

BUILDING THE FUTURE OF HUMANITARIAN AID: LOCAL CAPACITY AND PARTNERSHIPS IN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

POVERTY

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Monthly food rations are distributed in a
refugee camp near Thailand's border with
Burma. Christian Aid's partner TBBC provides
the rations, but it is the refugees who run the
camps themselves and organise distribution

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A significant common message from the East Africa food crisis, Pakistan floods, Haiti earthquake and the 2004 tsunami – and almost every emergency in recent years – is that investment in building resilience, reducing disaster risk and strengthening local capacity to respond saves lives and speeds recovery.

In any emergency the first people to respond and give life-saving help are those affected by it. 'Friends and neighbours search through the rubble for loved-ones after earthquakes; local hospitals work through the night to care for the injured.'¹ In Kenya, for example, the church and national organisations have played a key role in managing drought risks and providing emergency relief in the face of the 2011 food crisis.

In some countries frequently affected by natural hazards, governments and local organisations have become adept at disaster prevention and response. Whether through local government, neighbourhood organisations, faith networks or NGOs, the reality is that a significant amount of humanitarian assistance is ultimately delivered by the citizens of disaster-affected countries themselves.

But local capacity, national government and civil society institutions can be undermined by humanitarian actors in the urgency to respond and the tight spending timeframes for humanitarian funds. Independent evaluations in 2007 of the tsunami response criticised the humanitarian sector for sidelining local capacity and organisations. 'The way in which the humanitarian sector is funded, by sudden inputs following public appeals, encourages an emphasis on rapid service delivery, exaggeration of the agencies' own importance and understatement of the role of local people.'²

National governments have primary responsibility for protecting citizens from preventable disasters and leading emergency response efforts. But while some are leading the way in preparedness and emergency response, others lack the necessary capacity or use their efforts in a partisan way.

Partnerships between international humanitarian agencies and local organisations – as part of government-led response plans – are an important way to reinforce local

leadership and deliver effective response in line with humanitarian principles. Where partnerships bring local knowledge and experience together with humanitarian expertise in a working relationship that is collaborative, risk-sharing and inclusive, they can deliver better emergency aid, and more resilient development in the long term.

But working through partnerships can only build on and benefit from local capacity when there is a genuine commitment to cooperation and shared responsibility. Learning from recent humanitarian responses suggests that partnerships between international aid agencies and southern organisations can often fall short of genuine supportive collaboration. Partnerships can be in name only and southern organisations can be treated simply as a pipeline for delivery, with little say in their work and little sense of sustainability or of shared learning and mutual accountability. Where investment in supporting local partners is not sufficient, then their ability to deliver responses to time and to the desired standard can be impaired.

Other challenges include how to make the partnership approach to emergency response help local organisations deliver to scale, proportionally balance risk and responsibility, and, crucially, how partnership approaches to response can be recognised and funded in a humanitarian sector that has historically favoured top-down operational working models.

This report looks at Christian Aid's own experience of working with local partners in disaster risk reduction (DRR), preparedness, emergency response and recovery. It draws on direct experience of partnership approaches to emergency work and its challenges, with examples from a range of emergency contexts, including India, the Philippines, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Malawi and Burma, and a detailed case study on Haiti. The report then builds on Christian Aid's experience of influencing progressive thinking on DRR and resilience and supporting local and national advocacy on disaster prevention and response to ask what these lessons mean for the wider humanitarian sector.

