitoring of humanitarian action to date has taken place at the programme, country or agency level, or has focused on specific groups of actors. Real-world systems are much more than the sum of their parts – they have properties that emerge from their interactions. A national health service is more than just thousands of hospitals and clinics, an education system is more than thousands of schools and colleges. And likewise the global humanitarian network is more than the efforts of the individual delivery agencies.

If we are going to improve this system, we need to monitor its progress, successes and shortcomings, and this effort needs to take
place at a system-wide level. This is why we need a regularly published review of the state of the humanitarian system. In this excellent first pilot report the authors have laid down criteria for assessing the overall system, which will be reflected upon and improved before subsequent iterations. They have made judgment calls on how well (and poorly) the system is working. They have sought to highlight some of the promising innovations which may help bring about positive change and shape the system of the future.

Almost as important as what the report says, is what it does not say. It says nothing of how much of the true total global humanitarian need is being met, because there is no measure or estimate of total need. It has little to say about national and local response. But these gaps need not be shortcomings, as there is great value in the regular act of highlighting the extent of our ignorance. UNICEF demonstrated this some years ago when they first launched the State of the World's Children report. The data tables were characterized by huge gaps where states either couldn't or didn't collect and publish data. This was a crucial factor in pushing states to eventually collect and share their data. The same, I hope, will become true for the humanitarian system.

Our ability to be evidence-based in seeking improvements to global humanitarian performance really does matter. All the predictive models looking forward twenty years or so, whether focusing on climate change,
globalization, demographics or violence,
envisage a world which is far more uncertain than today. The 21st century will see the unexpected as the norm, shocks becoming frequent and apprehension over our common future becoming more pervasive. For many communities and states, a responsive, innovative and appropriate international humanitarian system will be needed more than ever.

On the bright side, mankind's ability to invent, to innovate, to share ideals and knowledge is moving

forward in geometric leaps. We only need to look at the way mobile telephony is changing the face of communications in Africa and Asia and by the way social and political networks are shaping global opinion and ways of thinking. Although we may attempt to make accurate projections, the real changes that will shape our future remain unknown. Twenty years ago there was no prediction of mobile phones, on-line communities or the prevalence of international terrorist networks. The real changes that will impact on our future are not here yet, and we have no idea what they are. In universities today we have to face the problem of how to prepare the leaders of tomorrow to solve problems we know nothing about, with tools that have not yet been invented, to provide solutions we have not even dreamt of.

If we as individuals concerned with the alleviation of suffering in humanitarian crises are going to perform with empathy and efficiency in this complex, innovative and risky future, we need to do it with evidence, with a clear sense of what works and does not work, and with an honest assessment of where, individually and collectively, we are succeeding and failing.

Herein lies the value of the ALNAP State of the System work, in its focus and its ambition. Humanitarian response is both a service and a calling. It obligates honest appraisal and improving the services provided to those affected by crisis. This report is a new and important part of our sector's work to meet that obligation.

Dr. Peter Walker
Irwin H. Rosenberg Professor of Nutrition and Human Security,
Director, Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University.
Chair of the ALNAP State of the System report Advisory Group.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements 3
Preface 4
Foreword 5

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 9
Coverage/sufficiency 10
Relevance/appropriateness 10
Effectiveness 10
Connectedness 11
Efficiency 11
Coherence 11

1 | INTRODUCTION 13
1.1 Scope and methodology 14
Notes 17

2 | COMPOSITION OF THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM 18
2.1.1 The international humanitarian footprint 18
2.1.2 Global humanitarian resources 19
2.2 NGOs and the Red Cross Movement 19
2.2.1 INGOs 19
2.2.2 LNGOs and CBOs 20
2.2.3 International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement 21
2.3 UN agencies 21
2.4 Donors 22
Notes 22

3 | PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT 23

3.1 Coverage/sufficiency 23
3.1.1 Funding against needs 23
3.1.2 Access and operational coverage 26
3.2 Relevance/appropriateness 27
3.2.1 Needs assessment 27
3.2.2 Prioritisation of needs and appropriate allocation of resources 29
3.3 Effectiveness 30
3.3.1 Preparedness/timeliness 30
3.3.2 Growing emphasis on DRR 31
3.3.3 Coordination and partnerships 32
3.3.4 Monitoring and evaluation 33
3.3.5 Human resources and organisational capacity 35
3.4 Connectedness and local capacity building 37
3.4.1 Accountability and participation 39
3.5 Efficiency 42
3.6 Coherence 44
3.6.1 Are key humanitarian principles, IHL and refugee law being respected? 44
3.6.2 Is there consistency in objectives and actions for protection and for advancing the crosscutting issues? 46
Notes 48

4 | CONCLUSIONS AND POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS 49

4.1 Taking forward the State of the System Review 50

ANNEXES 51

1 List of acronyms 51
2 Bibliography 53
3 List of interviewees 63
4 Survey results report and questionnaire 64

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report, commissioned under ALNAP's Humanitarian Performance Project, aims to provide a system-level mapping and assessment of international humanitarian assistance. To this end, the report 1) defines key criteria for assessing system performance and progress, 2) assesses the system's performance over the past two years against these criteria, 3) presents new, previously unavailable descriptive statistics and 4) highlights some new initiatives in policy and practice. The research team synthesised the findings of roughly 500 global survey responses, 100 recent evaluations, 89 interviews, staffing and budget information of over 200 aid organisations and a financial analysis of global humanitarian aid flows. The resulting report represents a pilot effort to broadly assess the 'state of the system' with the intent, if it is found useful, to repeat the exercise once every two years.

The study was necessarily limited to assessing operational performance of the international humanitarian system rather than taking the measure of beneficiary-level impacts. Focusing on emergencies for which an appeal for international assistance was made and in which international aid agencies were involved, the review examined three main categories of humanitarian actor: the major providers (non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement); the programme conveners/coordinators (the main role of UN humanitarian agencies and offices); and the official donors. The scope of the mapping exercise was limited to the 'formal international system', as time and resource constraints did not adequately allow for a comprehensive survey of national, local and community-based organisations that play such critical roles in relief efforts, or an in-depth examination of the evolving engagement of militaries and the private sector.

Thus (narrowly) defined, the international system has shown considerable growth in recent years. Global staffing levels have increased at an average annual rate of 6% over the past decade, and have now reached a total population of roughly 210,800 humanitarian workers in the field. In 2008, some $6.6 billion was contributed by donors directly to international emergency response efforts, a nearly three-fold increase since the start of the decade, after allowing for inflation.

In terms of performance, findings indicate overall progress in areas having to do with the internal workings of the humanitarian system – such as coordination mechanisms, funding vehicles and assessment tools – while at the same time some fundamental issues, such as leadership and the system's engagement with and accountability to beneficiaries, remained weak. The findings thus depict a system steadily and incrementally

improving its own internal mechanics and technical performance, while remaining deficient in some big-picture requirements for effectiveness.

What follows is a summary of key findings against the review assessment criteria.

Coverage/sufficiency

Despite significant increases in both humanitarian funding and the global aid worker population, this is an area where the system still falls short. Humanitarian funding has increased and is being distributed more equitably across sectors and emergencies, facilitated in large part by new pooled funding mechanisms. On average, total humanitarian contributions equalled over 85% of total stated requirements in 2007 and 2008, compared with 81% in 2006 and only 67% in 2005. However, the needs of affected populations have gone up as well, and are still not matched by resources, so the result is a nearly universal perception of insufficiency, despite quantitative evidence of progress.

In a few contexts, humanitarian access is seen to be declining, owing to insecurity and/or host government restrictions. In the most contested environments, insecurity for aid workers has increased markedly.

Relevance/appropriateness

The review examined the question of whether humanitarian needs were adequately assessed and resources appropriately allocated. The quality of needs assessments was seen to have improved, and a majority of respondents indicated that inter-agency needs assessments were taking place in their contexts and were adequate. Despite improvements, however, humanitarian actors felt that needs assessment remained a weakness in the system. Evaluations and beneficiary consultations continue to note problems of multiple assessments without sufficient follow-up. Beneficiaries continue to be inadequately consulted and involved in assessments and subsequent programme design.

Prioritisation has improved with the advent of new tools and methodologies based on assessment frameworks. An impressive amount of innovation has occurred in the past two years in both inter-agency needs assessment methodologies and mechanisms for strategic prioritisation of allocations based on the assessments. (In fact, the glut of new initiatives has raised a concern of too many parallel processes potentially having a counterproductive effect, and the possible need for some consolidation.)

Relevance/appropriateness was also seen to benefit from the array of new types of programming starting to be considered, including cash transfers and new interventions to support livelihoods and promote market development.

Effectiveness

To gauge effectiveness the review focused on issues of preparedness/timeliness, coordination, monitoring and human resources/institutional capacity.

Improvements were identified in the timeliness of response, where significant agency investments in standby capacity and new mechanisms, notably the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and in at least one case the Cluster Approach, had enabled rapid action. Current efforts to increase humanitarian engagement and investment in disaster risk reduction (DRR) should reap future benefits in terms of improved preparedness and more timely, efficient and locally grounded responses. The need to focus on DRR has been highlighted by studies looking at the humanitarian implications of climate change.

Overall, coordination was seen to improve with the introduction of the Cluster Approach, and although it remains a subject of debate, positive views about the value of clusters outnumbered negative ones. Beyond these improvements in sectoral coordination, however, overarching leadership for coordination was

a noted weakness. In particular, the strengthening of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) system is seen as vital, but still a work in progress, with too many HCs lacking sufficient knowledge of the humanitarian system to coordinate and advocate effectively. Other coordination trends highlighted included a growing role for regional bodies such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and increased investments in consortia approaches, promoting greater collaboration between NGOs.

Monitoring continues to be consistently identified as a particular weakness within the system in many evaluations, although survey respondents did feel that the quality of monitoring was improving. Beneficiary consultations have stressed a desire for greater follow-up and monitoring from donors and implementing agencies. Stronger monitoring of pooled funding arrangements is also seen as a critical issue.

Many agencies have made real efforts to increase investment in operational capacity and quality of human resources. The survey and interviews did note improvements in the professionalism of humanitarian staff, but evaluations continue to identify problems with high staff turnover and a need to invest more in human resource management systems. There continues to be widespread acknowledgement of the need to invest more in national staff development. There are also growing capacities on the part of national governments to meet the needs of their own citizens in times of disaster in many contexts, which should be considered in advance of launching response efforts.

Connectedness

The paucity of investment in local and national capacities was a repeated concern, as were the top-down orientation of the system and the risk of undermining local capacities. However, there are also signs of improvement in how international agencies work with local humanitarian actors, with a solid majority of survey respondents indicating that efforts at capacity building had increased in the past two to three years. There is also clear momentum around the need for greater downward accountability and participation, and investments in feedback and complaint mechanisms and greater transparency are becoming more commonplace, which benefits programmes.

Efficiency

Efficiency issues, including the risks of corruption, continue to be relatively unaddressed in the literature and evaluations of humanitarian action, although Transparency International is developing an anti-corruption toolkit. There has been widespread concern about agency overhead and programme support costs, particularly in relation to new financial mechanisms. People also noted, however, that the constant drive to minimise administrative costs was leading to chronic underinvestment in key capacities that could serve to improve performance. Efficiency therefore seems to be neglected in terms of analysis, and has arguably too great a focus on driving down administrative costs.

In terms of the transaction costs of coordination (staff time and resources required to participate in new mechanisms and common processes), a consensus of reviews and survey respondents was that the benefits of coordination exceeded the costs of these new administrative burdens.

Coherence

Under the theme of coherence the review examined first, whether core humanitarian principles, international humanitarian law (IHL) and refugee law were being respected in humanitarian programming, and second, whether there was consistency in objectives and actions for protection and for advancing the crosscutting issues of illness, age, gender and disability. This is a difficult topic to address in such a study; however, the sum of interviewee comments, survey respondents and recent research findings does seem to suggest a

growing concern about the lack of respect for IHL and core humanitarian principles in many recent conflicts.

Humanitarian aid agencies identify a lack of respect for principles on the part of warring parties, but also on the part of donor governments and their militaries, as a result of comprehensive and 'whole of government' approaches (integrating humanitarian action with broader foreign policy goals) on the part of Western governments. Aid agencies also noted, however, that collectively they themselves were not doing enough to maintain principled approaches or to advocate effectively for respect for humanitarian principles and IHL vis-à-vis governments. Integrated missions continue to cause concern for some agencies, regarding the challenge they pose to humanitarian independence, although there is a more nuanced perspective on their role and impact as compared with previous years, and in some contexts integration is seen to present real opportunities. Overall, the role of UN integrated missions and UN peacekeeping forces was considered to be significantly less threatening than the growing involvement of Western militaries in providing aid in conflicts in which they are involved.

Recent years have seen an increased focus on the issue of protection within the humanitarian system. Guidelines and policies have been developed, and unprecedented numbers of humanitarian organisations now undertake protection activities. However, confusion over what protection is and which actors have responsibility for it continues to be an issue. There has been criticism of the quality of protection work, including the deployment of inexperienced staff, breaches of confidentiality of affected populations and inconsistent knowledge and application of relevant laws.

Regarding the crosscutting issues of illness, age, gender and disability, there is an evident tendency within the humanitarian system towards sudden bursts of attention to particular issues, such as that given to HIV/AIDS in the early 2000s or to gender mainstreaming in the 1990s, followed by a relative lull. Several interviewees noted that it was a challenge to maintain sufficient attention within organisations on these issues that need to be mainstreamed.

"There is a very real sense in which international humanitarian actors and their national counterparts ... do comprise a system"

1 INTRODUCTION

Humanitarian action is a substantial and complex endeavour, involving the efforts of populations affected by crises as well as those of a myriad of local, national and international institutions and organisations trying to assist them. To term the huge diversity of actors and networks a 'system' risks implying a degree of cohesion and uniformity of objectives that simply is not the case. Nevertheless, by virtue of their shared broad goals and underlying values, and their interdependence in field operations, there is a very real sense in which international humanitarian actors and their national counterparts involved in disaster management do comprise a system – albeit a loosely configured one – that is worthy as a unit of analysis. The aim of this study, commissioned and overseen by the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action's (ALNAP) Humanitarian Performance Project, was to develop a framework analysing and reporting on system-wide humanitarian performance (ALNAP 2008; 2009).

The context for humanitarian action is constantly shifting. The year 2008 started with the humanitarian aftermath of post-election violence in Kenya and conflict in Gaza. It also saw major natural disasters in Myanmar, China, Haiti and elsewhere. In 2009, conflicts in Sri Lanka and Pakistan produced major crises of displacement. In terms of numbers of emergencies, the global humanitarian situation in 2007–2008 appeared to have worsened somewhat compared with previous years. The years 2007 and 2008 saw 52 major humanitarian emergencies (as defined by a count of the United Nations (UN) consolidated and flash appeals launched), an average of 26 per year.[1] This represents an increase of 8% compared with the years 2001–2006. In terms of natural disasters alone (most of which are not severe enough to warrant a joint appeal), data from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) show an increase of 3% in numbers of separate disasters in 2007–2008 (IFRC 2008a). Small- and medium-scale floods in particular spiked in this period, a phenomenon attributed to climate change (ECHO 2009). The majority of international humanitarian resources, however, continued to be focused on protracted, complex crises, such as Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as well as on the high-profile contexts with great power involvement – Iraq and Afghanistan (Development Initiatives 2009a). Moreover, humanitarian funding requirements per emergency have increased by nearly 50%, reflecting a broadening scope for humanitarian action that increasingly includes early recovery and preparedness.

The humanitarian system faces a number of new and ongoing challenges, including climate change, high food prices, the financial crisis and the HIV/AIDS

and flu pandemics. Longer-term issues, notably rapid urbanisation and ageing populations, will also require adaptation. Our knowledge of the linkages between climate change and disasters remains limited, but there is confidence that it will mean more climate-related disasters and more need for disaster response (Scheumer-Cross and Taylor 2009; Webster et al 2008).

1.1 | Scope and methodology

Humanitarian action, broadly defined, could encompass any actions to save lives and alleviate suffering in the face of disasters. This would include the response to disasters in developed countries, such as Hurricane Katrina in the US or the 2009 earthquake in Italy, as well as efforts in thousands of small disasters which occur across the globe but do not generate an international response. Within this broad arena of the global response to disasters is what Hugo Slim (2007) calls the 'formal' international humanitarian system of donor governments, UN agencies, the Red Cross Movement and INGOs. This has been a largely Western endeavour, although non-OECD DAC donors are playing an increasingly important role. Much of the response to disasters has always been made outside of this international 'system', by affected governments, civil society, military and private sector actors and affected populations themselves. International aid agencies have always worked with and through local organisations and are themselves largely composed of staff from disaster-affected countries.

Drawing sharp boundaries around the 'system' that is of interest to this study is therefore difficult. The approach taken by the review was to focus on humanitarian emergencies for which an appeal for international assistance had been made and in which international aid agencies were involved. Within these disasters, however, the analysis considered national as well as international humanitarian actors, including disaster-affected states and local civil society.

Evaluations of humanitarian action generally take place on the level of individual projects, with few sector- or system-level assessments. When an evaluation does attempt a system-level analysis, this typically is around a specific emergency case, not the global performance of international humanitarian action.[2] Moreover, despite many years of evaluation and analysis in the humanitarian field, some very basic information about the humanitarian system as a whole – its size, reach, scope of action and capability – remains unknown. In other words, we lack a shared understanding of what the humanitarian system actually is, as well as a means of gauging its success.

A comprehensive evaluation of the overall international humanitarian system would be a mammoth undertaking, requiring far more resources and time than were available for this review.[3] This review attempts the more modest goal of enumerating some basic descriptive statistics, such as the size and scope of the major international aid agencies and recent trends in humanitarian financing, while also providing a baseline assessment against some basic indicators of system-level performance. Additionally, this report highlights a few of the plethora of new initiatives that are covering a wide range of issues in humanitarian practice and policy.[4] This report therefore represents a pilot effort to assess broadly the 'state of the system'. If it is deemed to be useful, the intent is to repeat the exercise once every two years.

The review based its performance assessment categories on the OECD DAC humanitarian evaluation criteria of Relevance/Appropriateness, Connectedness, Coherence, Coverage, Efficiency and Effectiveness (ALNAP 2006; OECD DAC 1999), adapting these and developing specific indicators for each based on research capacities and data availability. A detailed description of the research methodology and the specific indicators used (including an explanation of how the review approached the 'Impact' criterion) is provided in this Study's inception report (Harvey et al 2009), which

was prepared by the research team in consultation with the project's Advisory Board. As noted in the inception report, for the purposes of this study – a desk review of limited resources and duration – it was necessary to develop indicators that were few in number, reasonably objective and able to be tracked over time. It is envisioned that future iterations of the study will revisit, refine and potentially expand on these indicators.

The research programme consisted of four main components: 1) an evaluation synthesis, analysing the findings of evaluations, reviews and other recent analytical literature pertaining to humanitarian action; 2) a compilation of descriptive statistics, mapping the system's components through an examination of global financial data and organisational information; 3) a series of interviews with a selected group of key informants within humanitarian practitioner and policymaking circles; and 4) a global survey on humanitarian performance indicators encompassing humanitarian actors and stakeholders across a range of field settings.

For the evaluation synthesis, over 100 evaluations were reviewed, covering a broad range of contexts, sectors and agencies. The report drew on evaluations from 2007 in the ALNAP ERD, complemented by efforts to gather further evaluations from agencies not well represented in this. A list of these evaluation documents and other literature captured in the synthesis is provided in the bibliography (attached as Annex 2). The literature review examined reports published since the last system-wide evaluation, undertaken by the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) (Telford et al 2006).

The descriptive statistics were compiled using data gathered from various public sources, including:

- The OCHA FTS – for figures on contributions to specific humanitarian emergencies, programmes and appeals;

Table 1

Assessment criteria and sample research questions

COVERAGE/SUFFICIENCY
- Does the system have adequate resources to do the job?
- Is there capacity to reach all populations in need?

RELEVANCE/APPROPRIATENESS
- Are resources allocated appropriately to meet needs?
- Are needs adequately assessed?

EFFECTIVENESS
- Is the system responsive (prepared), fast and flexible?
- How well are component parts coordinated?
- Has the quality of monitoring improved?
- Do aid workers possess appropriate qualifications and experience?
- Do field staffers receive adequate support and supervision from their organisations?
- Is there increased downward accountability from the system to beneficiaries?

CONNECTEDNESS/CAPACITY BUILDING
- Is the international community actively engaged in building capacity for local humanitarian response?
- Are local/national authorities involved in planning (if appropriate)?
- Do local/national NGOs have increased access to common planning processes and international funding?

EFFICIENCY
- Have efficiencies been gained or lost by recent reform efforts?
- Overheads, transaction costs and other headquarters–field allocation issues

COHERENCE
- Are key humanitarian principles, IHL and refugee law being respected?
- Are rights-based approaches being used and making a difference?
- Are there shifting trends in the involvement of military and private sector actors?

- OECD DAC statistics databases – for global humanitarian resource allocations from major official government donors;
- Individual organisations' annual reports, financial statements and other organisational materials – for information on humanitarian budgets, programme portfolios and staffing figures.

To compile the figures for the large population of INGOs, organisations were divided into five tiers based on their annual overseas programme expenditures. Tier 1 contained INGOs with budgets in excess of $250 million and Tier 5 those with budgets of less than $10 million.[5] Annual expenditure figures were readily available from annual reports and audited financial statements, but not all organisations provide or record staffing figures year to year. For organisations where staffing numbers were available for some but not all years, we calculated the average annual overseas expenditure to field staff ratio for the years where the data were available, and used this ratio to calculate the staff number for the missing years for that individual organisation. Similarly, to obtain a breakdown of international vs. national staff and humanitarian vs. development expenditure in instances where these figures were not available, we used the average percentage of internationals in that organisation's data history. For organisations where no staff numbers were available for any of the years, the expenditure to staffing formula was calculated based on the average for that of the other organisations in the same tier.

This methodology draws upon and expands that developed by the researchers in a previous study on humanitarian operational security (Stoddard et al 2006), also outlined in the inception report.

Interviews were held with 89 people, representing NGOs (47), UN agencies (21), the Red Cross/ Red Crescent Movement (6), host governments (8) and donor governments (7) (see Annex 3 for a complete list of names and organisational affiliations). Informants were selected to be broadly representative of the major actors and sectors of the international humanitarian system. Attempting to reflect roughly the proportional share of resources (human and financial) and operational presence in humanitarian response, the team designed a matrix

Figure 1
Composition of survey respondents

for identifying interviewees from aid agencies and organisations across the full range of humanitarian sectors, as well as those from host and donor governments. Research team members used a questionnaire template designed according to the study framework and tailored to the individual interviewee's field of expertise.

The web-based survey instrument (Annex 4) was designed to complement the other research components, allowing the study to reach greater numbers of field-based practitioners and stakeholders than was possible through interviews alone. The survey instrument was designed by the research team, reviewed by the Advisory Board and further revised after being piloted in International Rescue Committee (IRC) field offices. The original target of 300 responses was raised to 500 after a greater than anticipated response rate. The survey was posted in English, French and Spanish, and garnered a total of 499 complete responses. In numbers roughly proportionate to their operational field presence in humanitarian programming, most respondents were INGO staff (48%), followed by UN agency staff (21%) and local/national NGO and community-based organisation (CBO) representatives (9%). The remaining respondents were made up of representatives from the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (7%), donor governments (6%), host governments (3%), host country citizens (1%) and researchers/academics (1%). In the regional breakdown of field-based responses, most emanated from Africa (42%), followed, in descending order, by Asia, the Americas, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

The review took pains to identify objective indicators for performance so that the study would not be overly self-referential, but the fact that the great majority of interview and survey subjects were from inside the system (the international humanitarian organisations) warrants a caveat. The review also attempted to draw additional beneficiary views from the existing literature and recent work involving participatory evaluation methods. Future iterations of this review, if undertaken, should set increasingly higher targets for outreach to beneficiaries and other relevant outside observers.

Notes

1 Figures from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service (FTS) as of 12 September 2009 (http://ocha.unog.ch/fts).

2 A notable exception being the Humanitarian Response Review, commissioned by the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator in 2005.

3 75 days of researcher time were used to complete this review.

4 We have attempted to provide a picture of key developments across sectors and the different aspects of humanitarian action, but space and scope issues mean that a comprehensive sector-by-sector review of new initiatives has not been possible. For a more detailed and comprehensive review focusing on performance-related initiatives, see Ramalingam and Mitchell (2009) Counting what counts: performance and effectiveness in the humanitarian sector in the ALNAP 8th Review of Humanitarian Action.

5 To compile the total list of INGOs engaged in humanitarian response we consulted the membership of the major INGO consortia (InterAction, International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies (VOICE), and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR)), the World Food Programme's (WFP's) list of INGO partners and the rosters of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) grant recipients.

"...In 2008 the total number of aid workers in the field was roughly 210,800... global total funds directed to humanitarian response efforts totalled roughly $7bn in 2008"

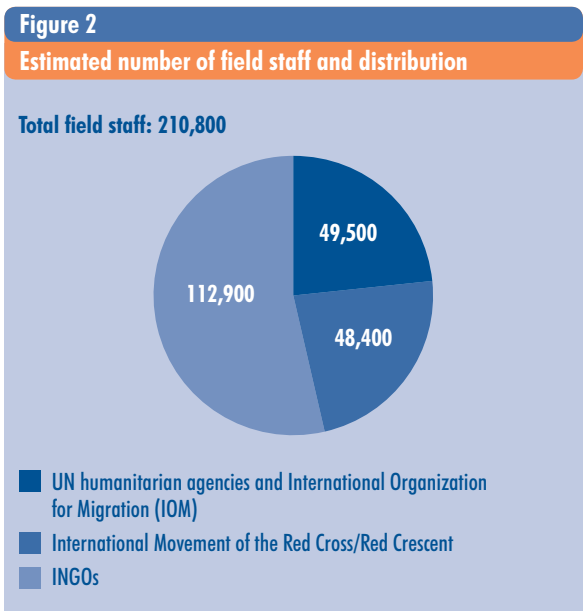
2 COMPOSITION OF THE HUMANITARIAN SYSTEM

The descriptive statistics presented in this section examine the components of the international system in an attempt to establish some basic figures about its size, scope and capability. It focuses on the internationally operating aid organisations and their local partners that implement the aid projects (i.e. NGOs and Red Cross Movement);[6] the UN agencies, which both implement programmes and have a central coordinating role in international humanitarian efforts; and the official *donors*, which contribute a significant portion of aid resources.[7] Of course, it can be argued that there are other important actors in humanitarian response – national militaries and private sector contractors, to name two. However, to be analytically useful and also feasible within the confines of the study, the field was limited to the above three main categories. If resources are made available, in future iterations it may be useful to expand the scope to look in more detail at other actors, including host governments, local NGOs and militaries.

2.1.1 | The international humanitarian footprint

In 2008, the total number of aid workers in the field (including both relief and development workers) was roughly 595,000.[8] This could be viewed as the potential staffing resource pool of international humanitarian response, since multi-mandated organisations often respond to sudden onset crises by shifting development resources to emergency response. A more conservative estimate, including only those **staffing resources allocated specifically to crisis response and rehabilitation activities, is 210,800**.[9] On average, the humanitarian fieldworker population has increased by approximately 6% per year over the past 10 years (Stoddard et al 2009).

Figure 2
Estimated number of field staff and distribution



2.1.2 | Global humanitarian resources

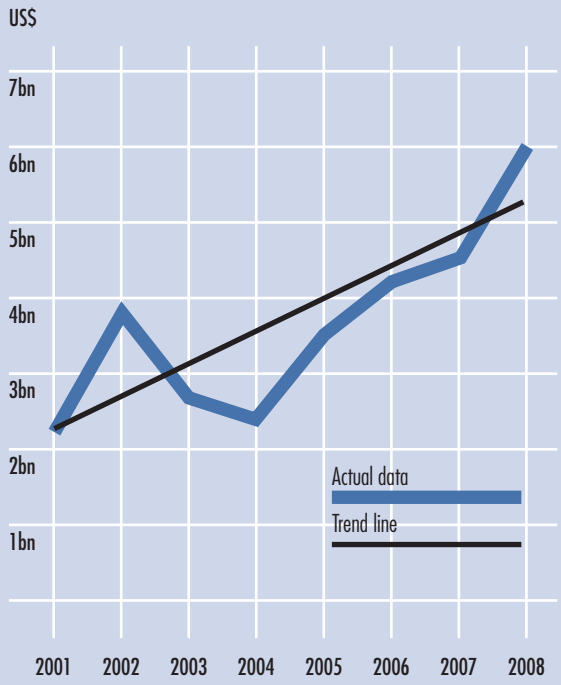
As with the aid worker population, calculating the total dollar amount of funding used for humanitarian action is a difficult task, and estimates vary. The most widely credited among these comes from the Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA) Report, which estimates that international humanitarian resources totalled $15 billion in 2007 and in the neighbourhood of $18 billion in 2008 (Development Initiatives 2009a). The GHA Report takes a donor-based approach to the calculation, factoring in official government humanitarian assistance contributions as reported to the OECD DAC, non-DAC government contributions as reported to OCHA's FTS, OECD DAC governments' security-related and post-conflict assistance and private (non-government) contributions received by aid organisations.

Having noted the GHA Report's estimates, the review used different approaches (no more or less valid; rather, different slices of the data) to arrive at somewhat lower estimates[10] of global funding resources mobilised for humanitarian response. The first involved looking at targeted contributions to *specific humanitarian emergency response efforts*, as reported to OCHA's FTS. In 2007, total emergency aid flows were at $4.4 billion, and in 2008 at $6.6 billion. These years' totals continued the general upward trend of aid humanitarian contributions.

Financial data going back to 2001 indicate that humanitarian aid has risen faster than overall official development assistance (ODA), and that the rate of growth accelerated significantly after 2005. This rise correlates with the inception of the new pooled funding mechanisms for humanitarian contributions, i.e. the expanded UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the country-level Common Humanitarian Funds (CHFs).

The other approach to estimating global humanitarian funding resources entailed looking at the *overseas programme expenditures of the provider organisations allocated to humanitarian action*. This calculation yielded global totals funds directed to humanitarian programming (from both public and private sources) at roughly $6 billion in 2007 and $7 billion in 2008.

Figure 3
Total humanitarian flows to emergencies by year



Source Figures compiled from OCHA FTS as of 16 March 2009 (adjusted for inflation; excludes Iraq and tsunami responses).
Note US$1bn = US$1,000,000,000

2.2 | NGOs and the Red Cross Movement

2.2.1 | INGOs

INGOs programmed approximately $5.7 billion of the international humanitarian system's expenditure and accounted for the majority of humanitarian staff in the field. Roughly 250 organisations and multinational federations (each of these in turn containing multiple national affiliates) comprise the

global INGO community. The group of six largest INGO federations/organisations (CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Oxfam, Save the Children and World Vision International) in 2008 had an estimated combined overseas operating expenditure in excess of $4 billion, of which $1.7 billion was allocated to humanitarian programming.

In all, field staff working for INGO programmes in 2008 totalled nearly 208,000, of whom approximately 113,000 were engaged in humanitarian efforts. Nearly 95% of global INGO field staffers were nationals of the host country.

The combined data confirmed the INGO movement as a mid-20th century phenomenon, with the average age of the larger NGOs (Tiers 1–4) at 49. The group of six largest INGOs tended to be a good deal older, with the exception of MSF, whose relatively recent founding in 1971 brought the tier's average age down to 59. The majority of INGOs are based in North America (particularly the US) and Western Europe, are secular in orientation and engage in humanitarian action across a range of sectors.

2.2.2 | LNGOs and CBOs

National/local NGOs (LNGOs) and CBOs are an important part of humanitarian delivery in many settings. UN agencies and INGOs alike sometimes depend upon these groups for the end-stage implementation of their aid programmes. On the whole, they tend to be small in size and in geographic scope of operations, but numerous within affected countries. It was beyond the scope of this review to survey comprehensively the (non-Red Cross/Red Crescent) LNGOs and CBOs. However, because the imputing formula was based on staffing to overseas expenditure ratios, the estimate captured a significant portion of LNGO partnering/subcontracted local staff as well, particularly for those agencies that programme large budgets and in-kind material aid almost exclusively through local partners on the ground.

Evaluations have suggested that recent humanitarian reforms such as the Cluster Approach and CHFs have created the potential for greater international engagement with LNGOs, and greater access for these organisations to international funding and capacity-

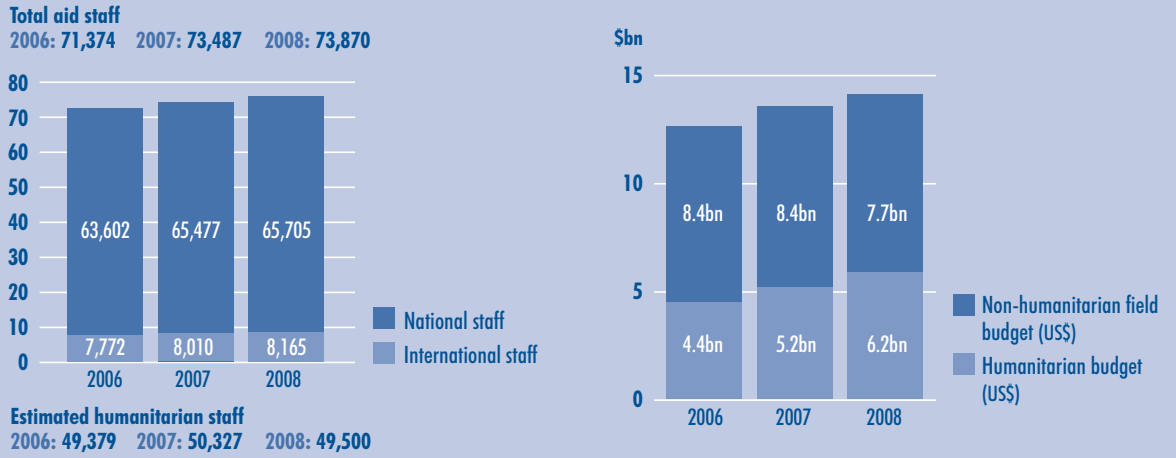
Figure 4

Operational NGOs grouped by annual budget size

TIER 1 >US $250m/yr	• **6** organisations/federations • Combined humanitarian spending **$1.7bn** • Total staff **90,400** (86,000 nationals and 4,000 internationals)
TIER 2 US $100–250m/yr	• **11** organisations/federations • Combined humanitarian spending **$193m** • Total staff **30,900** (28,800 nationals and 2,100 internationals)
TIER 3 US $50–99m/yr	• **12** organisations/federations • Combined humanitarian spending **$388m** • Total staff **24,700** (23,100 nationals and 1,600 internationals)
TIER 4 US $10–49m/yr	• **27** organisations/federations • Combined humanitarian spending **$261m** • Total staff **38,100** (36,400 nationals and 1,800 nternationals)
TIER 5 <US $10m/yr	• **179** organisations/federations • Combined humanitarian spending **$523m** • Total staff **13,900** (13,100 nationals and 800 internationals)

Table 2

UN humanitarian actors & IOM – staffing and budgets



building support. They have also found, however, that the potential created by these platforms has not yet been evidenced in terms of actual tangible benefits to LNGOs and CBOs in the form of measurably increased levels of direct grants.

2.2.3 | International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

This unique category of humanitarian agencies is comprised of the ICRC, the IFRC and the 186 national societies themselves. The ICRC, whose historic 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, brought a total of 13,400 workers to the humanitarian staff count in 2008. It is less straightforward to calculate the humanitarian staffing numbers of the Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies, whose employees engage in not only relief situations but also emergency preparedness and non-emergency public health provision, along with other social activities. In addition, they are supported by large numbers of unpaid volunteers. For the aid worker population calculations, we used the most recent figures available from the IFRC, recognising that these are broad estimates only: roughly 300,000 worldwide staff and 35,000 engaged in relief efforts (IFRC 2007a). When adding their estimate of volunteers, the IFRC estimates that the entire Movement 'is made up of almost 97 million volunteers, supporters, and staff in 186 countries' (ibid).

2.3 | UN agencies

The review compiled information from the nine key UN agencies and offices engaged in humanitarian response[11] plus IOM. Most of these bodies undertake humanitarian programming on a broad scale (often country-wide or region-wide) and typically adopt coordinating as opposed to project implementation roles in the field, although they are known to do both in some contexts. With the introduction of the Cluster Approach to coordination, the UN agencies have taken on sector-wide leadership responsibilities, resulting in increases both in their funding and in their operational presence in countries where clusters have been adopted (see Stoddard et al 2007).

The UN agencies have a higher percentage of international/expatriate field staff than do the NGOs (on average 11% as opposed to 5%), reflecting, perhaps, the more centralised coordinating role. On the whole, UN agencies receive the largest share of government contributions for specific emergency response efforts (totalling upwards of 85% when including contributions to CERF and CHFs, which

flow through UN agencies). Since 2006, NGOs have seen an ever increasing share of their total funding coming through sub-grants from the UN via the pooled funding mechanisms.

2.4 | Donors

Governments, as opposed to corporate, philanthropic or public donations or other private sources (not counting remittances) remain the largest source of international humanitarian funding flows. The largest DAC member government donors, in particular the US, continue to contribute the bulk of official humanitarian action; of these donors, the humanitarian reform-minded Western governments – the UK, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Canada and Ireland – have shown the largest jumps in post-reform years (105% on average) and have increased their share of overall humanitarian contributions. These governments are the biggest proponents and users of the pooled funding mechanisms.

FTS data show that non-DAC government humanitarian contributions have increased by a greater amount than DAC funding has, although this likely owes to better reporting recently by non-DAC donors into the system, and the system's improved monitoring of government–government humanitarian aid, the preferred channel for the non-DAC donors. Of the 10 largest donors (both DAC and non-DAC), Saudi Arabia has shown the largest increase of reported contributions in the past four years (2,465%) (Stoddard and Harmer 2009).

The number of donors contributing to international humanitarian response efforts has increased by 40%, from an average of 67 per year to 94 per year in the past four years. As of 2008, 104 governments were reporting humanitarian contributions, many of these made possible for the first time by the CERF mechanism.

Funding from private voluntary sources has increased as well, although not as dramatically as public funding has, apart from the unprecedented inflows that greeted the tsunami response. The GHA Report (Development Initiatives 2009a) shows the importance of funding for NGOs from voluntary sources. In 2006, the 19 members of MSF had expenditure of $496 million from voluntary sources, making it the third largest humanitarian spender after the US and the UK. Caritas had a voluntary expenditure of $294 million, almost equivalent to that of the government of Sweden. Voluntary funds are important for speed of response, flexibility and relative lack of conditions.

Notes

6 Defined as international organisations and agencies engaged in the provision of material aid and other tangible support operations to populations in crisis. This includes the provision of technical assistance for humanitarian purposes, but excludes human rights monitors/advocates, other pure advocacy organisations, peacekeepers, peace and reconciliation actors and religious missions for whom the provision of aid is a secondary activity.

7 Not including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and certain NGOs which, for reasons of independence and neutrality, operate largely outside coordination structures.

8 This includes international and national employees of UN humanitarian agencies (IASC members), INGOs, the ICRC and the IFRC/national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies. The estimate of employees of national Red Cross Red Crescent societies was not counted in previous aid worker population estimates by members of the review team, and its inclusion here has revised the previous estimate upward from 290,000 (Stoddard et al 2009).

9 This lower estimate was based on average percentage of overseas project expenditures of the multi-mandated organisations that was allocated to humanitarian action in 2008.

10 For example, the review's estimates do not include security-related expenditures from DAC donors, which bring the amount down considerably.

11 These are the members of the IASC: Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), WFP, World Health Organization (WHO) and OCHA.

"Undeniably improved, but still insufficient"

3 PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

This section integrates findings from the survey, interviews and evaluation synthesis into an assessment of the humanitarian system's performance against measures broadly framed around the OECD criteria of Relevance/ Appropriateness, Connectedness, Coherence, Coverage, Efficiency and Effectiveness, also drawing on key standards such as Sphere, the Code of Conduct and the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) standard.

On balance, many previously identified contexts of weak performance have remained unchanged at best, including some fundamental issues such as leadership, and the system's engagement of and accountability to beneficiaries.

The humanitarian system is above all inconsistent; interview and evaluation findings identified huge variability within and between crises in terms of performance. Of the recent crises, particularly weak performances were cited in Pakistan (2009), Kenya (2009) and Ethiopia (2008), owing to a mix of inadequate funding, slow response time and poor coordination and leadership. On the other hand, response efforts received on the whole positive reviews in Kenya in response to post-election violence (2008), Lebanon (2007) and the Yogyakarta earthquake in Indonesia (2006). In addition, certain programmes, actors and sectors are singled out for praise or criticism within broader emergency contexts. In the survey, the food aid and logistics/coordination sectors won highest marks, on average, for performance. The lowest ranking sectors in terms of performance were agriculture, protection and early recovery. When ranking their own sector of work, respondents cited prioritisation/appropriateness and participation of local authorities as the strongest aspect and participation of beneficiaries as the weakest.

3.1 | Coverage/sufficiency

This section first explores adequacy of funding and then turns to examine issues related to access and operational coverage, to answer the basic questions:

- Does the system have adequate resources to do the job?
- Is the system able to reach all populations in need?

3.1.1 | Funding against needs

As mentioned above, the absolute volume of global humanitarian contributions has continued to rise, with a particular surge after 2005. In addition, timeliness in humanitarian financing

appears to have improved in the post-reform period in chronic crisis contexts (it was not seen to improve in relation to flash appeals). This was manifested in a greater percentage of total annual contributions being committed in the first and second quarters – or the previous year – suggesting improved ability for aid organisations to plan and sustain their operational presence in chronic emergency settings. This is important for predictability and preparedness, since the majority of humanitarian action takes place in protracted crises, requiring aid year after year, as opposed to sudden onset emergencies.[12]

Despite these positive developments, however, the fact remains that in most cases funding still does not match needs. The persistent insufficiency against needs is evidenced in funding data and case evaluations, and borne out by interview findings and results of the global survey, where solid majorities across the board in each of the regions deemed the funding insufficient to meet the needs of their given context. There was even greater dissatisfaction on the level of funding for the respondents' individual sectors. The GHA Report (Development Initiatives 2009a) finds that around 30% of needs identified in UN consolidated and flash appeals have gone unmet in each of the past three years, and coverage has varied widely from crisis to crisis. Oxfam concludes that 'the current level of funding is still far too low to meet even today's humanitarian needs' (Scheumer-Cross and Taylor 2009). Beneficiary surveys have also noted that humanitarian assistance has been inadequate relative to need. A Fritz Institute (2006) survey found that, 10 months after the Pakistan earthquake, large numbers of affected people reported having acute needs for basic assistance. The issue is complicated by the fact that, for the purposes of measurement, 'needs' are defined as the stated requirements of humanitarian providers (e.g. work plans, consolidated appeals processes (CAPs), etc.) and do not necessarily reflect the reality of populations' needs on the ground. The use of the 'requirements' measure for needs is an oft-stated weakness, one which is only beginning to be addressed by improvements in needs assessment methodologies and coordinated humanitarian action plans and for the time being must serve as the best available proxy for need.

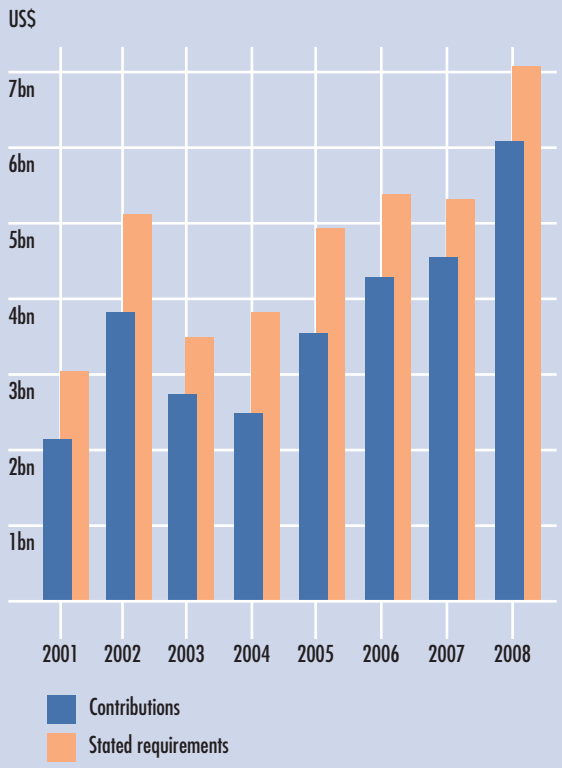
Evaluations tend to focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the aid provided by aid agencies and neglect the question of populations that were not reached. The existing evidence, therefore, just does not enable judgements about how adequately humanitarian actors are meeting the totality of global humanitarian need, as opposed to needs that are identified for which funding is requested. Humanitarian actors have tended to base appeals as much on what they think it is realistic to expect from donors as on an objective assessment of needs. Figures such as the percentage shortfall in consolidated and flash appeals therefore need to be treated with caution. In Afghanistan, Donini (2009) notes that 'the scale and scope of the humanitarian caseload are unknown', tracing the collapse of information collection and analysis capacity in the country. There are also populations that just fail to hit the radar of the international humanitarian system. For instance, Iraqi refugees in Syria were found to receive little assistance from the international community in 2007, with UNHCR trying to provide more support but reaching only a fraction of the 1.5 million refugees (Al-Khalidi et al 2007).

What is also lacking, both in real time and in evaluation findings, is any sense of how adequately needs are being met across particular sectors. In Myanmar, there has been adequate funding for immediate life-saving relief but limited funding for recovery; in Angola, the response to the return of three million internally displaced persons (IDPs) was found to be 'late and feeble' and a sign of the continuing problems of reorientation from relief to rehabilitation (Folke et al 2008; Turner 2008).
A lack of funding for disaster risk reduction (DRR), and specifically preparedness, was consistently highlighted by UN, NGO and national government interviewees, and underscored by evaluation findings. For example, a capacity study of the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) sector found that

funding was seen as a major constraint to effective response, with funding for preparedness and risk reduction the most constrained (Cosgrave 2009).

Although funding still does not match needs, recent financial analysis shows that not only is funding meeting a greater proportion of needs than previously, but also there is less discrepancy than before between sectors and emergencies in terms of funding coverage. The data revealed that coverage of stated requirements has gone up in all operational sectors, and that increases have been largest in the chronically under-funded sectors (economic recovery, shelter) and smallest in the previously best-funded sectors (food aid). In addition, funding to chronic emergencies has increased, in terms of both absolute amounts and percentage of stated requirements covered (Stoddard 2008).

Figure 5
Humanitarian flows against requirements, 2001–2008



Source Figures from OCHA FTS.