Ultimately, it is the changing external context that may be the greatest driver for the system to get its act together. With disasters increasing in scale and number, the international system is under ever-growing strain to mount effective and timely responses. The role of national civil society and governments will become more important. This will require changes in the way international humanitarian actors work that are far from trivial. These changes include 'adapting the ways in which international humanitarian action

In some countries frequently affected by natural hazards, governments and local organisations have become adept at disaster prevention and response.

is appealed for, financed, coordinated, staffed, assessed and delivered.’³ The need for greater partnerships and local capacities is slowly moving to the centre of the humanitarian policy debate. As the Ashdown review found in 2011:

‘...if the world is going to get better at the challenges [faced], then [international agencies] have to work with governments, and with affected people...they have to support local institutions rather than weaken them...’⁴

Delivering this fundamental reorientation of the humanitarian sector towards ‘supporting and facilitating communities’ own relief and recovery priorities’⁵ requires action on three levels:

- **Change in practice:** the humanitarian agencies should develop best practice on collaborative partnership approaches for disaster prevention and response that builds local capacity.
- **Change in global perspective:** the importance of DRR and emergency response to building resilience and development makes it central to global development and aid debates; the UN secretary-general should appoint a high level panel to lead a global review of disaster prevention and response to feed into the post-millennium development goals (MDGs) agenda.
- **Change in funding, coordination and attitude:** donors, UN coordination mechanisms and national governments should fund, coordinate and deliver emergency responses as if local capacity mattered. They must develop structures that reinforce and fund best practice for working with local capacity in emergency response.

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL CAPACITY AND PARTNERSHIPS IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE



Christian Aid/Nazile Dale

Elliott Kachingwe works on his irrigation plot in Malawi. Through profit from selling his crops, he was able to build a new house, purchase livestock and buy fertiliser for his crops. He is now also able to save money each year as a safety net for himself and his family in case his harvest is destroyed by the regular droughts and floods the country experiences

1.1 Local capacities are key in building resilience to disasters and delivering rapid, effective emergency response – but their neglect continues

The importance of local capacity and the role of local organisations in emergency response are becoming well recognised. Successive studies and evaluations have found that local capacities can make a critical difference to humanitarian responses. Partnerships between international humanitarian actors (whether donors, UN or aid agencies) and the government and local and national organisations of affected countries are emerging as a key way to work with local capacity as part of a coordinated response.

But this approach requires a change in attitude in the humanitarian sector that is not happening fast enough. The real-time evaluation of the Haiti emergency in 2010 identified the failure to adequately involve local actors as a key challenge even a year after the earthquake hit.⁶ The

Humanitarian Emergency Response Review published in 2011 recognised that, despite the policy commitments and growing evidence base of the importance of local and national organisations in the humanitarian sector: ***‘all too often the international response arrives as though this were not the case, sweeping aside local responders and adding to the chaos rather than alleviating it.’***⁷

The call by aid agencies in January this year to invest in early action and channel funds to prevention in the wake of the East Africa food crisis is an important one. But there is also a deeper point that needs to be addressed. Releasing money earlier, while essential for saving lives and preserving livelihoods, should be accompanied by a more fundamental change: *‘[a] fundamental reorientation from supplying aid to supporting and facilitating communities’ own relief and recovery priorities,’* as called for by the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition in 2007.⁸

Box 1 gives some examples of the kinds of statements found in policy documents and evaluations.

Box 1: Statements on local capacity and partnership in key humanitarian policies and reports

‘Local capacity is one of the main assets to enhance and on which to build. Whenever possible, humanitarian organizations should strive to make it an integral part in emergency response.’
Global Humanitarian Platform, 2007⁹

‘[Donors should] strengthen the capacity of affected countries and local communities to prevent, prepare for, mitigate and respond to humanitarian crises, with the goal of ensuring that governments and local communities are better able to meet their responsibilities and coordinate effectively with humanitarian partners.’
Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles, 2003¹⁰

‘The international humanitarian community needs a fundamental reorientation from supplying aid to supporting and facilitating communities’ own relief and recovery priorities.’
Tsunami Evaluation Coalition recommendations, 2007¹¹

‘The paradigm is still viewing the affected population too much as what economist Julian Le Grand has called “pawns” (passive individuals) and the international community as “knights” (extreme altruists). This approach costs. Local capacities are not utilised, the beneficiary is not involved enough and the quality of delivery is lower than it should be.’
Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR), 2011¹²

‘Local actors are usually the first responders in a crisis... Local community capacity building is a crucial element in a transitional context (post-crisis situation) and necessary to ensure the sustainability of DRR efforts.’
DG ECHO Guidelines on Strengthening Humanitarian Responses through Global Capacity Building and Grant Facility, 2011¹³

‘Particularly in sudden onset crises, immediate humanitarian assistance such as search and rescue and the provision of water, food and shelter are undertaken by neighbouring communities on a voluntary basis. In these communities, religious groups often play a very important role. It may take some days for organised national or international assistance to

arrive in the affected areas. Local capacities save lives in the first vital hours and days.’
Irish Aid Humanitarian Policy, 2009¹⁴

‘Immediate family, neighbours and members of the local community are the first to help those around them when disaster strikes. The UK will help strengthen these local actors’ ability to respond.’
UK Government Humanitarian Policy, 2011¹⁵

1.2 Disasters are increasing in scale, frequency and complexity, which makes the importance of local capacity more acute, with some contexts still remaining very difficult

In 2010, the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters recorded 373 natural disaster events that killed more than 296,800 people, affected the lives of 208 million and cost nearly US\$110bn.¹⁶

Statistics such as these are alarming but are set to worsen. Year on year, risk drivers such as rapid, unplanned urbanisation, population growth, environmental degradation and climate change are increasing the exposure to and impact of hazards such as earthquakes, cyclones, floods and droughts. These risk drivers are also resulting in disasters of greater complexity. For example, massive urban centres, such as earthquake-hit Port-au-Prince or Metro Manila after Typhoon Ketsana, required new and innovative approaches to delivering humanitarian assistance. Political factors also add to the complexity, with examples including conflict in Somalia and authoritarian states such as Burma also impacting on the access or nature of an international emergency response in those contexts.

The increasing numbers and complex nature of emergencies means it is even more important that the humanitarian sector incorporates local emergency capacity at its heart and builds that capacity as part of resilient development plans. Partnerships between international development and humanitarian organisations and their donors with local and national organisations is an important way to do this.

1.3 Changing attitudes to partnership in the humanitarian system

Partnership is a core part of humanitarian response structures. In July 2007, UN and non-UN humanitarian agencies agreed to five Principles of Partnership, at the Global Humanitarian Platform:¹⁷

- equality
- transparency
- result-oriented approach
- responsibility
- complementarity.

The principle of complementarity firmly recognised the importance of local capacity and committed agencies to putting it at the heart of their humanitarian partnerships. 'The diversity of the humanitarian community is an asset if we build on our comparative advantages and complement each other's contributions. Local capacity is one of the main assets to enhance and on which to build. Whenever possible, humanitarian organizations should strive to make it an integral part in emergency response. Language and cultural barriers must be overcome.'¹⁸

Box 2 on the opposite page provides examples of some of the findings of evaluations and policy statements that emphasise the importance of partnerships and capacities.

It should be recognised that in contexts where the local capacity is extremely weak and emergency needs are overwhelming, the humanitarian imperative requires a response that meets those needs. There will always be some local capacity to collaborate with, but, where displaced or refugee communities number in the tens or hundreds of thousands, an international operational response and implementing method may be the most appropriate. Similarly, in the midst of an internal conflict, operational responses to meet the needs of vulnerable or affected populations by international agencies or INGOs may be a preferred mechanism to deliver a scaled response.

But partnership approaches that deliver emergency responses through local organisations have the flexibility to play a central role in a large variety of contexts. Parts of the humanitarian system already recognise this by working in a partnership, capacity-enhancing mode by default, albeit with varying degrees of success.