This development correlates with the inception of the expanded CERF and other new pooled funding mechanisms. Evaluations of these instruments have been mostly positive. The CERF has been seen as having made progress towards meeting its objectives of improving the timeliness of initial response to sudden onset emergencies and improving the financing of neglected emergencies (Barber et al 2008). In Mozambique, it was found that 'the CERF helped to ensure a rapid response, and a larger programme of assistance than would otherwise have been possible' (Cosgrave et al 2007). In DRC and Sudan, pooled funds were seen as having empowered humanitarian coordinators, supported coordination, filled gaps sectorally, geographically and temporally, allowed smaller donors to fund activities in DRC and empowered the field to improve targeting of funds (Willits King et al 2007).

UN interviewees echoed these positive assessments, highlighting their role in driving improved coordination by bringing agencies to the table and better insulating funding from the political interests of donor governments. NGO respondents, by contrast, expressed strong concerns about the common funding modalities, both in terms of questions of efficiency and effectiveness and with regard to the ability of agencies to remain independent and impartial. Poorly functioning pooled mechanisms were considered to negatively impact the timeliness and cost efficiency of responses (ActionAid et al 2009; Mowjee 2009). On the positive side, financing reforms have stimulated new conversations about improving approaches to collaborative financing within the NGO community.

Although the CERF is judged to have made a measurable difference in the availability of funding for forgotten crises, there continue to be inequities in funding between disasters, and concern that some populations just fail to hit the radar of the international humanitarian system. The EC's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) has a particular focus on forgotten crises, using its Forgotten Crisis Assessment (FCA) tool, which attempts to identify serious humanitarian crises in which the populations

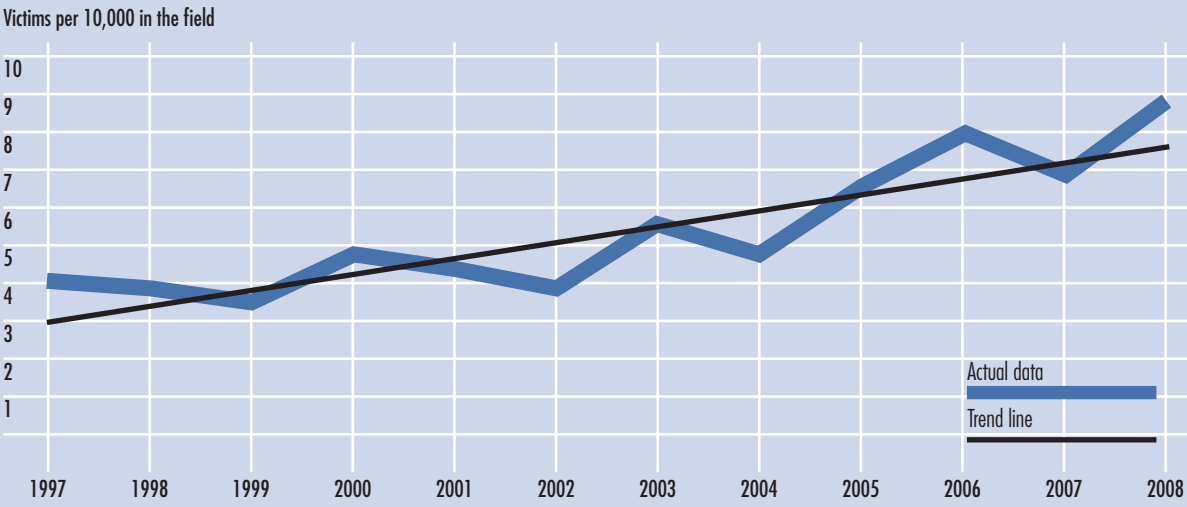
affected do not receive sufficient international aid, and highlights, for example, the conflicts in Myanmar and Yemen as forgotten crises in 2009 (ECHO 2009). The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC 2009) highlights relative neglect and donor fatigue in relation to protracted displacement crises in Colombia, Ethiopia, the Philippines and India. Iraqi refugees in Syria were found to receive little assistance from the international community in 2007, with UNHCR trying to provide more support but reaching only a fraction of the 1.5 million refugees (Al-Khalidi et al 2007).

As well as being neglected in funding terms, forgotten crises also tend to suffer from a lack of analytical attention. The evaluations reviewed for this synthesis were mostly focused on the larger, higher-profile disasters, with very few evaluations of smaller and lower-profile disasters.

3.1.2 | Access and operational coverage

Even as the global humanitarian footprint is expanding across the world, humanitarian access is under strain. According to interview and survey findings, access to needy populations is increasingly being thwarted by, for example, restrictive governments in some instances and rising insecurity and lawlessness in others. Access is difficult to measure objectively. An initiative by OCHA to monitor and track access constraints has recently been developed, and the first findings from this process were highlighted in the 2009 UN Secretary-General's report to the Security Council on the Protection of Civilians (UN Secretary-General 2009a). It found that timely and unimpeded access by humanitarian organisations to civilians in need has become an increasingly critical issue. The study identified three types of constraints on access, which currently pose the greatest challenges owing to their widespread and frequent occurrence and the severity of their implications for humanitarian personnel and operations and of their consequences for populations in need. These are bureaucratic constraints imposed by governments and other authorities, the intensity of hostilities and attacks on humanitarian personnel and assets. While not able to quantify the impacts of these constraints on access and operational coverage, the report provided detailed, anecdotal, country-specific evidence of the challenges posed to

Figure 6
Global rate of attacks on aid workers, 1997–2008



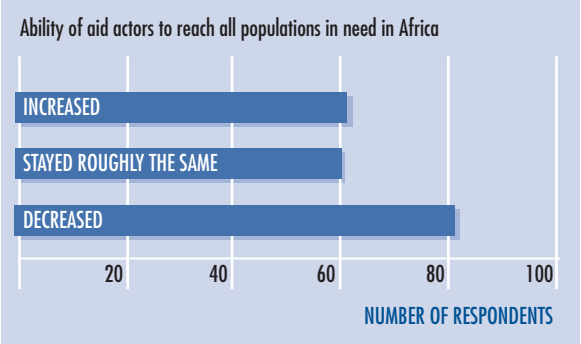
Source Stoddard et al (2009)

humanitarian operations over the previous year and noted the implications for decreased effectiveness of aid activities and increased delivery costs, as well as those for civilians, including protracted suffering and increased risk of displacement, disease and malnourishment.

On the issue of violence against aid workers, Stoddard et al (2009) recognise that working in humanitarian aid has always been a dangerous profession, but note that it has become dramatically more so in some settings in the past three years. The global incidence rate of violence against aid workers, particularly kidnappings, has sharply increased (61%) since 2006. Afghanistan, Somalia and Sudan (Darfur) have proved the most dangerous contexts for aid operations, accounting for more than 60% of violent incidents and aid worker victims in the past three years. Additionally, attacks in these settings have increasingly entailed political motives, reflecting a less permissive environment for humanitarian work and a broad-brush targeting of the Western-dominated aid enterprise as a whole.

A plurality of survey respondents working in Africa and the Middle East indicated that their ability to reach populations in need had declined over the past two to three years (for reasons mainly to do with rising insecurity in certain contexts). In Asia and the Americas, most respondents deemed the level of humanitarian access to have stayed roughly the same.

Figure 7
Survey finding – access/coverage



3.2 | Relevance/appropriateness

On measures of relevance and appropriateness, the report examined the following questions:

- Are needs adequately assessed?
- Are needs appropriately prioritised and addressed?

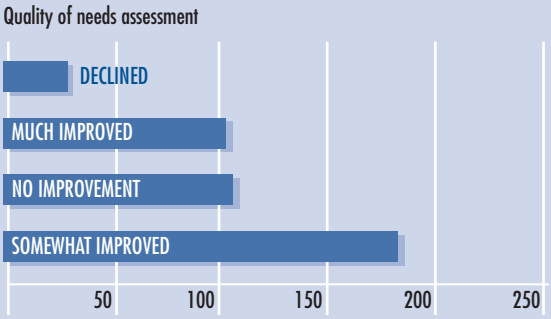
3.2.1 | Needs assessment

Needs assessment remains a key weakness within the system, as successive ALNAP and other independent evaluations and reviews have identified (Cosgrave and Herson 2008; UN Secretary-General 2009b; Vaux 2006). However, evidence from this review points to progress in both quality and quantity of assessments, and in the development of new tools and methodologies to improve their usefulness.

A majority of survey respondents indicated that a coordinated needs assessment had been undertaken in their settings, that the quality of assessment was 'adequate' and that their organisations, for the most part, had participated. The majority had also seen a modest improvement in humanitarian needs assessment practice over the past few years. However, nearly a third of respondents indicated that no joint needs assessment had taken place in their setting, and 10% said that the needs assessment was of poor quality (i.e. it did not result in an accurate reflection or prioritisation of needs). The greatest improvement in needs assessments was seen in Latin America/Caribbean, and the least in the Middle East.

Likewise, most interviewees felt that assessment practice was generally improving, including basic know-how (e.g. sampling techniques, etc) and quality of available tools and guidance for agencies. They also saw a growing interest in inter-agency assessments. Donors interviewed for the study felt that there were some signs of improvement in assessment practice in terms of reliability and consistency, but remained concerned about there being too many multiple assessments and a lack of comparability at the global level. Donor governments have recently written a

Figure 8
Survey finding – needs assessment



joint letter to Sir John Holmes, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, calling for greater investment in needs assessments and more of a focus on comparability between crises.

The evaluation synthesis yielded similar findings. ECHO's annual survey on the CAP found that needs assessments had improved somewhat, especially at the sector level, although some concerns remain on overall quality. In particular, inter-sector analysis and the identification of gaps are still regarded as weak. OCHA's (2009) mapping of humanitarian assessment initiatives found that agencies and clusters were seriously engaged in efforts to standardise and improve their own assessment practice and to build partnerships for joint assessments and information consolidation. Interviewees raised concerns that there were perhaps too many initiatives taking place in parallel, and that there was a need for greater coherence and common frameworks. It was also recognised that joint assessments should not be conducted by international agencies alone, and that there is a critical challenge to involve the government and local actors. Evaluations note continuing problems with multiple assessments, creating assessment fatigue among disaster-affected populations and local officials. Walden et al (2006), evaluating the Lebanon response, met with a mayor in Sharma municipality who reported having met with about 50 INGOs, 'most of whom talked and never delivered anything'. Beneficiary consultations revealed frustrations with multiple needs assessments, and widespread 'survey fatigue', with no subsequent follow-up or feedback about ensuing programme decisions (CDA 2006a; Duffield et al 2008).

The DRC 2009 Humanitarian Action Plan has been cited as an example of best practice in multilateral needs assessment and prioritisation of pooled funding allocations (Darcy and Foliot 2009). The 2009 Humanitarian Action Plan utilises thresholds to trigger humanitarian responses. Assessment information was compiled from all districts of concern and ranked according to the severity of needs across six priority sectors: IDPs, returnees, protection, sexual and gender-based violence, malnutrition and health (OCHA 2009). There are also country-level investments in improving analytical capacity. Boudreau (2009) highlights the Livelihoods Integration Unit in Ethiopia in 2006, which aims to build the capacity of the government's early warning system, using the household economy approach as an analytical framework, and which has 'advanced the science' in the area of disaster risk assessment. There has also been a focus on improving the assessment of markets in emergencies to enable more appropriate responses and the development of an Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis (EMMA) tool (Albu and Murphy 2007).

Other new tools that have been positively received include the Multi-Cluster Rapid Assessment Mechanism (McRAM) in Pakistan and the Post-Nargis Joint Needs Assessment (PONJA) in Myanmar. The Assessment and Classification of Emergencies (ACE) project aims to improve the basis on which relief actors identify needs and make decisions on the prioritisation and allocation of resources, by supporting, harmonising and improving the comparability of inter-agency assessments and analysis activities (OCHA 2008). The Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) is a multi-agency technical approach that aims at providing decision makers with timely, reliable and accessible information about the food security situation. It has been adopted and is in

regular usage in six countries, and is being piloted in others (IPC 2008). OCHA is also working on a tool for consolidating core humanitarian information in a consistent and accessible manner, currently referred to as the Humanitarian Dashboard, which is being further developed and field tested (UN 2009).

Ensuring greater participation of disaster-affected populations in assessments remains a challenge. People consulted as part of the Listening Project in several countries felt that they were not adequately consulted about their needs and how these could best be met (CDA 2006a; 2006b; 2006c). Rothkegel et al (2008) and interviewees note that the systematic implementation of participatory assessments in most UNHCR operations is a major step forward. However, they also note that this is not translating into greater engagement in participatory planning or implementation, meaning that 'beneficiary participation often achieved rhetorical rather than real results'.

3.2.2 | Prioritisation of needs and appropriate allocation of resources

At a global level, ECHO has developed tools to ensure consistency in the allocation of resources. The Global Needs Assessment classifies countries according to their relative vulnerability and the existence of a crisis situation, and the Forgotten Crisis Assessment (FCA) attempts to identify severe, protracted humanitarian crises where affected populations are receiving no or insufficient humanitarian aid. The aim is to provide objective measures to ensure that the principle of independence is applied in allocations (ECHO 2008). OCHA's Global Focus Model, developed in the Asia regional office to rank the needs and capacities of individual countries, represents a similar attempt to objectively assess relative needs and prioritise resources accordingly.

At the level of individual emergencies, most evaluations reviewed concluded that responses were appropriate to the need. It was often unclear, however, how well alternative assistance options had been considered, and critical analysis of the appropriateness of responses remains rare (Levine and Chastre 2004). The lack of adequate support to enable recovery of livelihoods was a persistent theme in several evaluations (Harvey 2009a; Tod et al 2008). However, despite the tendency for humanitarian aid to programme within a delineated set of traditional sectors and activities, there are some recent signs of a wider range of interventions being considered and tried.[13]

For instance, there is a growing awareness and willingness with regard to giving people cash as an alternative or a complement to in-kind assistance (Harvey 2007; WFP 2008b). There has also been greater attention given to a broader range of interventions to support livelihoods and promote market development (Maxwell et al 2008; SEEP 2007; USAID 2007). The Small Enterprise Education and Promotion (SEEP) network has published a new set of minimum standards for economic recovery after crisis, which focuses on strategies and interventions designed to promote enterprises, employment and cash flow and asset management among affected enterprises and livelihoods (SEEP 2009). Interventions to support pastoralist livelihoods and livestock production are another area where much recent innovative programming and guidelines has been developed (Alinovi et al 2007; Watson and Catley 2008). There is increasing interest in the possible use of insurance as a form of response to food insecurity and disasters. Micro-finance providers have been examining the possibility of extending their product range to provide micro-insurance; at a more macro level, some governments have taken out 'catastrophe bonds' against extreme weather events, and UN agencies have been piloting weather-based insurance indexes (Slater and Dana 2006; Twigg 2004; WFP 2005). There is growing interest in questions relating to land in humanitarian crises and a recognition that better addressing land issues is crucial (IDMC 2009).

The potential of longer-term approaches to provide social protection and assistance as an alternative or complement to relief has gained currency, particularly in places where chronic vulnerability has

seen long-running relief programmes (Harvey et al 2007; Harvey 2009a). The Ethiopia Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) and the Hunger Safety Net Programme in Kenya are the best known examples. Shoham (2007) notes that there is widespread agreement that the PSNP represents a significant improvement over previous relief programming and a positive step towards finding long-term solutions to Ethiopia's food insecurity.

There have also been some important innovations and shifts in approach in traditional sectors. For instance, in nutrition there has been a major shift from centre-based approaches to therapeutic feeding to widespread adoption of an approach now labelled community-managed acute malnutrition (CMAM), which uses ready-to-eat therapeutic foods to treat acute malnutrition in the community whenever possible. Navarro-Colorado (2007) argues that, given current levels of low coverage and population-level impact, there is a need to explore alternative interventions to supplementary feeding, addressed to the wider population. Navarro-Colorado et al (2008) argue for greater consideration of approaches such as blanket distribution of special foods during pre-harvest periods or expanded general ration programmes. The Emergency Nutrition Network (ENN) is about to start a research project that will compare outcomes from a traditional supplementary feeding approach with expanded general rations.

Beneficiary consultations often highlighted concerns with how international assistance is targeted. A persistent theme of the Listening Project case studies was a sense of unfairness in the selection of beneficiaries. In Aceh, people felt that it would it be better for smaller amounts of aid to be distributed more evenly (CDA 2005). In Pakistan, the main reason for dissatisfaction with assistance received was the perception of inequity in the aid distribution process (Fritz Institute 2006). Maxwell and Burns (2008) note a disconnect between external and internal (community) definitions of vulnerability and who deserves assistance – leading to widespread sharing of targeted food aid. In Somalia, for example, Jaspars and Maxwell (2008) found widespread redistribution and sharing of food aid, which limited exclusion but ensured that no-one received very much.

3.3 | Effectiveness

Under the heading of effectiveness we examined at the following questions:

- Preparedness/timeliness: is the system responsive, prepared, fast and flexible?
- Coordination: are the system's components coherent and coordinated?
- Monitoring and evaluation: does the system effectively identify and apply lessons learned in the quality of monitoring?
- Human resources and management: do aid workers possess appropriate qualifications, attitudes and experience to plan and effectively implement appropriate programmes? Do field staff receive adequate support and supervision from their organisations?

3.3.1 | Preparedness/timeliness

Recent studies and interviewees for this review suggested both that timeliness of humanitarian actors in emergency response had improved and that significant agency investments in areas, such as standby capacity, had enabled more rapid responses, particularly to sudden onset disasters (Cosgrave and Herson 2008; Houghton 2007). Beneficiary consultations also sometimes noted the speedy response of non-governmental agencies. In Thailand, the Listening Project heard repeatedly from beneficiaries that 'the best thing is that NGOs work fast' (CDA 2007d). Most survey respondents also felt that overall timeliness had improved; this was particularly the case in the Latin America/Caribbean region. Assessments of the deployment of 'appropriately skilled staff' as a particular component of timeliness were somewhat less positive, although they still indicated overall improvement.

Advance, un-earmarked funding through mechanisms such as the CERF and CHFs was seen to play a role in improving the timeliness of response. Additionally, those agencies and NGOs that have created or bolstered their own emergency revolving funds as an operational reserve were better able to jumpstart operations in advance of receiving donor funding. Two-thirds of respondents in a survey of the WASH sector noted that agencies' own funds were the key funding source in the first weeks of response, suggesting that agencies need to have their own emergency funds to be effective players in this initial phase (Cosgrave 2009). A majority (62%) of survey respondents indicated that their organisation possessed emergency reserve funding that had (or could have) been used to begin operations in advance of donor emergency grants. On this score, the highest level of preparedness was seen among INGOs and the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and the lowest among LNGOs, where the majority possessed no reserve funding.

Better contingency planning and preparedness are repeatedly highlighted in evaluations as a critical part of more timely responses (Choularton 2007; Lakeman 2008). This has been supported by the IASC's inter-agency contingency planning guidelines and training modules (OCHA 2008). Agencies in the Mozambique response, for example, highlighted the value of a simulation exercise carried out in 2006 by the INGC before the floods (Cosgrave et al 2007).

Some evaluations, however, note some downsides to the focus on speed of response in relation to timeliness. Although there is sometimes a need for speed, the situation can turn into a counterproductive rush to be seen to be doing something (Walden et al 2006). A focus on speed means that opportunities for listening to people and building respectful relationships with local actors are lost (CDA 2008a). In Sri Lanka, people spoke about the need for agencies to take more time, saying that a rush to spend funds quickly had led to hasty decisions and inappropriate interventions at the local level (CDA 2007b). Evaluations of the Pakistan earthquake response note that improvements in surge capacity have led to other problems, including loss of effectiveness in other programmes when people are diverted from their regular posts, and issues with high turnover resulting from the need to replace the first surge wave of emergency staff members (Cosgrave and Herson 2008). It was also noted in interviews that sustaining attention and capacity to continue responding to protracted crises and investing adequately in recovery were neglected dimensions of timeliness.

3.3.2 | Growing emphasis on DRR

There is a growing focus on the need to increase investments in DRR and to better link development and humanitarian work in this area. Thanks in part to heightened concern over the impacts of climate change, DRR was seen in interviews as a growing area of policy and programmatic investment for NGOs, and some positive knock-on effects have come from this, including a greater focus on partnerships and community engagement, and an increased awareness on the part of development colleagues of the need for risk reduction work in development programming.

There is, however, a general recognition that resources for DRR are still insufficient. ECHO's Epidemic Decision in West Africa is a good example of a regional programme to help countries to respond more rapidly and effectively to epidemics that occur regularly (Harnemeijer and Meeux 2007). IFRC, as another lead agency in this area, has been working with the African Centre for Meteorological Applications in Development (ACMAD) since 2008 to improve early warning mechanisms for flooding in West Africa.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement has developed guidelines for the facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance. The International Disaster Response Law

(IDRL) project argued that 'governments can and should become better prepared to address regulatory problems for the international assistance they receive' (IFRC 2008b). The guidelines can help to improve the efficiency of relief operations and clarify the roles and responsibilities of different actors involved. They cover areas such as expedited visa processing and customs clearance for relief personnel, goods and equipment, exemptions from taxes, duties and fees and simplified means for humanitarian organisations to acquire temporary domestic legal personality in order to operate legally in countries.

3.3.3 | Coordination and partnerships

The introduction of the cluster system continues to dominate debates about the quality and effectiveness of coordination within the humanitarian system. Positive views about the value of the Cluster Approach to coordination outnumbered negative ones in interviews and in the evaluations reviewed. At the global level, clusters were seen as playing a useful role in bringing actors together more systematically to develop stronger policies and standards for particular sectors. At the national level, where clusters worked well they were seen as providing clearer leadership and stronger sectoral coordination.

In the interviews, UN respondents noted more and better space for dialogue between UN, NGOs and donors at a global level in policy debates and in some country contexts, especially with the advent of greater NGO participation in IASC working groups and field teams. The Cluster Approach is seen to have made significant improvements in planning and coordination where it has been implemented well and where there are experienced and skilled coordinators. The predictability and partnership aspects have been important. Clusters were also seen as facilitating shared human and financial resources, rationalising of tools and standards, better mapping of 'who's doing what where', lesson learning, the sharing of new technologies and training. Interviewees stressed, however, that problems arise when clusters are applied as a blueprint, unmindful of context and existing state capacities. Some organisations were seen as still struggling to think beyond their mandate, as not yet having learnt to put the sector over their own agency interests

Red Cross Movement interviewees were not convinced that the clusters have improved things, and noted the danger of stove-piping needs and activities into sectors. They also noted that there is a real need to move towards humanitarian – not just UN – country teams, but that progress was very slow. Donor respondents saw clusters as working and having a positive impact but recognised real challenges, such as in realising the 'provider of last resort' concept (cluster lead agencies' responsibility to fill critical gaps when no other provider is available) either not being utilised or not being effective. Despite initial scepticism, clusters are considered by NGOs generally to be delivering improvements in coordination, including avoiding duplication, generating a shared understanding of the key issues and identifying gaps. The standout weakness identified by NGO interviewees is the provider of last resort concept. Other weaknesses identified by NGOs included that clusters are enormously time consuming, that getting crosscutting issues addressed is challenging and that there is a lack of engagement of local aid agencies.

Performance is clearly highly variable between sectors and in different emergencies, and very dependent on the quality of leadership. Several studies have stressed the critical importance of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) system.

'The strengthening of the Humanitarian Coordinator system is perhaps the key to making all of the other components of humanitarian reform work effectively. Where the HC system worked well so did all of the components of humanitarian reform; where it didn't they were not as successful'
(Barber et al 2008).