There are a number of faith-based organisations such as Christian Aid and CAFOD that are part of wider networks – Christian Aid is part of Action by Churches Together (ACT) and CAFOD is part of the Caritas network. These work through networks of national and local organisations in order to deliver assistance. Some NGOs such as Action Aid also work through local capacities, while others, such as Oxfam and World Vision, have both operational and partnership approaches and are strengthening their ability to work through partnerships. For example, World Vision has established a partnership unit to strengthen its partnership approach as a core part of its next three-to-five year plan.

Another key partnership network is the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which is built on the idea of an international federation for humanitarian response, in which national members play a central role in disaster

Box 2: Evaluation findings on importance of partnerships with local actors to reinforce or use the local capacity in emergency response

'What is clear is that new models of partnership and preparedness will be required to respond to the crises of the next decade, with a focus on the frontline capacities of communities, authorities and civil society.'

Christine Knudsen, UNICEF, 2011¹⁹

'...the partnership approach allows for a more locally relevant response and greatly facilitates the transition process from relief to recovery, and wider social development...'

Christian Aid Tsunami Evaluation, 2007²⁰

'... partnerships with local NGOs are the best means for external aid agencies to scale up...'

Gujarat DEC Evaluation, 2001²¹

'The TEC studies found that international agencies experienced major problems in scaling up their own responses. Those agencies that had invested (before the disaster) in developing their emergency response capacity had the potential to be more effective. Pre-existing links, and mutual respect, between international agencies and local partners also led to better use of both international and

local capacities.'

Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, 2007²²

'The reflections from Haiti show that collaboration with local partners can be a highly effective way of ensuring that humanitarian action opens doors to innovative programming.'

Ruth Allen, Mercy Corps, 2011²³

'...In its relationship with local partners, this INGO has demonstrated a strong commitment to the principles of partnership... The partner has been included in all aspects of programme design, implementation and

monitoring and evaluation.

The close relationship and strong partnership trust that has developed between [the organisations]... has been facilitated by their shared values and programme scope. The investment made in partnership has not only contributed to the successful achievement of the Programme objectives to date, but has resulted in a strengthened local partner... better able to contribute to [the country's] long-term development...'

Tearfund Liberia Evaluation, 2008²⁴

preparedness, response, recovery and risk reduction, often supported by the northern members.

Learning on what makes effective partnerships is emerging from networks such as the Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN) and the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP), and operational agencies are also tackling questions of partnership, with many building local capacity through initiatives such as the Emergency Capacity Building project (ECB).²⁵

There is also growing recognition in UN coordination processes of the need to strengthen access and involvement of local actors. The IASC Cluster leadership training highlights the importance of local actors in their training guide on partnerships and recommends: 'Engage local NGOs, seek their input on strategies and priorities, and find ways to transfer and build their capacity. Local NGOs often have, among other things, a comparative advantage in early response and operational planning due to their links with local communities and authorities.'²⁶ These efforts are being complemented by INGOs that support partners' engagement in humanitarian coordination through initiatives such as the Humanitarian Reform Project consortium.²⁷

Despite this recognition of the importance of local capacity and for partnerships as a way of delivering locally led humanitarian aid, there is still a long way to go before the changes are made to deliver this, and even longer to see a humanitarian system built on local and national structures. As Oxfam's report *Crises in a New World Order* states: 'It will take years, in places decades, to build genuinely global humanitarian action, rooted in crisis-affected countries.'²⁸

1.4 Partnership approaches for emergency response must be collaborative and based on principles of transparency and mutual accountability

When one becomes aware of the moves towards more local partnerships or locally led humanitarian agencies, there is some cause for optimism. But pressure to deliver at speed and scale in complex emergencies and report on an agency's own impact to donors and the northern public can distort partnerships in practice.

The reality is that despite the policy commitments and growing evidence-base of the importance of local capacity

and the need to work in genuine partnerships, there are some repeated and disheartening lessons that emerge from many humanitarian responses.

In brief summary, these indicate that:

- local capacities are frequently undermined or excluded, often systematically so
- southern partnerships are sometimes in name only and partners are treated as a pipeline for delivery, with little sense of sustainability of work.