Scheumer-Cross and Taylor (2009) note a 'persistent failure to recruit competent and experienced humanitarian coordinators'. The majority of those

interviewed felt that there was as yet little evidence of stronger HCs, and leadership was seen to be the most difficult of the reforms. Too many HCs still had little knowledge of the humanitarian system or of the key aspects of international humanitarian and human rights law needed for them to coordinate and advocate effectively with national governments. It was noted, however, that OCHA was making efforts to tackle this problem through more systematic candidate inductions, training and skills development. Some NGO respondents questioned whether humanitarian coordinators could really play an independent humanitarian role outside of the broader UN state- and peace-building agenda, and that the issue was less about the quality of the individual and more of a structural issue to do with the ability of the HC to be genuinely independent.

Clusters and their pros and cons have dominated debates in recent years but other dimensions of coordination deserve attention. The innovative Tripartite Core Group (TCG) mechanism in Myanmar, which brought together the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Myanmar government and the UN, was seen as important and effective (Turner et al 2008). NGO representatives interviewed also highlighted the growing importance of NGO consortia approaches and greater collaboration between agencies through initiatives, such as the emergency capacity-building project at a global level and country-level approaches such as the Protracted Relief Programme in Zimbabwe (DFID 2007; Jones 2006).

One of the goals of the humanitarian reform process is improved partnerships between UN and non-UN actors. The interviews conducted for this report reinforced repeatedly articulated NGO concerns with the effectiveness and efficiency of UN agencies in managing and disbursing pooled funds to NGO partners. Despite high hopes for the Global Humanitarian Platform, which brings together UN humanitarian organisations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs to strengthen the principles of partnership, many participants felt frustrated by the slow progress in this 'fourth pillar' of humanitarian reform. At the same time, interestingly, several NGO interviewees expressed appreciation for the role of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator in reaching out to their community, and felt that their views were listened to and that their access had improved during his tenure.

Another theme is donor coordination. Stoddard (2008) notes that 'donors with significant field presence tend to favour a "go it alone" approach'. It is at the field level where the most work needs to be done in terms of donor coordination. However, in Southern Sudan a joint donor office that had been established was widely seen as ineffective (Harvey 2009c). A study on donor coordination at field level recommends that donors should do more to make the most of their collective capacity through greater pooling of expertise, knowledge and resources (Spaak and Otto 2009).

3.3.4 | Monitoring and evaluation

There were mixed views in relation to progress within the system in the monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian action. Beck (2003) identifies monitoring as a key weakness within the system, and limited progress seems to have been made. Many of the evaluations reviewed note serious limitations in the monitoring being carried out, and this is one of the areas where there is clearly great need for improvement. Most survey respondents felt overall, however, that quality of project monitoring and evaluation had improved. In the interviews there were mixed views, even within the same agency. Some NGO interviewees said there was little evidence of improvements and that monitoring was a real area of weakness. At the same time, there are some areas of innovation.

Real-time evaluations (RTE) were viewed positively and seen as particularly useful in sudden onset emergencies 'to catch things before they go too badly wrong… striking while the iron's hot and while donor and the organization's management focus remains engaged' (Cosgrave et al 2009). There is now a UN Interest Group on RTEs which, with agreement

from IASC, has a mandate to make RTEs a standard undertaking. Some positive examples of initiatives in particular sectors were noted, such as Valid's newly developed continuous monitoring approach for nutrition projects (SQUEAK), with coverage as the key determinant that is being monitored for success.

There were also many negative examples. Evaluations of returns in Sudan and Angola note the weakness of returnee monitoring (Crisp et al 2008; Duffield et al 2008). Cosgrave et al (2007) note that in Mozambique 'monitoring was basic', with reports dealing with quantity of inputs and coverage rather than quality of assistance provided or its impact. In Kenya, Simkin et al (2008) note for WFP that; 'in many cases the impact indicators and monitoring tools were not successfully informing and improving programmes', and impact indicators failing to successfully inform programming was identified as a wider issue in a recent ALNAP review (Proudlock et al 2009). Maxwell and Burns (2008) note 'little monitoring of livelihoods and almost no post-distribution monitoring' in Southern Sudan. In a review of supplementary feeding programmes, Navarro-Colorado (2007) finds programme reporting and analysis of outcome statistics to be 'grossly inadequate' in many programmes and recommends minimum reporting standards.

Several evaluations highlight the critical question of how to better monitor pooled funding arrangements (Willits-King 2007). Barber et al (2008) argue for 'the ERC [Emergency Relief Coordinator] to put in place robust quality assurance and peer review mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement, learning and accountability at every stage of CERF related processes' (Barber et al 2008). The UN Secretary-General (2009b) notes that CAPs have historically said little about what has been accomplished in the previous period, so there is little accountability at a collective level, but that progress is being made in the 2009 mid-year CAP reviews in cluster-level reporting against targets.

HAP (2008) has identified that evaluation practice consistently fails to take downwards accountability seriously. Similarly, the Listening Project finds that, 'currently dominant incentive structures do not generally reward more time spent with communities', and indicators used to track performance focus on outputs rather than on quality of relationships or processes (CDA 2008a).

Beneficiary consultations also noted issues with monitoring. Beneficiaries surveyed by the Listening Project in Ethiopia attributed failures in the quality of goods and services to a lack of monitoring and follow-up by aid agencies (CDA 2006a). In Sri Lanka, by far the most burning issue that people raised regarding donor's roles and responsibilities was the importance of regular monitoring visits (CDA 2007b). A man in Galle argued that 'foreign assistance concentrates on reports. If they are well prepared the reality is not considered'. In Kosovo, people felt that international staff did not spend enough time in the field and relied too much on local staff and local bodies, which could be corrupt or influenced by political considerations. The report notes that over and over again people asked 'why didn't anyone come back? Why didn't they come and see how the money was being spent, the quality of the materials used and who was getting them?' (CDA 2007c).

A recurrent theme in the humanitarian literature is a concern that international agencies do not invest enough in broader analysis of the contexts in which they work, beyond somewhat mechanical monitoring of project-related outputs. There are, however, some signs of investments in more in-depth research and analysis. World Vision, for instance, has developed tools for analysing complex emergencies (making sense of turbulent contexts) and for better understanding principled engagement with military forces (HISS-CAM). Thompson (2008) notes that, when HISS-CAM was recently piloted in Georgia and Myanmar, staff found that the tool 'facilitated an analytical due diligence process'. Interviewees also noted stronger interactions and partnerships with academic institutions in undertaking research around key humanitarian issues and contexts. The IRC's work with university partners on impact evaluation, partnerships with Tufts University in developing livestock standards and in-depth livelihoods analysis

in northern Uganda and Sudan are all recent examples (Stites and Akabwai 2009; Young et al 2009).

There are also rapidly growing opportunities to use information technology in creative ways to improve the management and sharing of information in emergencies. Innovations such as Frontline SMS and Ushahidi have offered new ways to collect and disseminate information in crisis situations. These new tools are distinguished by the potential for those affected by emergencies to generate and share information – as was demonstrated in the post-election violence in Kenya, when Ushahidi was used to map outbreaks of violence by those affected. World Vision has piloted an Automatic Identification and Data Collection (AIDC) project, a 'systematic effort to leverage innovative technology and business practices within World Vision's last mile humanitarian programming' (Narhan 2008). This has led to a hardware and software system using mobile barcode scanners to manage the identification of recipients and the allocation of food. The evaluation of the pilot, conducted in the autumn of 2008, concludes that, while attention to outstanding technological issues is needed before further scale-up, 'implementation of handheld devices by World Vision in food programming will be of significant value' (Carr 2008; Ramalingam et al 2009a).

It is clear that the humanitarian community can benefit from advances in information and communication technology (ICT), but as of yet utilisation of ICT has been implemented in an ad hoc manner. NGOs across the spectrum have adopted various aspects of ICT into their daily operations. Web sites, portals, wikis, blogs and social networking sites have revolutionised the way information is shared internally as well as broadening the scope of external information dissemination. The most dynamic ICT development to date is in the area of geospatial mapping. Typically called a Geographical Information System (GIS), software applications such as Google Earth provide real time imagery and global positioning systems (GPSs) allow field staff to collect, transmit and analyse data with more accuracy and speed than before. Not only does this technology have an immediate impact on the ground during emergencies but also the data collected can serve as basis for longer-term statistical analysis for project impact evaluations. An example of this is the development of weather tracking technology that allows NGOs to predict with some level of certainty where weather-related disasters will occur and where services are most needed. However, utilisation of this technology is largely being done by NGOs individually. Given that in disaster and emergency relief scenarios there are often several NGOs operating in the vicinity, there is much to be gained from inter-organisation sharing of raw data, especially in terms of coordinating efforts.

3.3.5 | Human resources and organisational capacity

The overall capacity of the humanitarian system is consistently seen as in need of strengthening. The Humanitarian Response Review (Adinolfi et al 2005) concludes that 'the major gap identified is the low level of preparedness of the humanitarian organizations, in terms of human resources and sectoral capacities'. More recently, the Humanitarian Response Index (HRI 2009) concludes that there is a continuing need to strengthen the overall capacity of the system and that international actors are 'stretched to the limit'. HRI survey responses gave poor marks to donors in all crises in relation to their support for contingency planning and strengthening response capacity. The critical importance of human resources as a central determining factor in effective humanitarian action is increasingly being recognised. According to Webster and Walker (2009), 'a good response comes down to the people'; the authors find that 'investing in people is one of the most critical ways to improve response' and that 'building relationships and trust across the entire organisation is essential.'

Partly in response to these perceived weaknesses, there are a large number of initiatives within individual organisations and across networks to build stronger capacities for response, such as the Emergency Capacity Building (ECB) project. Morris

and Shaughnessy (2007) conclude that the ECB has contributed significantly to enhanced emergency response capacities in the participating agencies. Capacities for humanitarian action are being strengthened within particular organisations, across organisational federations and within sectors. Published systematic evaluations or analysis of the capacities of implementing agencies by donors are thin on the ground. An exception in the synthesis of evaluations is the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), which regularly carries out capacity studies of its humanitarian partner organisations in order to find the most effective and efficient channels for Swedish humanitarian funding.

Some donors have invested in attempts to strengthen the capacity of particular institutions. One evaluation concludes that the jury is still out on the success of support to the WHO's emergency capacity through the Health Action in Crises (HAC) project (Harnemeijer and Meeux 2007). The FAO has invested significantly in improving its work in humanitarian action; this now represents something like half of the annual turnover and is 30 times what it was a decade ago (Barber et al 2008).

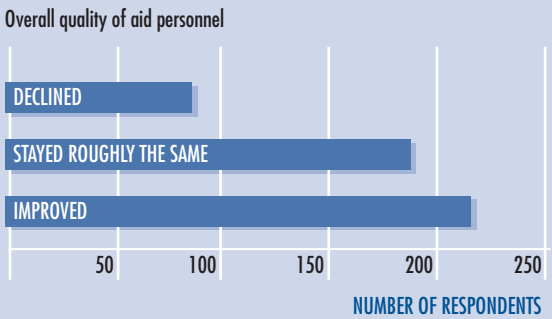
A survey focused on WASH capacities for emergencies found a widespread perception that the sector has seen improvements in staffing, procurement, funding, preparedness, information flows and coordination over the past five years. 'Those believing that things have improved in the WASH sector in the last five years strongly outnumber those who think things have got worse' (Cosgrave 2009).

There are also perceptions of growing capacities on the part of national governments affected by disasters to meet the needs of their own citizens. This, of course, is highly context specific, and not all governments are increasing their capacity, but there does seem to be a general trend towards greater government engagement around disaster management issues (Harvey 2009b). In a 2009 report, the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) finds that significant progress has been made in strengthening capacities, institutional systems and legislation to address deficiencies in disaster preparedness and response. This was also reflected in the interviews, where many respondents highlighted the growing assertiveness of states and an increasing desire to assert greater control over relief responses.

Survey respondents felt that the overall quality of aid workers in the field seemed to have improved overall, but not in enthusiastic majorities. No marked improvement was cited in headquarters support and guidance to field staff. In interviews, NGO respondents felt that the systems was still too expatriate driven, but at least that expatriates were better trained, more qualified and more skilled than a decade ago. Some NGOs identified a greater diversification in terms of nationalities and gender in senior roles. Leadership in the NGO sector was considered weak by some interviewees. As one noted, there is 'not a forceful enough group of senior people running emergency responses in the big NGOs. And it's become too managerial – not enough capacity to speak out well on the big issues'.

In evaluations and in interviews, people noted increased numbers of staff in key emergency positions, improvements in agencies' surge capacity and increased investments in staff capacity, such as

Figure 9
Survey finding – aid worker skills and profile



the creation of posts for organisational learning and staff wellness managers (Cosgrave and Herson 2008; Morris and Shaughnessy 2008). The effectiveness of strategic secondments is noted in some evaluations.

A common evaluation finding, however, is the need for greater investments in human resource management systems. For example, high staff turnover, difficulty recruiting experienced staff and difficulties getting staff with the right language skills are noted in a series of evaluations (Bourgeois et al 2007; Crisp et al 2008; Duffield et al 2008). Several interviewees and evaluation findings comment on how difficult it is to get experienced staff to work in the most difficult environments. 'Unpopular' postings such as Chad and Darfur are often staffed by less experienced aid workers and have high levels of turnover.

Several evaluations highlight the efforts being made to invest in the skills and capacities of national staff, who are also increasingly occupying senior management positions in aid agencies (Damerell 2008; EPN 2004; People In Aid 2007; Swords 2006). In interviews, however, there was a perception that this is still an area where greater efforts are needed. Several evaluations note tensions between national and international staff. Sperl et al (2006), for example, note that too many international staff were deployed in the UNHCR response in Lebanon and that national staff felt sidelined and disenfranchised after the arrival of emergency response team members. Debates about the potential for a professional association and accreditation process for humanitarian workers are ongoing and being taken forward in a study led by Save the Children (ELHRA 2009).

There was little attention in evaluations or the wider literature to the question of whether field staff receive adequate support and supervision from their organisations, and this appears to be an issue where greater attention is needed. In interviews there was some concern about the possibility that field staff were being overburdened with an ever-growing list of expectations in relation to new standards, guidelines, crosscutting issues and organisational priorities.

3.4 | Connectedness and local capacity building

The report set out to ask the following questions in relation to connectedness:

- How effectively do international agencies relate to national actors and promote the participation of affected populations?
- Is the international community actively engaged in building capacity for local humanitarian response?

Evaluations increasingly highlight the critical roles played by local actors. The response to Cyclone Nargis, for example, was very much a nationally led response, in part because of restrictions on access for international aid agencies. Turner et al (2008) note impressive results from individuals, private businesses, student groups and local agencies, which played a prominent role in the response. The Myanmar business community also played an important role – distributing relief, mobilising employees, providing logistics support and constructing shelters. The response to conflict-related displacement in Pakistan in 2009 has been led by Pashtun communities, with the majority of those displaced staying with host families (HPG 2009). In the Occupied Palestinian Territories, OCHA reports that the four largest Zakat committees provided food assistance to 145,450 households during the second intifada, making them the largest food donor after UNRWA (Scheumer-Cross and Taylor 2009). In the Yogyakarta earthquake response in Indonesia, strong traditions of solidarity strengthened local responses. The efforts of local people were supported by truckloads of volunteers from surrounding cities and universities (Wilson and Reilly 2007).

There appears to be a growing assertiveness on the part of governments and a renewed determination to insist on states' sovereign authority to determine if and how disasters are responded to within their national borders. Where governments are capable and concerned for the well-being of their citizens,

this has produced some very successful responses, with the government of Mozambique's response to floods in 2007, India's tsunami response and Pakistan's and Indonesia's earthquake responses seen as particularly effective (Cosgrave et al 2007; Wilson and Reilly 2007). One of the greatest disasters of 2008, the Sichuan earthquake in China, was very much a government-led response, with international actors playing a marginal role. In other contexts it has been more problematic, with the expulsion of aid agencies from Sudan, the initial reluctance to allow international agencies access to respond to Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar and the restrictive operating environment in Sri Lanka. For good and ill, however, the role of the state in responding to disasters has been more centre stage and is likely to remain so (Harvey 2009b). Young et al (2007) note that 'ultimately it must be for the sovereign state to have the final word about the level of international assistance that it needs and wants'. Powerful advocacy by the UN and other actors is influential and appropriate, but there is a need to be very circumspect about 'seeming to insist'.

A lack of investment in local and national capacities for response was one of the key findings of the TEC and of previous ALNAP reviews (Christoplos 2005; Telford et al 2006). Responses to the HRI survey (2009) suggest that supporting local capacities is still a problematic area, for donors and implementing agencies alike. Beneficiary consultations also highlight the undermining of local capacities (CDA 2007b). Recent evaluations and the interviews conducted for this study, however, do point to some signs of improvement in how international humanitarian actors relate to national and local capacities, with national actors playing a leading role in some contexts. It is important to balance criticism that humanitarian aid undermines capacities with recognition of genuine attempts to build and work with existing government capacities. The comparative wealth and strength of the international humanitarian system can make it an easy target for rather knee-jerk criticism that fails to acknowledge both real efforts to build capacities and real constraints to working with local institutions in some contexts.

Based on survey responses for this review, solid majorities in all regions found that capacity-building efforts have increased in the past two to three years. In all regions except the Middle East, respondents said that coordination meetings were typically held in or provided translation to the national language. Respondents cited an increase in the direct funding of local organisations by international donors. When assessing how well the international aid community had interacted with host government authorities, the majority of respondents gave a rating of 'Fair: International organisations reached out actively to national authorities, but weak capacity prevented their full participation'. On average, 21% actually pronounced this interaction 'Good: The national authorities were leading or heavily engaged in the response'. An almost equal number cited it as 'Poor: There was weak participation and only minimal consultation of the national authorities by the international organisations'. UN interview respondents felt that national capacity building was becoming an increasingly important issue. In the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) humanitarian segment for 2010, two topics have been requested: capacity building and partnership with host governments.

Many agencies have always had a major focus on working with and through local partner agencies, and capacity building is becoming a more significant policy priority for some key agencies. For example, following a policy review of its approach to capacity development, UNICEF's emergency division has made strengthening national capacity the overriding objective of its corporate strategy (Bellour and Mahoney 2009; UNICEF 2009). One of the most important parts of the mission of the IFRC, reflected in its four central goals, is to increase civil society and national Red Cross and Red Crescent capacity to address urgent situations of vulnerability, and a recent strategy review found significantly increased delivery capacity of national societies at local levels (IFRC 2009). Efforts are also being made to empower the Southern members of big NGO federations such as World Vision and Save the Children. ActionAid has moved its headquarters to the developing world.

Evaluations do continue to highlight weaknesses in how international actors support local partners. A recurring theme in several evaluations is that local partner organisations still felt treated like contractors rather than true partners (Walden 2008). Oxfam in response to Cyclone Sidr, for example, worked appropriately through local NGO partners but did not provide enough capacity support for NGOs with little experience in emergencies, risked overwhelming them with complex reporting requirements, and did not communicate key programming decisions well enough (Walden et al 2008). In DRC, UNHCR's six-month budget and planning cycle limited the potential for partnership with national NGOs that do not have access to pre-financing (Bourgeois et al 2007). In interviews, concerns were raised that capacity building has either been forgotten or not pursued strongly enough. The Darfur experience is important case, as one UN interviewee highlighted:

'When 13 NGOs were expelled in Darfur, nobody really faced the tough questions, which were why after three, four, five years was there no local capacity? What were the NGOs doing all those years? How is it possible that people were so vulnerable without their services after being there for so long? Why wasn't capacity built?'

Another challenge is that donor governments do not appear to be making any significant movement towards supporting local partners directly. This is part of an overall exercise to reduce administrative costs and increase accountability to their publics, with the net result that rules are even less flexible than before. That said, Willits-King (2007) notes that in DRC the pooled fund has played a valuable role in providing significant funding to local NGOs – $3.3 million to 13 organisations. In Somalia, LNGOs previously excluded from funding relationships between donors and agencies have been included in the Somalia Humanitarian Response Fund. In Sudan, by contrast, $418,000 to two LNGOs made up a tiny proportion of the funding and local NGOs were excluded by heavy administrative and coordination requirements and the weight of the work plan process.

3.4.1 | Accountability and participation

The report set out to analyse the adequacy of participation of affected populations and downwards accountability measures. The findings are included here under an effectiveness heading, but it is recognised that this is a crosscutting issue that also applies across the other criteria.

There is clear momentum around the need for greater downward accountability and participation of disaster-affected populations (Brookings 2008; HAP 2008). The HAP annual survey of perceptions of humanitarian accountability found growing confidence in improved practices towards disaster survivors alongside a perception that there was still room for improvement. Three-quarters of the 658 respondents perceived an improvement in accountability to beneficiaries (HAP 2009). However, in many disaster contexts, too few people know what they are entitled to receive, or how to complain if they do not get it, and are unable actively and meaningfully to participate in the planning and delivery of assistance. Oxfam's tsunami research programme concludes that 'too often, the knowledge, capacity and priorities of communities were overlooked, and their members were cast as consultants or passive recipients of aid rather than as equal partners in the process' (Oxfam 2009b).

The most critical perspective on performance is clearly that of disaster-affected populations. As Cosgrave and Herson (2008) argue, 'the affected populations view should have primacy', and community perspectives about the quality of response are often very different from agency views. There is starting to be a richer literature on beneficiary perspectives than there was in the past, itself an encouraging sign. Initiatives such as the Listening Project, and beneficiary surveys carried out by Fritz Institute suggest that there is some improvement in efforts to gather beneficiary views on performance. People's desire for greater meaningful participation in planning and implementation is a common theme in consultations with beneficiaries (CDA 2008d; HAP 2009).

There is a tendency for beneficiary consultations to be structured around particular themes, or geared toward finding the negative (for example, through complaints mechanisms or research into corruption or sexual abuse.) This can lead reports to overlook the positive. Beneficiary views are not always negative. In Ethiopia, the Listening Project found that people commented on the significance of food aid in saving lives during droughts and famines, and in Angola one of the most common sentiments was profound gratitude for whatever aid managed to get to people (CDA 2006a; 2006c). A Fritz Institute beneficiary survey 10 months after the earthquake in Pakistan found that people were happy with the assistance received but that there were outstanding needs for basic assistance (Fritz Institute 2006).

Respondents to the survey carried out for this report felt that beneficiaries had less than adequate participation in programming (i.e. planning, design and evaluation of projects). Interestingly, however, beneficiary populations' access to information about aid operations and their ability to complain and seek redress were seen to have increased overall, in all regions except the Middle East. NGO respondents interviewed largely identified progress and improvement in agency practice in relation to accountability over the past three to five years. They did, however, note that improvements in practice remained patchy and that the challenge is to be more consistent across the board. Agencies are investing more in complaints and feedback mechanisms, with varying levels of success. Greater investments in DRR were highlighted as supportive of participation and accountability. Engaging with communities on DRR can really make a difference to the subsequent quality of participation in response. On the supply side, the fact that donors are coming on board with the idea that performance should be judged in part on beneficiary views is also helping to drive improvement.

HAP has developed the HAP standard and started a process of certification for member organisations. The certification process was identified as useful by several interviewees from agencies currently going through it, who saw the process as prompting change within country programmes and encouraging a more systematic look at what practical measures can be taken to improve participation.[14] The deployment of HAP staff to new emergencies has also received widespread positive feedback from members. Other accountability initiatives include the development by the ECB project of a 'good enough' guide to participatory impact measurement and accountability, which has been disseminated and used widely (ECB 2007). The Feinstein International Center has been working with aid agencies to develop a participatory impact assessment methodology, and argues that better analysis of impact will lead to better programming and internal organisational learning benefits, and serve as a powerful advocacy tool to influence the formation of policy and best practice guidelines (Burns et al 2008; Catley et al 2007; Watson 2008). For example, evidence from Ethiopia was used to develop government-endorsed best practice guidelines for interventions in the livestock sector (Behnke et al 2008).