Box 3 illustrates some examples of the poor performance of the system with regard to partnerships and local capacity.

This Christian Aid report starts from the position that local capacity (national civil society and government institutions) should be central to emergency response and that efforts to adapt 'the way international humanitarian action is appealed for, financed, coordinated, staffed, assessed and delivered'²⁹ must be prioritised to accelerate this.

As part of this adaptation of humanitarian action, partnerships with local organisations need to be at the heart of an inclusive and empowering approach to disaster prevention, emergency response and recovery.

Failure to deliver in practice on policy commitments and rhetoric supporting local partnerships must be challenged. Practical support and guidance should be developed to strengthen best practice for working through partnerships in emergencies.

In this report Christian Aid has drawn on its experience in order to contribute to the work that is needed. Five key areas have emerged from this research that will be explored in the following chapter:

1. Knowledge and understanding of the partnership model and its principles.
2. Partnerships for disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience.
3. Partnerships for response.
4. Partnerships for advocacy.
5. The risks and responsibilities of the partnership model.

In the subsequent chapters we then look at the case of Haiti and draw out the lessons from Christian Aid's experience in these key areas.

Box 3: The reality of partnerships and local capacity work

'They would bring a team of people to a management meeting and then put several detailed strategies on the table, saying that this was the draft strategy and if there were any comments, they were needed within a few days. It didn't make us feel like we were a real part of the process.'
International NGO Partnerships Evaluation, 2007

'We are seldom recognised for the work we do in propping up the international system – we are the unseen workhorses.'
Southern NGO director, speaking at AHA Symposium in Addis, 2004

'... they [southern partner] have to be really special to turn around to us [northern partner] and say we want to do things another way...'
International NGO manager, ALNAP research, 2009

'... although we talk about partnerships and capacities, the underlying principle seems to be to make "them" work more like "us"...'
International NGO manager, talking at ALNAP workshop, 2009

'The weak link of partnership is relations between international organisations and their national and local counterparts, especially

as national and local organisations are sometimes the only means to deliver protection and other forms of assistance to displaced persons in the type of environments we face today.'
NGOs and Humanitarian Reform Project – Report on Strengthening Partnerships for Effective Humanitarian Response, 2010

2. CHRISTIAN AID'S EXPERIENCE OF PARTNERSHIPS IN EMERGENCIES



Christian Aid/Bramwen Niclas

Goat feed is distributed by Christian Aid partner Christian Community Services Mount Kenya East (CCSMKE) in Parkishon village, Marsabit district, Kenya during the 2011 food crisis. Eighty per cent of the animals in Parkishon died during the drought. CCSMKE visited the village regularly to deliver water in tankers, distribute animal feed and monitor the health of children, the elderly, pregnant and lactating women

This chapter explores Christian Aid's experience of working through partnerships and identifies some of the realities of the partnership approach in a humanitarian context, the benefits it delivers and the challenges it faces. It draws on country examples to illustrate conclusions that have emerged from the research.

2.1 Christian Aid's experience of partnerships in emergencies

Christian Aid is an international development and humanitarian agency that works through partnerships with local and national organisations and as part of the ACT Alliance, the network of church-based humanitarian and development agencies.

In the past five years, working with local and national organisations and ACT Alliance members, Christian Aid has worked with partners to respond to more than 80 different humanitarian emergencies in 39 countries. These have ranged in size from localised emergencies in India, the Middle East, Central America and the Philippines up to large-scale emergencies in Haiti, Pakistan, Burma and multi-country emergencies in west and east Africa. The organisation has responded in highly complex situations such as Somalia, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), occupied Palestinian territory (OPT), Burma and Kyrgyzstan (see Box 4 on page 11).

The research for this exploration of partnership in emergencies involved a total of 47 semi-structured interviews, and included 32 staff from across the different divisions of the organisation,³⁰ and 15 interviewees from local partners, donors and UN cluster coordination, UN agencies, or ACT Alliance members. In addition, a literature review was undertaken of relevant articles, reports and evaluations, both those internal to Christian Aid and from the wider humanitarian sector (see endnotes for quoted and referenced sources).