There has been substantial innovation and effort around creating effective complaints mechanisms. However, evaluations continue to note limited effectiveness of the complaints mechanisms established (such as boxes that go untouched) as well as of the capacity to properly follow up on and redress complaints (Walden et al 2008). Complaints mechanisms in IDP camps in Uganda, for example, were found to be inadequate and inappropriate, where they existed at all (Bailey 2008). Beneficiaries often find it difficult to complain or communicate concerns to agencies and are reluctant to do so; in many cases there are fears that this will negatively impact on assistance or just will not be acted upon. Lattu (2008) in beneficiary consultations with refugees in Namibia, Kenya, and Thailand found that beneficiaries felt that they had few channels through which to complain, feared that they would lose aid if they did complain and were concerned about a lack of confidentiality and security in the avenues that were available. The study found that beneficiaries of humanitarian aid knew that sexual abuse and exploitation was going on around them but that the vast majority of the 295

people consulted would not complain. HAP (2008) found that people welcomed agencies' efforts to address complaints but highlighted the need for more appropriate channels for raising complaints and the importance of changes in the attitudes of agency staff in handling complaints.

There are some examples of what appear to be more successful complaints mechanisms. Post-tsunami, the Sri Lankan Human Rights Commission set up a Disaster Relief Monitoring Unit (DRMU), which received over 17,000 complaints and successfully resolved between 55% and 60% of them. Respect for the DMRU's work was almost universal, with INGOs offering support. For example, Oxfam funded local Human Rights Commission Offices and additional staff (Wall 2006, in Brookings 2008). CARE in Peru after the 2007 earthquake introduced a free phone line with a Quechua-speaking operator, which received over 200 calls and supported citizen surveillance committees as part of a transparency process. Some complaints were made about the behaviour of staff towards beneficiaries, and it was felt that the complaints mechanism had helped make staff more careful and respectful in their interactions with beneficiaries (Calderon 2008).

Borton (2008) highlights that evaluations still too rarely make systematic attempts to gather beneficiary views. There are, however, some examples of good practice. Cosgrave et al (2007) is a good example of a serious attempt in an evaluation to gather beneficiary views. The team met with over 400 beneficiaries at 16 different sites and discussed what had happened during the emergency, what assessments had been made, what assistance they had received and their views of the future. Featherstone et al (2009) used an accountability framework to evaluate the response of Save the Children to Cyclone Nargis and found mixed results, with great effort put into the development of village committees to provide information and deliver programmes but limited participation of beneficiaries in monitoring and complaints mechanisms.

Beneficiary consultations often highlighted lack of transparency of international agencies. Following the earthquake in Pakistan, people surveyed felt that there had been minimal consultation with those affected, with the vast majority of those surveyed (97% and 98%) reporting that they had no input into decision-making processes related to the restoration of livelihoods, shelter and food aid (Fritz Institute 2006). A lack of understanding about how aid system works is often found among disaster-affected populations. Bailey (2008), analysing corruption risks in Uganda, finds that 'the most striking observation on perceptions of corruption in humanitarian assistance among IDPs is how little concrete information they have to determine if and where corruption is occurring. They are essentially passive recipients of assistance with no influence in targeting and registration processes and very limited access to aid agencies'. HAP (2008) notes discussions on the need for more transparent approaches: 'an information office has been set up for organisations; why isn't one set up for beneficiaries' (Ziarat, Pakistan, November 2008).

Debates on transparency in the humanitarian sector have tended to focus on how aid agencies can better communicate information about their own projects. Wall (2008) argues that there is a need to look more broadly at effective information and communication exchange with disaster-affected populations: 'the information needs of people affected by disasters remain largely unmet because the people, systems and resources that are required to meet them simply don't exist in a meaningful way'. He finds that there is very little dedicated public communications capacity within major humanitarian organisations. There are rare examples of good practice. In Galle, Sri Lanka, OCHA worked with agencies and local officials to address confusion about people's housing rights and entitlements. A campaign including radio spots, posters, a leaflet and a week-long open house day at the relevant local government offices was organised (Wall 2008). Following the Pakistan earthquake, an emergency information project secured emergency licenses to broadcast, set about rebuilding radio production facilities, provided small equipment grants and training to journalists in humanitarian reporting and

produced a daily one-hour humanitarian programme (Rehmat 2006).

3.5 | Efficiency

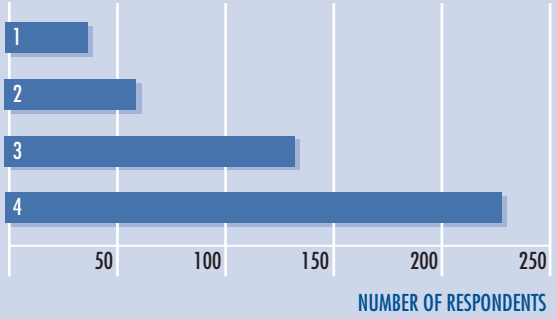
The broad question examined under the heading of efficiency was whether the efficiency of humanitarian actors has improved, stayed the same or declined in recent years. We also examined perceptions of whether efficiencies had been gained or lost by recent reform efforts.

In responses to the survey, although all but a tiny minority of respondents confirmed the presence of transaction costs regarding coordination, the plurality of respondents answered that the coordination burden was 'not too high – benefits of coordination are worth the cost'. However, there was still a sizable minority – roughly a third of respondents – that felt strongly that transaction costs were 'far too high – coordination detracts from programming'. Survey respondents from the Americas seemed to have the most positive attitude toward the cost of coordination, whereas support was weakest in Africa. In interviews with NGO representatives, it was felt that a focus on regional and local procurement wherever possible, and on working with partners, is helping with efficiency issues. There was a need to have more transparency between agencies and greater inter-agency comparisons on cost-effective solutions. Donors are also increasingly demanding consortia approaches, which may generate efficiencies.

The CERF evaluation notes widespread concern with issues relating to overhead changes or programme support costs and how these are determined and allocated (Willits-King 2007; Barber et al 2008). A value for money review of Irish funding to the tsunami response similarly notes that 'a key issue for efficiency is the many layers through which funding passes' and argues that there is a need for greater transparency about the financial implications of passing funding through many layers (INTRAC 2007). It notes that the multi-donor reconstruction fund in Indonesia coordinated by the Bureau for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction and the World Bank had low administration costs (below 2%) compared with trust funds managed by UN agencies. Concerns over the 'number of links in the chain' were also raised in interviews. In several of the Listening Project case studies, people consulted expressed concerns about the inefficiencies of international aid and the amounts that are spent on overheads and international staff salaries (CDA 2008a; Development Initiatives 2009a).

Figure 10
Survey finding – impact of coordination

Transaction costs of humanitarian coordination (time spent in meetings, etc) on aid actors



1 No significant transaction costs

2 Far too high – coordination detracts from programming

3 Too high – not worth the burden on the organisation

4 Not too high – the benefits of coordination are worth the cost

In several of the Listening Project case studies, people consulted expressed concerns about the inefficiencies of international aid and the amounts spent on overheads and international staff salaries (CDA 2008a). For example, CDA (2007a) quotes women's group leaders in Eastern province, Kenya: 'can aid come to beneficiaries without going through many middlemen and reach the people whole – the way it was given by the donor?' CDA (2007b) quotes a municipal official in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka: 'international aid is like a large ice cube. As it gets passed through many hands, it becomes smaller'.

There is little evidence from the evaluation review and the wider literature of much attention being given to the question of efficiency and cost effectiveness, although this is clearly an area where more focus is needed. For example, Harnemeijer and Meeux (2007) note huge differences in costs per beneficiary for health interventions, but that these 'do not appear to trigger DG ECHO staff members to identify the reasons for and/or addressing such disparities in efficiency'. Some evaluations attempted to analyse efficiency, for instance by comparing delivery costs between organisations, but found it impossible owing to different ways of budgeting (Tod et al 2008).

There were some exceptions to the neglect of cost effectiveness. An Action Contre La Faim (Action Against Hunger (ACF)) evaluation of a WASH project in Somalia calculated the cost per direct beneficiary as €20, benchmarking it against similar facilities constructed in Somalia funded by the European Union (EU) and by the Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), which worked in the area until 2005 (DeGabriele 2008). Catley (2007) finds a benefit cost ratio of 41:1 for a commercial destocking intervention in Ethiopia. An evaluation of a Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) project to provide legal information and advice to IDPs in Azerbaijan, which assisted people to replace key identity documents and to access benefits, notes that it was highly cost effective. For instance, the $300 it costs on average to recover an old age pension of $50 a month provide benefits for the IDP for many years. In DRC, UNICEF and OCHA manage funds that provide flexible assistance to NGOs (RRM (Rapid Response Mechanism) and PEAR (Programme of Expanded Assistance for Returns)). These have enabled the UN to compare more systematically the cost effectiveness of different agencies responding in similar ways.

Corruption risks are one element of efficiency that has traditionally been neglected but to which some attention has been given in recent literature (Maxwell et al 2008). The risks of corruption are rarely explicitly analysed, monitored or evaluated in the public domain. An exception is an evaluation of support to IDPs returning in Liberia, which notes that the project faced serious levels of corruption, both among its own staff and in dealing with others (Kirkby and Rose 2007). Corruption risks were also highlighted in beneficiary consultations (CDA 2005; 2006a; 2006c). In Kenya, people felt that donors and NGOs had played a role in perpetuating endemic corruption through a lack of monitoring and presence on the ground (CDA 2007a). In Kosovo, corruption was frequently discussed; people felt that corruption had been allowed and not dealt with effectively, reducing the impact of international assistance (CDA 2007c). In Savage et al (2007) in Liberia, people painted a bleak picture of widespread corruption in IDP and refugee camps, including sexual exploitation and extortion during registration and distribution processes.

A 'value for money review' of Irish Aid's tsunami funding concludes that 'Irish Aid could have been more effective in its response to the tsunami with a greater allocation of funds for monitoring and technical support' (INTRAC 2007). This view was echoed in several of the interviews for this study: people noted that the constant drive to minimise administrative costs was leading to chronic underinvestment in key capacities that could serve to improve performance. Efficiency therefore seems to be neglected in terms of analysis and has arguably too great a focus on driving down administrative costs.

3.6 | Coherence

Under the heading of coherence the report set out to examine the following questions:

- Are key humanitarian principles, IHL and refugee law being respected in humanitarian programming?
- Is there consistency in objectives and actions for protection and for advancing the crosscutting issues of illness, age, gender and disability?

3.6.1 | Are key humanitarian principles, IHL and refugee law being respected?

This is a complex and difficult topic to address in relation to performance of the humanitarian system. Interviewees, survey respondents and recent findings from reviews and inquiries on this topic suggest that there is increasing concern about the lack of respect for core humanitarian principles in many recent conflicts. Humanitarian aid agencies identify a lack of respect for principles on the part both of warring parties but also of donor governments and their militaries as a result of comprehensive and 'whole of government' approaches on the part of Western governments. The 2009 UN Secretary-General's report to the UN argues that 'humanitarian actors' capacity to operate in a principled manner is becoming more difficult', and highlights the worrying increase in the amount of attacks against humanitarian workers and the risk of a dangerous blurring of distinction between humanitarian and military or political actors (UN Secretary-General 2009a).

The survey specifically asked field actors to state their opinion on progress in respect for and adherence to IHL and humanitarian principles among different stakeholders. According to respondents, aid providers have made the most progress in respect for and adherence to humanitarian principles, whereas respect for principles on the part of host governments has actually declined on this measure. Donor governments come in the middle, with respondents citing a slight decline on average.

However, the majority of those interviewed for this study, including aid providers, felt that the humanitarian system was doing a poor job of responding to threats to core humanitarian principles. It was noted that agencies were not doing enough to maintain principled approaches themselves, or to advocate effectively for respect for principles and IHL on the part of governments. According to one respondent, 'we're a lot further back from where we thought we were on humanitarian principles. We need to stop talking only to people who agree with us'.

Interviewees recognised that, while some organisations do robustly defend and advocate for principles, this is not often enough an approach of the entire international community. Many NGO interview respondents recognised that there was a tendency to exaggerate ability to adhere to principles and that the operational focus of some agencies was leading them to neglect humanitarian principles. Oxfam, for example, argues that, although aid agencies have consistently criticised governments for seeing humanitarian agencies as part of overall military and political strategies, the latter could themselves do more to try to ensure that they are perceived as impartial in conflict (Scheumer-Cross and Taylor 2009). For example, concern has been expressed over the use of military transport assets in situations where it is unnecessary, despite clear guidelines stating that agencies should call on the military only in exceptional circumstances of insecurity or inaccessibility.

Independence is seen as increasingly difficult to maintain in the face of more assertive governments. The trend on the part of affected states towards more and more restrictive NGO laws, and an increasing tendency towards expulsions and tighter control of international agency activities, was particularly noted.

On the donor government side, donors still tend to have independent dialogues with affected states and could be more effective if they spoke with a collective voice. Donors have also been criticised for ignoring their responsibilities under the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative in some contexts. In Afghanistan, for example, the shift to stabilisation measures and

state-building goals has led to neglect of a growing humanitarian crisis (Harmer and Basu Ray 2009). Cornish and Glad (2008) find that a concentration of aid funding on provinces in Afghanistan that are politically and militarily important for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) donor countries involved has become the norm, and the use of aid for force protection purposes is widespread. Independent humanitarian funding, Cornish and Glad argue, does not seem to fit into the comprehensive approach and results in limited funding for needs-based humanitarian action. Donini (2009) argues that there is a 'strong case for supporting more principled and narrowly defined forms of humanitarian action in Afghanistan' and for separating humanitarian aid from 'politically driven stabilization operations'. Hansen (2008) notes 'strong indications that life-saving assistance and protection efforts in Iraq have been tainted by association or mis-association with a range of often flawed activities motivated by military or political objectives'. In other contexts, such as in Pakistan, political and military considerations have tended to override humanitarian concerns. International humanitarian actors have been reluctant to challenge government policies and the UN, retaining a development focus, had little capacity or willingness to assert influence over the humanitarian response in its early stages. More recently, the designation of a standalone UN HC and steps to strengthen OCHA have helped improve matters (HPG 2009).

This issue of integrated missions continues to be a concern for some agencies, although there is a more nuanced perspective on their role and impact as compared with in previous years (Wheeler and Harmer 2006). In some contexts, integration is seen to present real opportunities, for example in Burundi and Liberia, where positive gains from working alongside and coordinating with political, military and development actors have been identified. In other contexts, however, the political and security goals of the UN are seen to be in direct conflict with humanitarian goals. In DRC, the UN peacekeeping mission's stepping up of counterinsurgency operations with government forces represents a UN badged force openly waging war on insurgents, and it is feared that this will further undermine efforts to establish the UN as a neutral and impartial actor (Darcy and Foliot 2009). In Haiti, the presence and role of OCHA have been lost in the complexities of the UN stabilisation force and remaining UN agencies, meaning that overall coordination of the humanitarian response has been poor (Sole 2008).

For most interviewees, however, the role of UN peacekeeping forces was significantly less threatening than the growing involvement of Western militaries in providing aid in conflicts in which they are involved. While it is well recognised that military forces of governments have long been involved in the response to natural disasters – and are often highly effective in their role[15] – the role played in the context of conflict situations is considered to be much more contentious. Many have highlighted the increasing engagement of the US military in assistance that it labels humanitarian in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Commander's Emergency Response Programme (CERP) is a pool of discretionary cash available to field commanders for quick response civic action or 'hearts and minds' activities, including 'humanitarian assistance'. More broadly, the proportion of assistance funding that the Department of Defense controls has grown dramatically to as much as 20% all of US ODA.[16]

'Hearts and minds' tactics – the exchange of material rewards for information, cooperation and political support – have a long history in military practice and are deemed to have force protection benefits. However, they remain deeply contentious from the perspective of the independence and impartiality of humanitarian action. In Afghanistan, the military's delivery of assistance in similarly painted vehicles, dressed in civilian clothing, and the conditionality placed on military aid in return for intelligence have been particularly controversial. And the unfortunate and stinging characterisation of NGOs as 'force multipliers' by the US military in Afghanistan still lingers (Martone 2009). These practices are seen as challenging the distinction between humanitarian

and military action required by IHL, a distinction viewed as integral to the safety of humanitarian workers (Stoddard et al 2006; 2009; Wheeler and Harmer 2006). It should be noted, however, that the perceived 'humanitarian bid' by militaries may be overstated: commanders have little wish to see their forces lose basic war-fighting skills in the pursuit of other tasks and, in practical terms, commitments in Afghanistan and Iraq have left the major military actors overstretched. Nonetheless, governments have, and will continue to have, a clear interest in being able to deploy combined civil and military assets to crisis situations. At present, there remains a lack of evidence to show whether the military's delivery of assistance, a marginal activity compared with its core operations, is inimical to good outcomes for local populations – even in the short term (Wheeler and Harmer 2006). It is recognised, however, that the role played by militaries in the protection of civilians is critical.

3.6.2 | Is there consistency in objectives and actions for protection and for advancing the crosscutting issues?

Recent years have seen an increased focus on the issue of protection within the humanitarian system. Guidelines and policies have been developed: an unprecedented number of humanitarian organisations now undertake protection activities and protection is one of the 11 core areas of humanitarian action coordinated under the Cluster Approach (Global Protection Cluster Working Group 2008; O'Callaghan and Pantuliano 2007; Slim and Bonwick 2005). O'Callaghan and Pantuliano (2007) argue that every agency has a 'minimum responsibility to incorporate protection concerns into their relief activities to minimize risks and help keep people safe'. However, confusion over what protection is, and which actors have responsibility for it, continues to be an issue. The ICRC, independently from the Cluster Approach system, defines and implements its core protection activities in accordance with its mandate and standard modalities of work. It nevertheless participates in and often leads discussions on commonly agreed professional standards in protection to support more effective complementarities (Caverzasio 2001).

Interview respondents generally considered protection to be a weak area, and that greater attention had not led to better performance. In particular, there is a proliferation of agencies claiming to do protection but no shared understanding of what it involves, with under-qualified staff and poorly thought-through strategies and insufficient attention to how it affects other aspects of humanitarian action. More distressingly, there is evidence of breaches of confidentiality of affected populations and inconsistent knowledge and application of relevant laws (Bonwick 2006; Pantuliano and O'Callaghan 2006, in ODI 2009). The difficulty of measuring the effectiveness of protection interventions was highlighted as a significant challenge. Recent efforts, coordinated by the ICRC, have been made to establish and agree Professional Standards for protection work, carried out by humanitarian and human rights actors in armed conflicts and other situations of violence. The aim of these commonly agreed standards, published in November 2009, is to have a bottom line to be respected by all (ICRC 2009).

Some interviewees, however, noted that the Cluster Approach and the Protection Capacity Project (ProCAP) had been helpful for protection in humanitarian response. Through ProCAP, there have been efforts to increase capacity within the system to address protection issues. The Cluster Approach is seen to have delivered clearer institutional commitments, encouraged a dialogue between protection actors and established a stronger common framework and language for protection work, which is resulting in better collective protection strategies.

There is a tendency within the humanitarian system towards sudden bursts of attention to particular issues, such as that given to HIV/AIDS in the early 2000s or to gender mainstreaming in the 1990s, followed by a relative lull. Several interviewees noted that maintaining sufficient attention within organisations on issues that needed to be mainstreamed was a difficult challenge.

In survey responses, sizable majorities in all regions, and particularly in the Middle East, stated that their organisation's consideration of crosscutting issues, such as gender, age and disabilities, in their programming had increased and improved. A number of interviewees noted that the greater focus on protection issues was helping to improve consideration of gender issues, and particularly gender-based violence. Others felt that the system was still missing broader opportunities for promoting positive change in gender relations arising from emergencies, for example regarding livelihoods. The cluster evaluation also highlights concerns that the Cluster Approach, by segmenting response into discrete categories, has not ensured more effective incorporation of further crosscutting issues (Stoddard et al 2007).

Several evaluations note a neglect of gender issues (UNICEF 2007). For example, in response to the floods in Mozambique in 2007 gender received little attention – not helped by the fact that the vast majority of government officials, UN, Red Cross and NGO staff were men (Cosgrave et al 2007). Walden et al (2008) found a lack of consultation with women in the response to Sidr in Bangladesh around distribution and selection of beneficiaries and the composition of hygiene kits and sanitary materials. Some agencies, however, have made significant strides in this area. Rothkegel et al (2008) note that UNHCR has achieved considerable progress in promoting women's leadership and representation in community structures and has spearheaded the international recognition of multi-sectoral approaches to sexual and gender-based violence. UNHCR has an age, gender and diversity mainstreaming tool, which is a structured approach to ensuring greater beneficiary participation in assessments, and the perception is that it has worked well and made a difference. A gender capacity project (GenCap) launched in 2007 aims to improve gender equality programming in humanitarian action. Binder and Witte (2008) find that in its first year the project has had a positive impact.

After a flurry of attention to HIV/AIDS in the early 2000s as an emergency in its own right, as exacerbating vulnerability in other emergencies and as an issue that needed to be mainstreamed in humanitarian responses, the issue has dropped down the priority list (Harvey 2004). That does not mean, however, that it has gone away. In Swaziland, Whiteside and Whalley (2007) argue that HIV/AIDS is creating a chronic emergency, demonstrating a new type of disaster which exceeds emergency thresholds and requires a new style of response.[47]

A review of the humanitarian system's current practice in responding to the needs of older people affected by disaster concludes that there are several aspects of current practice that do not adequately meet the needs of older people. Older people do usually get included in definitions of vulnerability, but often as an afterthought and at the end of the list of priorities (Day et al 2007). HelpAge continues to advocate for greater consideration of older people's vulnerabilities and capacities but, as with other considerations, it continues to be an uphill battle to improve practice. HelpAge has found secondments to be an effective tool. For example, a HelpAge secondment into UNHCR helped to embed age considerations into organisational policy.

There is little if any evidence of consideration of issues relating to disability in the recent literature or in the evaluations reviewed, and it seems that this is another mainstreaming challenge struggling to receive sufficient attention (Kett 2007; Kett et al 2005; WHO 2005).

Overall, a holistic approach to crosscutting issues is also seen to be lacking. In Zimbabwe, for example, it was highlighted that the focus on HIV/AIDS had redirected aid away from the disabled (CDA 2006d). In the Eastern DRC, firewood distribution in an IDP camp was restricted to elderly women, leaving younger women vulnerable to attack by the Congolese army as they walked to collect firewood. An assessment highlighted that a more holistic approach to age and gender issues in this scenario would have been more appropriate. This need is also identified in an evaluation of the Cluster Approach, which finds a critical need for greater dialogue on crosscutting issues between the clusters (Stoddard et al 2007).

Notes

12 'Since 2002, long-term humanitarian assistance has accounted for over half of humanitarian spending' Development Initiatives (2009b).

13 In the following paragraphs we highlight innovations mainly in the food security and livelihoods sector. Limits of space and scope prevented a comprehensive review of developments across all sectors.

14 An independent evaluation of HAP is forthcoming.

15 Wilder (2008) notes the central role played by the Pakistan army in the response to the earthquake in 2005, which he argues contributed to one of the most effective humanitarian responses ever to a large-scale natural disaster. In China, the military in particular was considered key to the overall success of the emergency response to the Sichuan earthquake, with more than 130,000 troops and armed police reportedly dispatched to affected areas (Hoyer 2009).

16 According to the OECD, between 2002 and 2005, USAID's share of US ODA decreased from 50% to 39%, and the Department of Defense's increased from 6% to 22% (Walker and Pepper 2007).

17 Mortality rates now exceed emergency thresholds of one death per 10,000 persons per day.

"It is important to remember the inherent limitations of the enterprise, and to judge it within contexts of what is possible rather than against ideals of humanitarian perfection."

4 CONCLUSIONS AND POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS

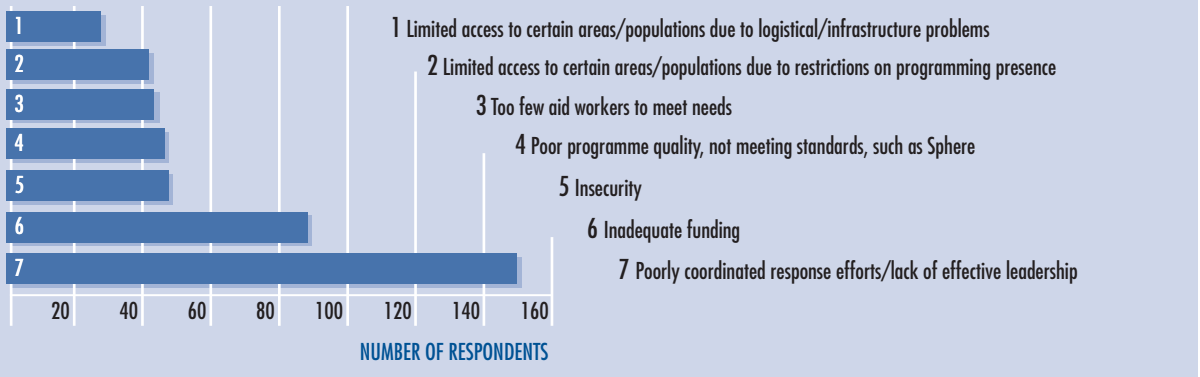
During the years 2007–2008, the international humanitarian system continued to expand in resources, deepen in programming methodology and increasingly solidify coordination linkages between its actors. If there is an overriding theme to the performance assessment findings for this, it is 'undeniably improved, but still insufficient'.

Taken as a whole, the balance of interviews, evaluations conclusions and survey responses suggests a trend of modest improvement on nearly every performance criterion. On the negative side, however, there was a clear perception among field actors that humanitarian response remains insufficiently funded, lacking in effective leadership and too little engaged with and supportive of local actors, and is possibly losing ground in terms of humanitarian access and neutral operational space.

Of all its challenges, international humanitarian action was seen to suffer most from lack of effective leadership and coordination, according to its constituents' responses, which were consistent across regions and agency affiliations.

Humanitarian evaluations, at least those on policy and system issues, tend to be unflinchingly self-critical, which has helped to spur necessary reforms and

Figure 11
Most difficult challenges to humanitarian action



innovation in years past. Nevertheless, it is important to remember the inherent limitations of the enterprise, and to judge it within contexts of what is possible rather than against ideals of humanitarian perfection. At the end of the day, a good deal of relief aid is being provided successfully to people in desperate circumstances in difficult and often dangerous environments all over the world. Evaluations consistently find aid getting to people who need it and making a difference in enabling them to survive and recover during and after crises.

4.1 | Taking forward the State of the System Review

If future assessments of the system are to go forward on a biennial basis using the framework devised for this review, the following would be useful steps for future research teams:

- Revisit indicators and methodologies for refinement/expansion of the research framework and consider using elements of the balanced scorecard approach, depending on available resources (Ramalingam et al 2009b).
- Using the current descriptive statistics as a baseline for growth, retain and maintain data input to the two data matrices on: 1) international financial flows and 2) agency staffing, budget and other organisational information. These templates could potentially be expanded to include private/public percentages and current country mission portfolios.
- Re-launch the survey every two years, with higher respondent targets each year.
- Consider adding a recommendations section, or linking the review to a set of recommendations in a broader ALNAP publication or form.

ANNEXES

1 | List of acronyms

ACE Assessment and Classification of Emergencies
ACF Action Contre La Faim (Action Against Hunger)
ACMAD African Centre for Meteorological Applications in Development
ADRA Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AIDC Automatic Identification and Data Collection project
AIDS Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
ALNAP Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action
ANSO Afghanistan NGO Safety Office
ASEAN Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CaLP Cash and Learning Partnership
CAP Consolidated Appeals Process
CBO Community-Based Organisation
CDMP Comprehensive Disaster Management Programme (Bangladesh)
CEPA Centre for Poverty Analysis
CERF UN Central Emergency Response Fund
CERP Commander's Emergency Response Programme
CHF Common Humanitarian Fund
CMAM Community-Managed Acute Malnutrition
COMPAS Criteria & Tools for the Management & Piloting of Humanitarian Assistance
CRS Catholic Relief Services
DAC OECD Development Assistance Committee
DARA Development Assistance Research Associates
DFID UK Department for International Development
DRC Democratic Republic of the Congo
DRMU Disaster Relief Monitoring Unit
DRR Disaster Risk Reduction
EC European Commission
ECB Emergency Capacity Building
ECHO European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
ECOSOC UN Economic and Social Council
ELRHA Enhancing Learning and Research for Humanitarian Assistance
EMMA Emergency Market Mapping and Analysis
ENN Emergency Nutrition Network
ERC UN Emergency Relief Coordinator
ERD ALNAP's Evaluation Reports Database
EU European Union
FAO Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
FCA Forgotten Crisis Assessment
FTS OCHA Financial Tracking Service
GANSO Gaza NGO Safety Office
GenCap Gender Capacity Project
GHA Global Humanitarian Assistance
GHD Good Humanitarian Donorship
GIS Geographical Information System
GPS Global Positioning System
Groupe URD Urgence, Réhabilitation, Développement
HAP Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HAC Health Action in Crises
HC Humanitarian Coordinator
HIV Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRI Humanitarian Response Index
HUNASP Humanitarian Needs Analysis Support Project
IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Humanitarian Response
ICRC International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT Information and Communication Technology
ICVA International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDMC Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP Internally Displaced Person
IDRL International Disaster Response Law
IDRP International Disaster Response Law
IFRC International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHL International Humanitarian Law
INGC Instituto Nacional de Gestão de Calamidades (Mozambique)
INTRAC International NGO Training and Research Centre
IOM International Organization for Migration

IPC Integrated Phase Classification
IRC International Rescue Committee
INGO International NGO
LEGS Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards
LNGO National/Local NGO
McRAM Multi-Cluster Rapid Assessment Mechanism
MSF Médecins Sans Frontières
NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA Official Development Assistance
OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFADEC Office Africain pour le Développement et la Coopération
PAHO Pan American Health Organization
PEAR Programme of Expanded Assistance for Returns
PONJA Post-Nargis Joint Needs Assessment
ProCAP Protection Capacity Project
PSNP Productive Safety Net Programme
RRM Rapid Response Mechanism
RTE Real-Time Evaluation
SCHR Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
SEEP Small Enterprise Education and Promotion
SENAC Strengthening Emergency Needs Assessment Capacity
Sida Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SPAS Security Preparedness and Support
TCG Tripartite Core Group (Myanmar)
TEC Tsunami Evaluation Coalition
UK United Kingdom
UN United Nations
UNDP UN Development Program
UNFPA UN Population Fund
UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF UN Children's Fund
UNISDR UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UNRWA UN Relief and Works Agency
US United States
USAID US Agency for International Development
WASH Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP World Food Programme
WHO World Health Organization

2 | Bibliography

Action Aid, CAFOD, CARE, Christian Aid, IRC, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Oxfam, Save The Children (2009) *Enhancing UN-NGO humanitarian financing partnerships to contribute to effective humanitarian response*.

Adinolfi, C., Bassiouni, D., Lauritzsen, H. and Williams, H. (2005) *Humanitarian Response Review, An independent report commissioned by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator & Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*.

Agrawal, K., Scott, I., Farhodi, W. and Walden, V. (2007) 'Real-time Evaluation of Oxfam GB's Response to the South Asia Floods July-September 2007'. Oxford: Oxfam.

Albu, M. and Murphy, E. (2007) 'Market Analysis Tools in Rapid Onset Emergencies'. Phase 1 report. Bourton-on-Dunsmore: Practical Action Consulting.

Alinovi, L., Hemrich, G. and Russo, L. (2007) *Beyond Relief: Food Security in Protracted Crises*, Practical Action Publishing.

Al-Khalidi, A., Hofmann, S. and Tanner, V. (2007) *Iraqi Refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic: A Field-based Snapshot*. Washington, DC and Bern: The Brookings Institution and the University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement.

ALNAP (2006) *Evaluating Humanitarian Action Using the OECD – DAC Criteria: An ALNAP Guide for Humanitarian Emergencies*. London: ODI.

ALNAP (2008) *The Humanitarian Performance Project: Briefing Note No 1*. London: Overseas Development Institute: available at: http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/24_hpp_briefing_note1.pdf (accessed 8th December 2009).

ALNAP (2009) *The Humanitarian Performance Project: Briefing Note No 2*. London: Overseas Development Institute: available at: http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/hpp-briefing-note2.pdf (accessed 8th December 2009).

Asiimwe, A. (2008) 'Mid-term Evaluation, Final Report'. NRC Sri Lanka, Information Counselling and Legal Assistance Programme, International Human Rights Network.

Bailey, S. (2008) *Perceptions of Corruption in Humanitarian Assistance among Internally Displaced Persons in Northern Uganda*. HPG Working Paper. London: HPG, ODI.

Barber, M., Bhattacharjee, A., Lossio, R.M. and Sida, L. (2008) 'Central Emergency Response Fund: Two Year Evaluation'. Prepared for OCHA, July.

Beck, T. (2003) *Humanitarian Action: improving monitoring to enhance accountability and learning*, ALNAP Annual Review 2003. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Behnke, R., Kerven, C. and Teshome, A. (2008) 'Evaluation of USAID Pastoral Development Projects in Ethiopia'. For USAID by Odessa Centre Ltd and USAID Ethiopia.

Bekele, G. and Abera, T. (2008) 'Livelihoods-based Drought Response in Ethiopia: Impact Assessment of Livestock Feed Supplementation'. Addis Ababa: Pastoralist Livelihoods Initiative.

Bellour, S. and Mahoney, K. (2009) *UNICEF Study on National Capacity Development for Humanitarian Action – Literature Review.* New York: UNICEF.

Bilateral Donor Group (2007) *Guiding Principles for Humanitarian and Development Assistance in Sri Lanka*. Colombo: Bilateral Donor Group.

Binder, A. and Witte, J. (2008) 'The Gender Standby Capacity Project (GenCap) One Year Ahead'. For UNHCR by Global Public Policy Institute.

Bonwick, A. (2006) *Protection in Colombia: A Bottom-up Approach*. HPG Background Paper, London: HPG, ODI.

Borton, J. (2008) *An Overview of Humanitarian Accountability in 2008*, in The 2008 Humanitarian Accountability Report. London: HAP.

Boudreau, T. (2009) *Solving the risk equation: people-centred disaster risk assessment in Ethiopia*, HPN Network Paper 66, Humanitarian Practice Network, Overseas Development Institute.

Bourgeois, C., Diagne, K. and Tennant, V. (2007) 'Real-time Evaluation of UNHCR's IDP Operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo'. UNHCR Policy Development and Advisory Service.

Bourgeois, C. and White, N. (2007) 'Real-time Evaluation of UNHCR's IDP operation in Uganda'. UNHCR Policy Development and Advisory Service.

Brahimi, L. (2008) 'Towards a Culture of Security and Accountability'. Report of the Independent Panel on Safety and Security of UN Personnel and Premises Worldwide.

Brookings (2008) *Moving Beyond Rhetoric: consultation and participation with populations displaced by conflict or natural disasters*, The Brookings – Bern Project on Internal Displacement.

Bubuya, R., Mwambutsa, C., Scott, I., Wainana, J.K. and Zicherman, N. (2008) 'Evaluation of the Humanitarian Programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) 2004–2008'. Oxford: Oxfam.

Burns, J., Suji, O.W. and Reynolds, A. (2008) 'Impact Assessment of the Pastoralist Survival and Recovery Action Project, Niger'. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

Calderon, J. (2008) *Emergency Response to the Earthquake of August 15, 2007*, External Evaluation, After Action Review, CARE Peru.

Carr, P. (2008) *World Vision AIDC Evaluation Report*, World Vision.

Catley, A. (ed.) (2007) *Impact Assessment of livelihoods based drought interventions in Moyale and Dire Woredas*, A Pastoral Livelihoods Initiative Report produced by the Feinstein International Centre in partnership with CARE, Save the Children USA and USAID Ethiopia.

Catley, A., Burns, J., Abebe, D. and Suji, O.W. (2007) 'Participatory Impact Assessment: A Guide for Practitioners. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

Caverzasio, G. Ed (2001) *Strengthening Protection in War – a search for professional standards: a summary of discussions among human rights and humanitarian organizations*, ICRC.

CDA (2005) 'Report of Listening Project Aceh, Indonesia'. Collaborative Learning Projects, Listening Project.

CDA (2006a) 'Field Visit Report, Bosnia and Herzegovina'. Collaborative Learning Projects, Listening Project.

CDA (2006b) 'Field Visit Report, Ethiopia'. Collaborative Learning Projects, Listening Project.

CDA (2006c) 'Field Visit Report, Angola'. Collaborative Learning Projects, Listening Project.

CDA (2006d) 'Field Visit Report, Zimbabwe'. Collaborative Learning Projects, Listening Project.

CDA (2007a) 'Field Visit Report, Kenya'. Collaborative Learning Projects, Listening Project.

CDA (2007b) 'Field Visit Report, Sri Lanka'. Collaborative Learning Projects, Listening Project.

CDA (2007c) 'Field Visit Report, Kosovo'. Collaborative Learning Projects, Listening Project.

CDA (2007d) 'Field Visit Report, Thailand'. Collaborative Learning Projects, Listening Project.

CDA (2008a) 'Field Visit Report, Ecuador'. Collaborative Learning Projects, Listening Project.

CDA (2008b) 'Presence: 'Why Being Here Matters'. Listening Project Issue Paper, Collaborative Learning Projects.

CDA (2008c) 'The Cascading Effects of International Agendas and Priorities'. Listening Project Issue Paper, Collaborative Learning Projects.

CDA (2008d) *International assistance as a delivery system*, Listening Project Issue Paper, Collaborative Learning Projects.

Chandran, R. and Jones, B. (2008) *Concepts and Dilemmas of State Building in Fragile Situations: From Fragility to Resilience*. Paris: OECD DAC.

Chandran, R., Jones, B. and Smith, N. (2008) *Recovering from war: gaps in early action*, a report by the NYU Centre on International Cooperation for DFID.

Choularton, R. (2007) *Contingency Planning and Humanitarian Action: A Review of Practice*. HPN Network Paper 59. London: HPN, ODI.

Christoplos, I. (2005) *Institutional Capacity Building*, ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action in 2004: Capacity Building. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Cohen, R. (2008) *Listening to the Voices of the Displaced*: Lessons Learned. Washington, DC and Bern: The Brookings Institution and the University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement.

Commins, S. and Fenton, W. (2007) 'Treading a Delicate Path: NGOs in Fragile States'. Draft Synthesis Report, Save the Children.

Cornish, S. and Glad, M. (2008) 'Civil–Military Relations: No Room for Humanitarianism in Comprehensive Approaches'. Security Policy Library, CARE International.

Cosgrave, J. (2009) 'Global Survey of Gaps in WASH Capacities for Emergencies'. Global WASH Cluster. Cork: InterWorks Europe.

Cosgrave, J., Ramalingam, B., and Beck, T. (2009) *Real time evaluations of humanitarian action – an ALNAP guide*. London: Overseas Development Institute: available at: http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/rteguide.pdf (accessed 8th December 2009).

Cosgrave, J. and Herson, M. (2008) 'Perceptions of Crisis and Response: A Synthesis of Evaluations of the Response to the 2005 Pakistan Earthquake'. ALNAP Seventh Review of Humanitarian Action. London: ODI.

Cosgrave, J., Gonçalves, C., Martyris, D., Polastro, R. and Sikumba-Dils, M. (2007) 'Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation of the Response to the February 2007 Floods and Cyclone in Mozambique'. IASC. Cork: InterWorks Europe.

Creach, Y. and Fan, L. (2008) 'ASEAN's Role in the Cyclone Nargis Response: Implications, Lessons and Opportunities'. Humanitarian Exchange 41. Humanitarian Practice Network. London: HPN, ODI.

Crisp, J., Martins de Freitas, R. and Riera, J. (2008) Evaluation of UNHCR's returnee reintegration programme in Angola, UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service.

CRS (2007) 'CRS Emergency Response to the Locust and Drought Induced Food Insecurity in Niger'. Final Evaluation Report.

Damerell, J. (2008) 'National Staff Development Program Pilot Project: External Strategic Review'. For the ECB Project.

Darcy, J. and Foliot, G. (2009) 'The Limits of Humanitarian Action: WFP Food Assistance and International Action in DR Congo'.

Darcy, J., O'Callaghan, S. and Bonwick, A. (2007) 'External Evaluation of the Protection Standby Capacity Project'. ODI.

Das, R. and Nkutu, A. (2008) 'Evaluation of General Food Distribution in Northern Uganda: Gulu, Amuru and Kitgum Districts 2005–2008'. Final report, Nordic Consulting Group, NRC.

Day, W., Pirie, A and Roys, C. (2007) *Strong and Fragile: Learning from Older People in Emergencies*. London: HelpAge International and IASC.

Deloitte (2008a) 'Capacity Study of Plan's Humanitarian Response Capacity'. Report to Sida.

DeGabriele, J. (2008) *Water and Sanitation and Nutrition Projects in South Central Somalia, End of Project Evaluation*, ACF Project Funded by DFID.

Deloitte (2008b) 'Capacity Study of Islamic Relief'. Report to Sida.

Department for International Development (2007) *Zimbabwe Protracted Relief Programme Overview*, Briefing Note 1.

Development Initiatives (2009a) *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2009*. Wells: Development Initiatives.

Development Initiatives (2009b) *Public Support for Humanitarian Crises through NGOs*. Wells: Development Initiatives.

Diagne, K. and Solberg, A. (2008) 'Lessons Learned from UNHCR's Emergency Operation for Internally Displaced Persons in Kenya'. UNHCR.

Dolan, C. and Hovil, L. (2006) *Humanitarian Protection in Uganda: A Trojan Horse?* Background Paper. London: HPG, ODI.

Donini, A. (2009) *Afghanistan: Humanitarianism Under Threat*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

Donini, A., Fast, L., Hansen, G., Minear, L., Mowjee, T. and Wilder, A. (2008) *The State of the Humanitarian Enterprise*. Humanitarian Agenda 2015. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

Duffield, M., Diagne, K and Tennant, V. (2008) *Evaluation of UNHCR's returnee reintegration programme in southern Sudan*, UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service.

ECB (2007) 'Impact Measurement and Accountability in Emergencies: The Good Enough Guide'. ECB Project.

ECHO (2008) *Methodology for the Identification of Priority Countries for the European Commission Humanitarian Aid*, 'GNA and FCA'. Technical Note. Brussels: ECHO.

ECHO (2009) *Operational Strategy 2009*. Brussels: ECHO.

ELHRA (2009) 'Professionalising the Humanitarian Sector: A Scoping Study'. Terms of Reference.

El-Tayeb, M., Scott, I., Hutton, J., Ievers, J. and Sandison, P. (2008) 'Learning about Transition Programming in Aceh and Nias: Drivers and Inhibitors of Transition from Emergency to Recovery and Development in Oxfam International's Aceh and Nias Programme'. Report to Oxfam.

EPN (2004) Managing and developing nationally recruited staff – aiming for equity, Sixth Emergency Personnel Network Seminar.

Featherstone, A., Hart, K., Thurstans, S., Khen, S.I., Durnian, T., Khin Maung Lwin, U., Porteaud, D., Shahi, D., Goby, B. and Chaimontree, A. (2009) 'Evaluation of the Save the Children response to Cyclone Nargis'. For Save the Children.

Ferris, E. (2008) *The Looming Crisis: Displacement and Security in Iraq*. Policy Paper 5. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute.

Foley, C. (2007) *Mozambique: A Case Study in the Role of the Affected State in Humanitarian Action*. HPG Working Paper. London: HPG, ODI.

Folke, S., Stepputat, F., Buur, F., Kyed, H., Inglês, P. and Wacussanga, J.P. (2008) *SDC Humanitarian Aid in Angola 1995–2006*. Bern: SDC.

Fritz Institute (2005) *Recipient perceptions of Aid Effectiveness: Rescue, Relief and Rehabilitation in Tsunami-affected Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka*. San Francisco, CA: Fritz Institute.

Fritz Institute (2006) *Surviving the Pakistan Earthquake: Perceptions of the Affected One Year Later*. San Francisco, CA: Fritz Institute.

Fritz Institute (2007a) *Recovering from the Java Earthquake: Perceptions of the Affected*. San Francisco, CA: Fritz Institute.

Fritz Institute (2007b) *The Immediate Response to the Java Tsunami: perceptions of the Affected*. San Francisco, CA: Fritz Institute.

Frize, J. (2008) *Targeting in Complex Emergencies: Colombia Country Case Study*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

Gaebler, M. (2008) 'Youth Resettlement from Urban and Mining Areas to Their Villages of Origin'. Report to GTZ on the social impact and implications for sustainable peace building.

Gassser, G. (2008) *Lebanon: Crisis of Civilian Protection*. Madrid: DARA.

GHP (2007) 'Principles of Partnership'. www.globalhumanitarianplatform.org/pop/html.

Girerd-Barclay, E. (2007) *Full Report of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Southern Africa Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO 10310.0)*, World Food Programme, Evaluation Report

Global Protection Cluster Working Group (2008) *Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*. Geneva: OCHA.

Grunewald, F., Robins, K., Odicoh, A., Woldemariam, M., Nicholson, N. and Teshome, A. (2006) 'Real-time Evaluation of the Drought Response in the Horn of Africa'. Regional Synthesis.

Hansen, G. (2008a) *Adapting to Insecurity in Iraq*. Briefing Paper 1. NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq.

Hansen, G. (2008b) *Operational Modalities in Iraq*. Briefing Paper 2. NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq.

Hansen, G. (2008c) *Personnel Management in Iraq*. Briefing Paper 3. NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq.

Hansen, G. (2008d) *Interactions between Aid and Conflict in Iraq*. Briefing Paper 4. NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq.

Hansen, G. (2008e) *Humanitarian–Military Interactions in Iraq*. Briefing Paper 5. NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq.

Hansen, G. (2008f) *Perceptions of Humanitarianism in Iraq*. Briefing Paper 6. NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq.

Hansen, G. (2008g) *Taking Sides or Saving lives: Existential Choices for the Humanitarian Enterprise in Iraq*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

HAP International (2008) *The 2008 Humanitarian Accountability Report*. London: HAP.

HAP International (2008) *The Guide to the HAP Standard*. London: Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management.

HAP International (2009) 'The HAP Newsletter'. June.

Harmer, A. and Basu Ray, D. (2009) *Study on the Relevance and Applicability of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in Humanitarian Assistance*, Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute, Commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Harnmeijer, J. and Meeux, W. (2007) 'An Evaluation of DG ECHO-financed Activities in the Health Sector'. Report to ECHO.

Harvey, P. (2004) *HIV/AIDS and Humanitarian Action*. HPG Report 14. London: HPG, ODI.

Harvey, P. (2007) *Cash based responses in emergencies*, HPG Report 24, Overseas Development Institute.

Harvey, P. et al (2007) *Social Protection in Fragile States*, a report for DFID.

Harvey, P. (2009a) 'Strategic Evaluation of WFP's Approach to Livelihoods Recovery'. Report for the WFP. London: ODI.

Harvey, P. (2009b) *Towards Good Humanitarian Government: The Role of the State in Disaster Response*. HPG Report 28. London: HPG, ODI.