It is recognised that the report speaks from the perspective of a northern partnership INGO, and we acknowledge the limitations that this places on the findings. There is a clear need for southern NGOs and local partners to share

experience and analysis, and we hope that this report contributes to a dialogue in which southern partners, national humanitarian organisations and affected communities can take up the debate and their central role in shaping the evolved humanitarian sector.

2.2 Knowledge and understanding of the partnership model and its principles

Christian Aid believes that working through local partner organisations is key to ensuring lasting, locally owned projects and achieving positive long-lasting change in both its humanitarian and development work. Working through national and local partners and the ACT Alliance means that Christian Aid is present before, during and after an emergency.

'Our approach to humanitarian work places clear emphasis on linking response, rehabilitation, development and DRR, recognising emergencies as an integral part of the development cycle'³¹

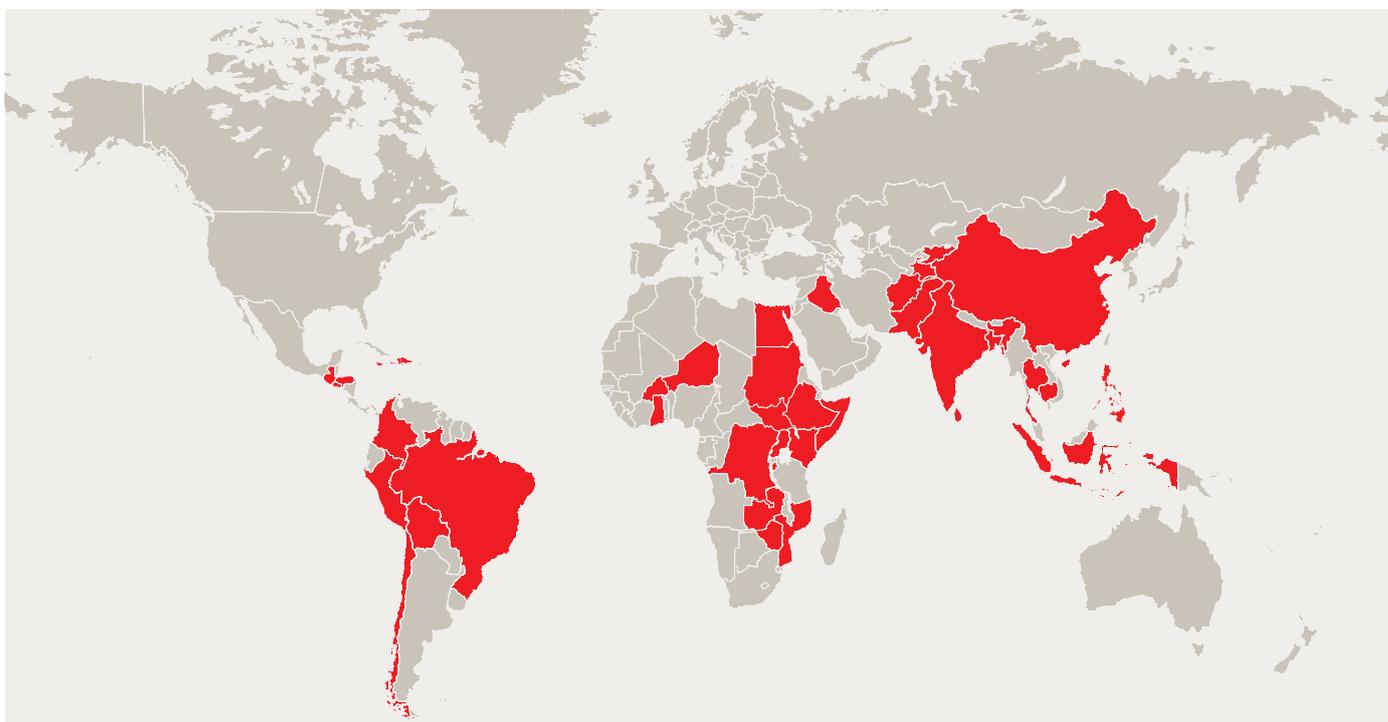
Christian Aid understands and manages its partnerships using a clear and well communicated set of partnership principles and organisational procedures that reinforce those principles. The organisation's corporate strategy from 2005 to 2012 summarised the Christian Aid partnership approach: 'Partnership for us is a matter of principle, not of convenience (...) So everything we do in the field is built on mutually accountable relationships with partners who have roots in the communities where they are working.'³² The new strategy to guide work from 2012 onwards, 'Partnerships for Change', reinforces this commitment.