Harvey, P. (2009c) *EC and US Approaches to Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development: A case study on South Sudan*, Raising the Bar Case Study, Global Policy Institute.

Harvey, P., Harmer, A., Stoddard, A. and Taylor, G. (2009) *Revised Inception paper for State of the System Review*. London: Overseas Development Institute: available at: http://www.alnap.org/pool/files/inception-report.pdf (accessed 8th December 2009).

Haver, K., Hatungimana, F. and Tennant, V. (2009) 'Money Matters: An Evaluation of the Use of Cash Grants in UNHCR's Voluntary Repatriation and Reintegration Programme in Burundi'. UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service.

Hidalgo, S. (2008) *Colombia: A Crisis Concealed*. Madrid: DARA.

Houghton, R. (2007) *Surge capacity in the humanitarian relief and development sector*, People In Aid.

Hoyer, B. (2009) 'Lessons from Sichuan: The Role of the State in the Aftermath of the Wenchuan Earthquake'. Consultancy Report.

HPG (2009) *A Clash of Principles? Humanitarian Action and the Search for Stability in Pakistan*. HPG Policy Brief 36. London: HPG, ODI.

HRI (2009) *The Humanitarian Response Index 2008: Donor Accountability in Humanitarian Action*. Madrid: DARA.

ICRC (2008) *Annual report 2007*, International Committee of the Red Cross.

ICRC (2009a) *Professional standards for protection work carried out by humanitarian and human rights actors in armed conflict and other situations of violence*. Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross.

ICRC (2009b) *Summary Report: Afghanistan, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Georgia, Haiti, Lebanon, Liberia and the Philippines, Opinion Survey*. Geneva: International Committee of the Red Cross.

IDMC (2009) *Internal Displacement: Global Overview of Trends and Developments in 2008*. Geneva: IDMC.

IFRC (2007a) *The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement At a Glance*. Geneva: IFRC.

IFRC (2007b) *Law and Legal Issues in International Disaster Response: A Desk Study*. Geneva: IFRC.

IFRC (2008a) 'Red Cross/Red Crescent Emergency Responses in 2004-2008'. Unpublished data report.

IFRC (2008b) 'Introduction to the Guidelines for the Domestic Facilitation and Regulation of International Disaster Relief and Recovery Assistance'. Geneva: IFRC.

IFRC (2009a) *Rainy Season in West and Central Africa: The IFRC's Early Warning, Early Action System in Practice*. Geneva: IFRC.

IFRC (2009b) *Review of Strategy 2010: Summary*, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

INTRAC (2007) *Support to Tsunami-affected Countries: A Value for Money Review*. Irish Aid.

IPC (2008) *Factsheet and update on activities*, Integrated Food Security Phase Classification.

IRIN (2007) 'Ghana: Nearly 275,000 Affected by Floods in Little-known Disaster'. Available at: http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=74278 (accessed 8th December 2009).

Jacobs, A. and Wilford, R. (2008) 'Listen First: Practical Ways of Improving Accountability for NGOs'. Report to Concern and Mango.

Jaspars, S. and Maxwell, D. (2008) *Targeting in Complex Emergencies: Somalia Country Case Study*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Centre, Tufts University.

Johnson, D. (2008) 'The Impact of Catholic Relief Services Aceh Reconstruction Program'. Report to CRS.

Johnson, E. (2008) *Principled Pragmatism: NGO Engagement with Armed Actors*. New York: World Vision.

Jones, B., Gowan, R. and Sherman, J. (2009) *Building on Brahimi: Peacekeeping in an Era of Strategic Uncertainty*. New York: NYU Centre on International Cooperation.

Jones, S., Matiza, G., Mlalazi, B. and Wiggins, S. (2006) *Zimbabwe Protracted Relief Programme: Output to Purpose Review*. Available at: http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/1267.pdf (accessed 8th December 2009).

JRS (2007) 'Six Months after the Official Closure of the IDP Camps'. Assessment of the return process in Liberia.

Kelly, T. and White, C. (2006) *The UN Response to the Lebanon Crisis*. Lesson Learning Paper. Geneva: OCHA.

Kett, M. (2007) 'Emergency and Humanitarian Assistance and the UN Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities'. IDDC Task Group on Conflict & Emergencies.

Kett, M., Stubbs, S. and Yeo, R. (2005) 'Disability in Conflict and Emergency Situations: Focus on Tsunami-affected Areas'. IDDC research report submitted to KaR Disability Programme.

Kirsch-Wood, J. and Amirova, S. (2008) *ICLA in Azerbaijan – Counseling for Change*. Oslo: NRC.

Kirkby, S. and Rose, J. (2007) 'Going Home: Making a Life after Conflict'. NRC Evaluation Report. ETC-UK.

Lakeman, C. (2008) Oxfam GB review of findings from real-time evaluations (2006–2008) final report, Oxfam.

Lattu, K. (2008) 'To Complain or Not To Complain: Still the Question'. Consultations with humanitarian aid beneficiaries on their perceptions of efforts to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse.

Lavell, A. (2008) 'Evaluation of DIPECHO Action Plans in Central America (1998-2007)'. Madrid: DARA.

Levine, S. and Chastre, C. (2004) *Missing the Point: An Analysis of Food Security Interventions in the Great Lakes*. HPN Network Paper 47. London: HPN, ODI.

Mahoney, K. and Bellour, S. (2009) *National Capacity Development for Humanitarian Action – Case Studies*. New York: UNICEF.

Martone, G. (2009) *The Pentagon as development agency: the US military's increasing role as an aid provider*, Monday Developments, Vol. 27, No. 8.

Maxwell, D. and Burns J. (2008) *Targeting in Complex Emergencies: South Sudan Case study*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

Maxwell, D., Walker, P., Church, C., Harvey, P., Savage, K., Bailey, S., Hees, R., and Ahlendorf, M-L. (2008) *Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Assistance: Final research report*, Feinstein International Centre, Transparency International, Overseas Development Institute.

Maxwell, D., Sim, A, Mutonyi, M and Egan, R. (2008) *Emergency Food Security Interventions*. Good Practice Review. London: HPN, ODI.

McKune, S. (2007) 'Evaluation of CAFOD's Organizational Response to Niger's 2005 Food Crisis'. Report to CAFOD.

Medair (2008) *Beneficiary Accountability Update for 2008: Medair Uganda*. Kampala: Medair.

Morris, M. and Shaughnessy, D. (2007) 'Emergency Capacity Building Project: Final Evaluation Report'. Report to ECB by Social Impact Inc.

Mowjee, T. (2009) 'NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project'. Presentation on key messages on humanitarian reform and funding at the Montreux Humanitarian Donorship Retreat, 1 March.

MSF (2009) Trapped and Without Hope: The People of Northeast DRC pay a High Price in an Interminable Conflict. Briefing Paper. Brussels: MSF.

Narhan, J. (2008) World Vision LMMS Bridging Proposal.

Navarro-Colorado, C. (2007) 'A Retrospective Study of Emergency Supplementary Feeding Programmes'. Report to ENN and Save the Children.

Navarro-Colorado, C., Mason, F. and Shoham, J. (2008) *Measuring the Effectiveness of Supplementary Feeding Programmes in Emergencies*. HPN Network Paper 63. London: HPN, ODI.

Nicholson, N., Majid, N., Cossée, O., Gebru, H., Mutale, M. and Asingwire, N. (2007) 'Evaluation of the FAO Emergency and Rehabilitation Assistance in the Greater Horn of Africa (2004-2007)'. Report to the FAO.

NRC (2004) *Handbook on Information Counselling, Legal Assistance*. Oslo: NRC.

O'Callaghan, S. and Pantuliano, S. (2007) *Protection Action: Incorporating Civilian Protection into Humanitarian Response*. HPG Report 26. London: HPG, ODI.

O'Callaghan, S., Jaspars, S. and Pavanello, S. (2009) *Losing Ground: Protection and Livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory*. HPG Working Paper. London: HPG, ODI.

OCHA (2008) *OCHA Annual Report 2008*. Geneva: OCHA.

OCHA (2009) 'Mapping of Key Emergency Needs Assessment and Analysis Initiatives'. Final report, Assessment and Classification of Emergencies Project.

ODI (2009) *Trends in Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance: A Review of Policy and Practice*. London: ODI.

OECD DAC (1999) *Guidance for Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies*. Paris: OECD DAC.

Oxfam (2009a) 'Rape, Forced Labour, Reprisal Attacks and Torture Surge in Eastern Congo, Says New Oxfam Survey'. Press Release.

Oxfam (2009b) *Collaboration in Crises: Lessons in Community Participation from the Oxfam International Tsunami Research Programme*. Oxford: Oxfam.

Pantuliano, S., Buchanan-Smith, M., Murphy, P. and Mosel, I. (2008) *The long road home: Opportunities and obstacles to the reintegration of IDPs and refugees returning to Southern Sudan and the Three Areas*, HPG Commissioned Reports Synthesis paper. London: Overseas Development Institute.

PHR (2009) 'Nowhere to Turn: Failure to Protect, Support and Assure Justice for Darfuri Women'. Report by PHR in partnership with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative.

People In Aid (2007) *Save the Children – Building Capacity for Emergency Response*, Emergency Capacity Building Project 'Case study of good practice'.

Proudlock, K. and Ramalingam, B. (2009) *Improving humanitarian impact assessment: bridging theory and practice*, ALNAP 8th Review of Humanitarian Action. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Ramalingam, B., Scriven, K. and Foley, C. (2009a) *Innovations in International Humanitarian Action*, ALNAP 8th Review of Humanitarian Action. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Ramalingam, B. and Mitchell, J. (2009b) *Counting what counts: performance and effectiveness in the humanitarian sector*, ALNAP 8th Review of Humanitarian Action. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Refugees International (2009) 'Pakistan: Invisible People, Visible Consequences'. Field Report.

Rehmat, A. (2006) *Building Media Capacities to Improve Disaster Response: Lessons from Pakistan*. Humanitarian Exchange Issue 34. London: HPN, ODI.

Rothkegel, S., Poluda, J., Wonani, C., Papy, J., Engelhardt-Wendt, E., Weyermann, B. and Hennig, R. (2008) 'Evaluation of UNHCR's Efforts to Prevent and Respond to Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Situations of Forced Displacement'. For UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Services.

Savage, K. (2007) *Corruption perceptions and risks in humanitarian assistance: a Liberia case study*, HPG Working Paper. London: Overseas Development Institute

Savage, K., with Maxim Kumeh, D. and Dorbor, E. (2007) *Corruption Perceptions and Risks in Humanitarian Assistance: A Liberia Case Study*. HPG Working Paper. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Save the Children and People In Aid (2007) 'Building Capacity for Emergency Response'. ECB Project Case Study of Good Practice.

Scheumer-Cross, T. and Taylor, B. (2009) *The Right to Survive: The Humanitarian Challenge for the Twenty-first Century*. Oxford: Oxfam Professional.

Schiman, P. and Philpott, J. (2007) 'Mid-term Evaluation of DG ECHO Financed Actions in the Greater Horn of Africa'. Report to ECHO by AGEG Consultants.

SEEP (2007) *Market Development in Crisis-affected Environments: Emerging Lessons for Achieving Pro-poor Economic Reconstruction*. Washington, DC: The SEEP Network.

SEEP (2009) *Minimum Standards for Economic Recovery After Crisis*. Washington, DC: The SEEP Network.

Shoham, J. (2007) 'Mid-term Evaluation of PRRO 10362.0: Enabling Livelihood Protection and Promotion in Ethiopia'. World Food Programme

Simkin, P., Makotsi, B., Njoroge, M., Oman, A., Velis, J-P. and Marzilli, J. (2008) *Evaluation of Kenya Emergency Operation 10374.0 and Country Programme 10264.0 (2004–2008)*, A report commissioned by the Office of Evaluation, World Food Programme.

Slater, R. and Dana, J. (2006) *Tackling vulnerability to hunger in Malawi through market-based options contracts*, Humanitarian Exchange 33, Overseas Development Institute.

Slim, H. (2007) 'White Toyota, White Aid'. Blog. Available at: www.alertnet.org/db/blogs/12926/2007/03/5-144255-1.htm (accessed 8th December 2009).

Slim, H. and Bonwick, A. (2005) *Protection: An ALNAP Guide for Humanitarian Agencies*. London: ALNAP, ODI.

Sole, R. (2008) *Haiti: Violence, Gangs and a Fragile State on the Brink of Crisis*. Madrid: DARA.

Spaak, M. And Otto, R. (2009) *Study on the mapping of donor coordination (humanitarian aid) at the field level*, Commissioned by DG ECHO on behalf of the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative.

Sperl, S., Diagne, K. and Snider, D. (2006) *Real time evaluation of UNHCR's response to the emergency in Lebanon and Syria*, July-September 2006, UNHCR Policy Development and Evaluation Service.

Stites, E. and Akabwai, D. (2009) *Changing roles, shifting risks: livelihood impacts of disarmament in Karamoja, Uganda*, Feinstein International Center.

Stoddard, A. (2008) 'International Humanitarian Financing: Review and Comparative Assessment of Instruments'. Study for the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance, Humanitarian Outcomes.

Stoddard, A. and Harmer, A. (2009) 'Operational Consequences of Reform, Updated Financial Analysis: June, 2009'. Unpublished paper for HPG, ODI.

Stoddard, A., Harmer, A. and DiDomenico, V. (2009) *Providing Aid in Insecure Environments: 2009 Update. Trends in Violence against Aid Workers and the Operational Response: Why Violent Attacks on Aid Workers Are on the Increase*. London: HPG, ODI.

Stoddard, A., Harmer, A. and Haver, K. (2006) *Providing Aid in Insecure Environments: Trends in Policy and Operations*. London: ODI.

Stoddard, A., Harmer, A., Haver, K., Salomons, D. and Wheeler, V. (2007) *Cluster Approach Evaluation Report*, OCHA Evaluation and Studies Section.

Swords, A. (2006) 'Establishing the Learning Needs of National Staff in Emergency Response Results of Learning Needs Survey'. For the ECB Project.

Tearfund (2008) 'Accountability to Beneficiaries in Kashmir'. Available at: www.hapinternational.org/pool/files/tearfund-accountability-to-beneficiaries-in-kashmir.pdf (accessed 8th December 2009).

Telford, J., Cosgrave, J. and Houghton, R. (2006) *Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami: Synthesis Report*. London: Tsunami Evaluation Coalition.

Telyukov, A. and Paterson, M. (2009) 'Impact Evaluation of PRM Humanitarian Assistance to the Repatriation and Reintegration of Burundi Refugees'. US Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

Ternstrom, B. (2008) 'Evaluation of CARE Myanmar's Cyclone Nargis Response'. Report to CARE.

Thomson, E. (2008) *HISS-CAM: A decision making tool*, World Vision.

Tod, I., Nurul Alam, S. M., Wahra, N., Hoque, T. and Begum, R. (2008) 'Independent Evaluation of CARE Bangladesh's Cyclone Sidr Response Programme'. Report to CARE.

Turner, R., Baker, J., Oo, Z. M. and Aye, N. S. (2008) *Inter-Agency Real Time Evaluation of the Response to Cyclone Nargis*. Geneva: OCHA, on behalf of IASC.

Twigg, J. (2004) *Disaster Risk Reduction: Mitigation and Preparedness*, Humanitarian Practice Network, Good Practice Review 9.

UN (2009) *Humanitarian Appeal 2009: Mid-year Review*. New York: United Nations.

UNHCR (2009) 'Gutierres Says UNHCR and NGO Partners Must Face Challenges Together'. Geneva: UNHCR.

UNHCR (2008) *Global Needs Assessment, Pilot Report*. Geneva: UNHCR.

UNICEF (2007) Summary Review of Lessons Learned in the Southern Africa Crisis Humanitarian Response, 2003-2005. New York: UNICEF.

UNICEF (2008) 'Towards Implementing a Human Rights-based Approach to Programming in Humanitarian Action'. Draft, August.

UNICEF (2009) 'UNICEF Humanitarian Action Report 2009. Mid-year Review. New York: UNICEF.

UNISDR (2005) *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015. Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*. Geneva: UNISDR.

UNISDR (2009) *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*. Geneva: UNISDR.

UN Secretary-General (2009a) 'Report of the Secretary-General on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict'. Report to the Security Council, 29 May.

UN Secretary-General (2009b) 'Strengthening of the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations'. Report of the Secretary-General to the 64th Session of the General Assembly, 28 May.

USAID (2007) *Accelerating the Transition from Conflict to Sustainable Growth: Value Chain Development in Conflict-affected Environments*. Washington, DC: USAID.

Vaux, T. (2008) *Proportion and Distortion in Humanitarian Assistance*, in ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action: Evaluation Utilisation. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Walden, V. (2008) 'Evaluation of Oxfam's Response to Hurricane Dean in Three Countries of the ESC'. Report to Oxfam.

Walden, V. M., Emsley, R. and Beesley, J. (2006) 'Real Time Evaluation Report – Lebanon Crisis Response'. Report to Oxfam.

Walden, V., Briere, J.-F. and Kumar, P. (2008) 'Real Time Evaluation of Oxfam International's Response to Cyclone Sidr'. Report to Oxfam.

Walker, P. and Pepper, K. (2007) *Follow the Money: A Review and Analysis of the State of Humanitarian Funding*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

Wall, I. (2008) *Left in the Dark: The Unmet Need for Information in Humanitarian Responses*. BBC World Service Trust Policy Briefing 2, October.

Watson, C. (2008) *Impact Assessment of Humanitarian Response: A Review of the Literature*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

Watson, C. and Catley A. (2008) *Livelihoods, livestock and humanitarian response: the livestock emergency guidelines and standards*, HPN Network Paper 64, Humanitarian Practice Network. London: Overseas Development Institute.

Webster, M., Ginnetti, J., Walker, P., Coppard, D. and Kent, R. (2008) *The Humanitarian Costs of Climate Change*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

Webster, M. and Walker, P. (2009) *One for All and All for One: Intra-organisational Dynamics in Humanitarian Action*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

WFP (2005), *Pilot development project – Ethiopia drought insurance*, Executive Board, Projects for Executive Board Approval.

WFP (2008) *WFP Strategic Plan (2008–2011)*. Rome: WFP.

WFP (2008b) *Vouchers and Cash Transfers as Food Assistance Instruments: Opportunities and Challenges*. Policy Issues. Rome: WFP.

Wheeler, V. And Harmer, A. (2006) *Resetting the rules of engagement: trends and issues in military–humanitarian relations*, HPG Report 21, Overseas Development Institute.

Whiteside, A. and Whalley, A. (2007) *Reviewing Emergencies for Swaziland: Shifting the Paradigm in the New Era*. Mbabana: NERCHA and HEARD.

WHO (2005) *Disasters, Disability and Rehabilitation*. Geneva: WHO.

Wilder, A. (2008) 'Perceptions of the Pakistan Earthquake Response'. Humanitarian Agenda 2015, Pakistan Country Study. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

Wilderspin, I. (2008) 'Evaluation of Disaster Risk Reduction Mainstreaming in DG ECHO's Humanitarian Actions'. Report to ECHO by Aquaconsult Ltd.

Willitts-King, B. (2007) *Evaluation of Common/Pooled Humanitarian Funds in DRC and Sudan*. OCHA Evaluation and Studies Section.

Wilson, P. and Reilly, D. (2007) 'CARE, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children and World Vision Indonesia: Joint Evaluation of their Responses to the Yogyakarta Earthquake'. Report to ECB Project.

World Vision (2008) *Why Do Accountability? A Business Case from Sri Lanka*. New York: World Vision.

World Vision (2009) *Real Time Learning on the Category III, Level II Sichuan Earthquake Emergency Response*. Beijing: World Vision China.

Young, H. and Maxwell, D. (2009) *Targeting in Complex Emergencies: Darfur Case Study*. Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University.

Young, H., Osman, A., Abusin, A., Asher, M. and Egemi, O. (2009) *Livelihoods, Power, and Choice: The Vulnerability of the Northern Rizaygat, Darfur, Sudan*, Feinstein International Center.

Young, N., Khattak, S.G., Bengali, K. and Elmi, L. (2007) *IASC Inter-agency Real-time Evaluation of the Pakistan Floods/Cyclone Yemin*.

3 | List of interviewees

Cristina Amaral, FAO
Kitty Arie, Save the Children
Eric-Alain Ategbo, UNICEF
Nicki Bennett, Oxfam
Miguel Bermeo, UNDP
Chija Bhandari, WFP
Monica Blagescu, HAP International
Richard Blewitt, HelpAge
Nelson Bosch, IOM
Gary Burniske, Mercy Corps
Andrew Catley, Feinstein International Center
Joel Charny, Refugees International
Hakim Chkam, MSF Switzerland
Harriet Cochrane, MSF
Jane Cocking, Oxfam
Bruce Cogill, UNICEF
Alex Coissac, IOM
Beverley Collins, MSF
Steve Collins, Valid International
Andrew Cox, OCHA
Matt Croucher, Save the Children
Dominic Crowley, Concern
Alison Cupit, Fiji Red Cross
John Damerell, Sphere Project
Steve Darvill, OECD DAC
Daniele Donati, FAO
Linda Doull, Merlin
Marc DuBois, MSF UK
Daniel Duvillard, ICRC
Nicholas Finney, Save the Children
Bekele Geleta, IFRC
Louis-Georges Arsenault, UNICEF
Scott Green, OCHA
Iwan Gunawan, World Bank
Azwar Hasan, FBA
Thea Hilhorst, Wageningen University
Anne Holmes, Irish Aid
Monowar Hossain, Government of Bangladesh
Jamo Huddle, World Vision
Rod Imer, World Vision
Rashid Khalikov, OCHA
General Farooq Ahmad Khan, Government of Pakistan
Iris Krebber, Welthungerhilfe
John Lakeman, ECHO
Emma Leonard, Irish Aid
Mikael Lindvall, Sida
Joanna Macrae, DFID
Eleanor Monbiot, World Vision
Jemilah Mahmood, Mercy Malaysia
Mario Lito Malanca, IOM
Simon Mechale, WFP
Dr. N. Vinod Chandra Menon, Government of India
Steven Michel, UNICEF
Abdullahi Mohamud, Mercy Corps
Mary Mwale, Government of Kenya
Mamadou Ndiaye, OFADEC
Reiseal Ni Cheilleachair, Concern
Abdi Rashid Hadi Nur, Concern
Jerome Oberreit, MSF
Lisebeth Pilegaard, NRC
Jean-Luc Poncelet, PAHO
Eddy Purwanto, Government of Indonesia
Dr. J. Radhakrishnan, UNDP
Manumur Rashid, Government of Bangladesh
Ian Rector, CDMP, Bangladesh
Antje van Roeden, ICRC
Anas Roudie, UNHCR
Tullio Santini, UNDP
Graham Saunders, IFRC
Ivan Scott, Oxfam
Lewis Sida, Consultant
Nicholas Stockton, HAP International
Ros O'Sullivan, Concern
Gareth Owen, Save the Children
Michael Paratarayil, Christian Aid
Rein Paulsen, World Vision
Louise Searle, World Vision
Vicky Tenant, UNHCR
Deepesh Paul Thakar, World Vision
Sid Peruvemba, Malteser International
Prashan Thalayasingam, CEPA
Nigel Timmins, Tearfund
Fred Vignoud, Save the Children
Peter Walker, Feinstein International Centre
Carol Ward, Mercy Corps
John Webster, DFID UK
Sonali Wickrema, WFP
Jennifer Worrell, UNDP
Randall Zinder, MedAir

4 | Survey results report and questionnaire

Background/methodology

The web-based survey was designed to complement the other research components, allowing the study to reach greater numbers of practitioners and stakeholders than was possible through interviews alone. It was also aimed at field actors specifically, rounding out the largely headquarters-based interview subjects with a broader perspective. A series of mostly closed-ended questions was structured along the study framework, with the purpose of collecting quantifiable data on the chosen indicators. With the help of the Advisory Board, the survey was disseminated to potential respondents in INGOs, UN agencies, local and national LNGOs and CBOs in host countries, regional organisations, donor government offices and host governments. The original target of 300 responses (three times the number of interviews) was revised upwards to 500 after a greater than anticipated response rate. The following highlights key findings from the analysis of responses.

Response profile

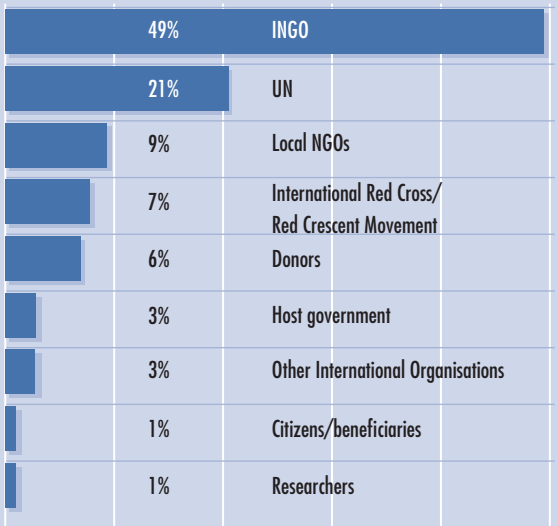
The survey garnered a total of 499 complete responses. In numbers roughly proportionate to their operational field presence in humanitarian programming, most respondents were INGO staff (48%), followed by UN agency staff (21%) and LNGO and CBO representatives (9%). The remaining respondents were made up of representatives from the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (7%), donor governments (6%), host governments (3%), host country citizens (1%) and researchers/academics (1%). In the regional breakdown of field-based responses, most emanated from Africa (42%), followed in descending order by Asia, the Americas, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

Summary of general findings

Taken as a whole, responses to the survey reveal two simultaneous and opposing trends in the humanitarian system. On the one hand, on nearly every performance criterion the responses suggest a trend of modest improvement (with only small minorities suggesting that certain measures had greatly improved and an even smaller minority saying that things had markedly worsened). On the negative side, however, there was a clear perception among field actors that humanitarian response remained insufficiently funded and lacking in effective leadership, and was losing ground in terms of humanitarian access and coverage of needs. The survey results thus paint a picture of a system steadily and incrementally improving its own internal mechanics and performance, while at the same time deficient in the big picture requirements for effectiveness.

Regarding developments in inter-agency coordination mechanisms, as much as they add to staff time and administrative burdens, they were on the whole judged to be worth it. However, overarching leadership for coordination was a noted weakness.

Composition of survey respondents



According to a plurality of respondents, the number one problem or challenge facing humanitarian operations was 'poorly coordinated response efforts/ lack of effective leadership'.

Individual findings

Coverage/sufficiency

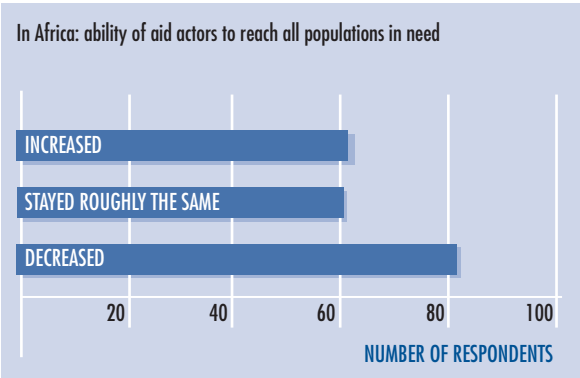
A number of questions related to perceptions of funding sufficiency and access to populations in need, and how these aspects have changed over the past two to three years. In terms of funding, solid majorities across the board in each of the regions deemed funding insufficient to meet the needs of their given context, but fewer than 10% indicated that funding levels fell 'far below the needs'. About a third of respondents found that funding was generally sufficient. There was even greater dissatisfaction on the level of funding for the respondents' individual sectors.

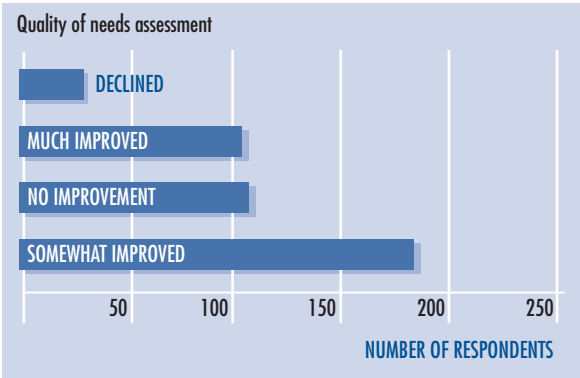
In terms of humanitarian access and coverage, a plurality of respondents working in Africa and the Middle East indicated that the ability to reach populations in need had declined over the past two to three years (for reasons mainly to do with rising insecurity in certain contexts). In Asia and the Americas, most respondents deemed the level of humanitarian access to have stayed roughly the same.

Relevance/appropriateness

Needs assessment

This question sought to determine the prevalence of coordinated (multi-agency) needs assessments in humanitarian settings, and their general quality. Respondents from a majority of field settings indicated that a coordinated needs assessment had been undertaken, that the quality of assessment was 'adequate' and that their organisations for the most part had participated. However, 27% of respondents indicated that no joint needs assessment had taken place in their setting, and 10% said that the needs assessment was of poor quality, i.e. it did not result in an accurate reflection or prioritisation of needs. Only a very small minority (under 1%) characterised the needs assessment as of very high quality. Negative views on quality of needs assessments were seen particularly in Latin American/Caribbean. A majority of respondents overall and in each of the individual regions indicated that needs assessment quality had improved 'somewhat' over the past two to three years, with the most improvement seen in Latin America/ Caribbean and the least in the Middle East.



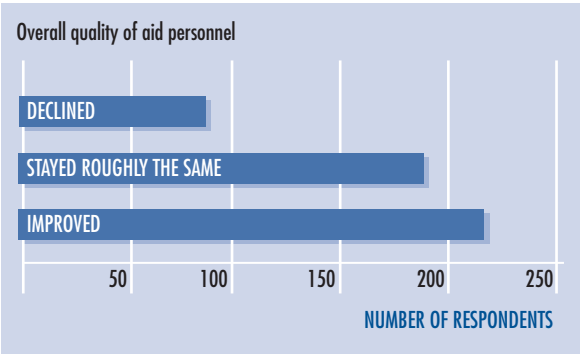


Effectiveness

Preparedness and timeliness of response
A majority (62%) of respondents indicated that their organisation possessed emergency reserve funding that had (or could have been) used to begin operations in advance of donor emergency grants. On this score, the highest level of preparedness was seen among INGOs and the International Movement of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, and the lowest among LNGOs, where the majority possessed no reserve funding.

Most respondents felt that the overall timeliness of humanitarian actors in emergency response had improved. This was particularly the case in the Latin America/Caribbean region.

Quality and management of aid personnel
Assessments of the deployment of 'appropriately skilled staff' as a particular component of timeliness were somewhat less positive, although they still indicated an overall improvement. In a separate question, the overall quality of aid workers in the field was seen overall to have improved, but not by enthusiastic majorities. No marked improvement was cited in headquarters support and guidance to field staff.



Performance and programme quality
Overall among the sectors examined, food aid and logistics/coordination won the highest marks on average for performance. The lowest ranking sectors in terms of performance were agriculture, protection and early recovery.

When ranking their own sector of work, respondents cited prioritisation/appropriateness and participation of local authorities as the strongest aspect (with a fair-to-good rating) and cited participation of beneficiaries as the weakest.

Overall, most respondents felt that the quality of project monitoring and evaluation had improved (the exception was in the Latin America/Caribbean region, where respondents felt the level of quality had stayed roughly the same).

Coordination effectiveness
Coordination was ranked on average just under fair/adequate in the sector performance assessments by respondents. Regarding leadership from the HC's office, most respondents indicated that leadership quality had stayed roughly the same, except in the Middle East, where most noted a decline.

Connectedness

Beneficiary input
Beneficiaries were seen to have far less than adequate participation in programming (i.e. planning, design and evaluation of projects). Interestingly, however, beneficiary populations' access to information about aid operations and their ability to complain and seek redress was seen to have increased overall, and in all regions except the Middle East.

Other questions aimed at measuring connectedness had to do with capacity building and engagement with local civil society and authorities.

Capacity building and participation of local civil society

Solid majorities in all regions found that capacity building efforts had increased in the past two to three years.

In all regions except the Middle East, respondents said that coordination meetings were typically held in or provided translation to the national language.

A plurality of respondents cited an increase in the direct funding of local organisations by international donors.

Interaction/cooperation with host country authorities

When assessing how well the international aid community had interacted with host government authorities, the majority of respondents gave a rating of 'Fair: International organisations reached out actively to national authorities, but weak capacity prevented their full participation'. On average, 21% actually pronounced this interaction 'Good: The national authorities were leading or heavily engaged in the response'. An almost equal number said it was 'Poor: There was weak participation and only minimal consultation of the national authorities by the international organisations'. Finally, 5% of respondents, primarily from Africa, answered 'N/A: There were no functional authority structures to engage with'.

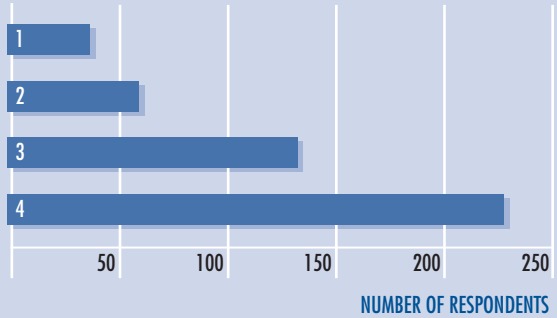
Efficiency

The survey sought to examine whether efficiencies have been gained or lost in the past two to three years, especially in light of new coordination mechanisms such as the Cluster Approach and pooled funds. Although all but a tiny minority of respondents confirmed the presence of transaction costs regarding coordination, the plurality of respondents felt that the coordination burden was 'not too high – benefits of coordination are worth the cost'. However, a sizable minority (roughly a third of respondents) indicated that coordination transaction costs were 'far too high – coordination detracts from programming'. Survey respondents from the Americas region seem to have the most positive attitude towards the cost of coordination; support was weakest in Africa.

Coherence

Although a complex and difficult topic to address in the form of a survey question, the survey also asked field actors to state their opinion on progress in respect for and adherence to IHL in humanitarian principles among different stakeholders. According to respondents, aid providers have made the most progress in respect for and adherence to IHL and humanitarian principles, whereas host governments have actually declined on this measure Donor governments come in the middle, with respondents, on average, citing a slight decline.

Transaction costs of humanitarian coordination (time spent in meetings, etc) on aid actors

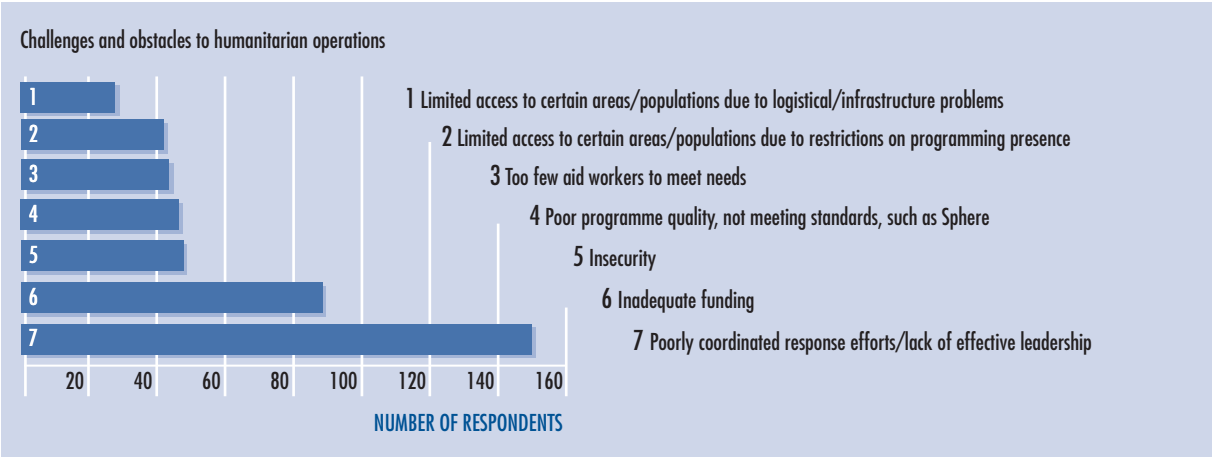


1 No significant transaction costs

2 Far too high – coordination detracts from programming

3 Too high – not worth the burden on the organisation

4 Not too high – the benefits of coordination are worth the cost



Sizable majorities in all regions, and particularly the Middle East, stated that their organisations' consideration of crosscutting issues, such as gender, age and disabilities, in their programming had increased and improved.

Continuing challenges

The survey concluded by asking respondents to choose the single most difficult obstacle or challenge regarding humanitarian operations at the current time. The results were consistent across regions, ranking the following challenges (in ascending order of difficulty).

Survey questions

1 Country/duty station where you work now (or formerly, if you are answering this survey based on a past emergency case)

2 Name of your organisation/institution

3 Institution type:

- ☐ Local/ national NGO or community-based organisation
- ☐ International NGO
- ☐ UN agency (or fund, program, office) involved in aid
- ☐ UN other
- ☐ ICRC
- ☐ IFRC
- ☐ Red Cross / Red Crescent Society
- ☐ Other international organization
- ☐ Regional intergovernmental organization
- ☐ National government (host government)
- ☐ Donor Government
- ☐ Host country citizen or beneficiary of aid efforts

4 The aid sector you work in primarily:

- ☐ All/Multisector (e.g. senior staff of a multi-mandated organization)
- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Coordination, Logistics, Support Services
- ☐ Economic Recovery and Infrastructure
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Food aid
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Mine Action
- ☐ Nutrition
- ☐ Protection/Human Rights/Rule of Law
- ☐ Security
- ☐ Emergency shelter and non-food relief items
- ☐ Water and Sanitation
- ☐ Other, please specify

Please answer the following questions only as they apply to your current job posting or the specific emergency case of your experience.

5 Did your organisation participate in a joint (inter-agency) needs assessment? If so, how would you assess its overall quality?

- ☐ No, there was no joint needs assessment
- ☐ No, there was a joint needs assessment, but we chose not to participate
- ☐ Yes we participated, and it was very good – resulted in an accurate reflection and prioritisation of needs
- ☐ Yes we participated, and it was adequate
- ☐ Yes we participated, but it was of poor quality
- ☐ Comments (optional)

6 In general, over the past 2 years how has needs assessment quality changed in your field setting?

- ☐ Much improved
- ☐ Somewhat improved
- ☐ No improvement
- ☐ Declined
- ☐ Comments (optional)

7 How would you rate overall funding for the emergency response?

- ☐ 4. More than sufficient
- ☐ 3. Sufficient
- ☐ 2. Insufficient
- ☐ 1. Far below the needs

8 How would you rate the overall funding resources for your sector?

- ☐ 4. More than sufficient
- ☐ 3. Sufficient
- ☐ 2. Insufficient – there were funding gaps
- ☐ 1. Far below the needs

9 In the past 2 years has the ability of humanitarian actors to reach all populations in need of assistance in your setting:

- ☐ Increased
- ☐ Decreased
- ☐ Stayed roughly the same
- ☐ Comments (optional)

10 Did your organisation have its own emergency reserve funds that were used in this emergency to begin operations in advance of new donor funding for response?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Comments (optional)

11 Please give your opinion of the overall performance (quality and coverage of programming) of the different sectors in your field setting by ranking them on a scale of 1–3. Leave blank if the sector was not relevant to the emergency or if you have no opinion.

1 Poor
2 Fair/adequate
3 Good

- ☐ Agriculture
- ☐ Coordination, Logistics, Support Services
- ☐ Economic Recovery and Infrastructure
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Health
- ☐ Mine Action
- ☐ Nutrition
- ☐ Protection / Human Rights / Rule of law
- ☐ Security
- ☐ Shelter and Non-food Items
- ☐ Water

12 For the specific sector that your work mainly involved, please give your opinion of how it worked in your setting regarding the following:

1 Poor
2 Fair/adequate
3 Good

- ☐ Timeliness in responding to the crisis
- ☐ Coordinated effort of multiple actors
- ☐ Participation and consultation of local authorities
- ☐ Participation of local civil society organisations (NGOs, CBOs, other)
- ☐ Prioritisation/appropriateness in addressing beneficiaries' most urgent needs
- ☐ Effectiveness in meeting goals
- ☐ Quality of performance and adherence to standards/best practices
- ☐ Participation of beneficiaries in design and assessment of programs

13 Compared to past years or other cases you have experienced, how has respect for/adherence to the core humanitarian principles of independence, impartiality, and neutrality by aid providers, donors, and host governments changed?

1 Decreased
2 Stayed roughly the same
3 Increased

- ☐ Aid providers
- ☐ Donors
- ☐ Host governments

14 Compared to past years or other cases you have experienced, has the quality of monitoring and evaluation, including the extent to which it involves beneficiaries and informs programming:

- ☐ Improved
- ☐ Declined
- ☐ Stayed roughly the same
- ☐ Comments (optional)

15 Overall quality of aid personnel – compared to past years or other cases you have experienced, have the number of aid workers with appropriate qualifications, skills, attitudes and experience to effectively plan and implement programmes:

- ☐ Improved
- ☐ Declined
- ☐ Stayed roughly the same
- ☐ Comments (optional)

16 Compared to past years or other cases you have experienced, has the extent to which field staff receive adequate support and supervision from their organisation:

- ☐ Improved
- ☐ Declined
- ☐ Stayed roughly the same
- ☐ Comments (optional)

17 Compared to past years or other cases you have experienced, how would you assess the timeliness of the overall response?

- ☐ Much improved
- ☐ Somewhat improved
- ☐ No improvement
- ☐ Declined
- ☐ Comments (optional)

18 Compared to past years or other cases you have experienced, how well prepared was your organisation for the emergency in terms of timely deployment of adequate numbers of appropriately skilled staff?

- ☐ Much improved
- ☐ Somewhat improved
- ☐ No improvement
- ☐ Declined
- ☐ Comments (optional)

19 Compared to past years or other cases you have experienced, has participation of local aid workers, organisations and authorities in the coordination of planning and project design:

- ☐ Increased
- ☐ Decreased
- ☐ Stayed roughly the same
- ☐ Comments (optional)

20 Compared to past years or other cases you have experienced, has your organisation programme's consideration of issues relating to gender, age and disability:

- ☐ Increased
- ☐ Decreased
- ☐ Stayed roughly the same
- ☐ Comments (optional)

21 Compared to past years or other cases you have experienced, has beneficiary populations' access to information about aid and their ability to complain about aid and seek redress:

- ☐ Increased
- ☐ Decreased
- ☐ Stayed roughly the same
- ☐ Comments (optional)

22 Compared to past years or other cases you have experienced, has support to capacity building for local actors:

- ☐ Increased
- ☐ Decreased
- ☐ Stayed roughly the same
- ☐ Comments (optional)

23 In your opinion how well did the international system respect and promote the role of local authorities in managing and coordinating the response?

- ☐ Good: The national authorities were leading or heavily engaged in the response
- ☐ Fair: International organisations reached out actively to national authorities, but weak capacity prevented their full participation
- ☐ Poor: There was weak participation and only minimal consultation of the national authorities by the international organisations
- ☐ N/A there were no functional authority structures to engage with
- ☐ Comments (optional)

24 To your knowledge have national/local NGOs in your field setting received direct grants from international donors (or the common funds)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

25 In your opinion, how has the level of direct funding to local/national NGOs changed over the past 2 years?

- ☐ Increased
- ☐ Decreased
- ☐ Stayed roughly the same

26 Are coordination meetings conducted in the national language of the country or with translation available for nationals?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

27 Regarding the 'transaction costs' of humanitarian coordination (time spent in meetings, additional reporting requirements, etc) for your organisation, in your opinion are they:

- ☐ Far too high – coordination detracts from programming
- ☐ Too high – not worth the burden on the organisation
- ☐ Not too high – the benefits of coordination are worth the cost
- ☐ No significant transaction costs
- ☐ Comments (optional)

28 Has the quality of leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinators office:

- ☐ Increased
- ☐ Decreased
- ☐ Stayed roughly the same
- ☐ Comments (optional)

29 In your opinion, what is the single most important problem hindering effective humanitarian response in your setting (select one):

- ☐ Too few aid workers to meet needs
- ☐ Poorly coordinated response efforts/lack of effective leadership
- ☐ Poor program quality, not meeting standards, such as Sphere
- ☐ Inadequate funding
- ☐ Insecurity (violence, crime)
- ☐ Limited access to certain areas/populations due to logistical/infrastructure problems
- ☐ Limited access to certain areas/populations due to restrictions on programming presence
- ☐ Other, please specify

30 In your opinion, over the last two years, has the overall performance of humanitarian aid efforts on saving lives and reducing suffering in your setting improved, declined or stayed roughly the same? Please use this space to share any final thoughts on the overall system.

The humanitarian system has a fundamental responsibility to continually assess its ability to save lives and alleviate human suffering. The IFRC, as a global network, shares many of the issues and challenges identified by this initiative. I welcome this report for its ambition to assess overall achievements on a regular basis and believe it will help individual organizations and networks to reflect on and improve their own performance. We have learned from our participation in the initiative and we hope it will continue to grow and strengthen over the years to come.

Bekele Geleta, Secretary General of the IFRC

I warmly welcome this first State of the Humanitarian System report because it shows deep commitment towards self improvement within the humanitarian system. I encourage this effort to be sustained over time so that it can gradually live up to its potential to further improve the quality of services provided by all humanitarian actors. The ICRC remains committed to lead its own self improvement and to contribute to that of the humanitarian system as a whole.

Angelo Gnaedinger, Director General of the ICRC

Thanks to the collective efforts by members of the humanitarian community over the past five years, the humanitarian system has made significant strides in becoming increasingly rapid, effective, and predictable. That said, much more still needs to be done. ALNAP's first State of the Humanitarian System report is unique in its scope and well researched. Findings such as these will contribute to the humanitarian community's collective efforts to take stock of where we stand, face up to global challenges, and to decide how we can make more difference to the lives of people affected by emergencies.

Sir John Holmes, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

This is a very important and timely initiative from ALNAP. Careful consideration of the analysis in this report has potential benefits for all actors in our humanitarian sector. Repeated, with improvements, the State of the Humanitarian System report can provide a useful regular indicator of the progress we will hopefully be making as a system.

Mikael Lindvall, Deputy Director and Head Section for Humanitarian policy and conflict issues, Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

ALNAP's State of the Humanitarian System report aims to assess the humanitarian system as a whole and analyse its performance over the last two years. This was an ambitious undertaking, but the results are impressive and require us, as humanitarian actors, to pause and reflect on our actions. Whilst progress is being made, we must find ways to improve our work with those who matter most: populations affected by conflicts and disasters.

While this report was not able to look at the considerable role of local NGOs and community based organisations, the first step has been taken, which can allow for a more extensive effort next time around. ALNAP has taken an essential step that will help us to better consider the work we are doing and to critically examine whether we are collectively performing well or not.

Paul O'Brien, Chair ICVA Executive Committee, Board Member of VOICE and Overseas Director Concern Worldwide