The partnership principles that guide this work are based on working developmentally, including to promote partners rights to control their own direction; compatibility; shared goals, values and complementary strengths; clarity around expectations, commitments and responsibilities; and mutual accountability and transparency (see Box 5).

These partnership principles are put into practice at country level through formal procedures such as the signing of partnership agreements and project-specific contracts, and their requirements in terms of support for reporting and accountability. They are also in operation through the day-to-day relationships between Christian Aid staff and partners, whether in monitoring and evaluation, information sharing, joint planning, training or capacity building.

Christian Aid's certification into the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership in 2009 reinforced the organisation's commitments to 'downward accountability'

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Box 4: Christian Aid's emergency response (map)

Over the past five years, Christian Aid has worked with local partners and the ACT Alliance to provide humanitarian assistance in the following situations:

2011-2012:

Philippines, Tropical Storm Washi; Guatemala and El Salvador, floods; Bangladesh, floods; Cambodia, floods; Philippines, typhoon/floods; India, Orissa floods; Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan, drought/famine and displacement; Ghana, internally displaced persons (IDP) crisis following CDI coup; Burma, broken ceasefire; Colombia, floods

2010-2011:

Niger, food crisis; India, Cyclone Laila; Guatemala, Tropical Storm Agatha; Kyrgyzstan, conflict; Pakistan, floods; Burkina Faso, food crisis; India, floods; Burma, Cyclone Giri; Bolivia, forest fires; Tamil Nadu, refugee camp fires; DRC, poliomyelitis epidemics; Philippines, landslides; Sri Lanka, floods, Colombia, floods; Brazil, floods; Egypt, political crisis; China, earthquake

2009-2010:

Sri Lanka, IDPs; Philippines, floods in Mindanao and Tropical Storm Ketsana; Kenya, drought; Indonesia, earthquake; Burkina Faso,

floods; Ghana, floods; India, floods; Sudan, IDPs and drought; El Salvador, landslides/floods; Haiti, earthquake; DRC, IDPs; Peru, floods; Zambia, floods; Chile, earthquake

2008-2009:

China, earthquake; Philippines, typhoon and conflict; Egypt, food crisis; Burma, Cyclone Nargis; India, floods; Haiti, hurricane; South Sudan, floods; Dominican Republic, tropical storm; Zimbabwe, food shortages; Gaza, conflict; Afghanistan, drought

2007-2008:

Afghanistan, winter; Burkina Faso, floods; Dominican Republic, tropical storm;

Ghana, floods; Haiti, hurricane; India, floods; Iraq, IDPs; Jamaica, Hurricane Dean; Kenya, violence; Bangladesh, Cyclone Sidr; Peru, earthquake; Philippines, Typhoon Durian; Somalia, IDPs; Uganda, floods; Zimbabwe, food crisis; Honduras, Hurricane Felix; Tajikistan, winter

2006-2007:

Kenya, floods; Indonesia, earthquake; Philippines, Mount Mayon eruption and Typhoon Durian; Ethiopia, drought; Lebanon, conflict; Honduras, floods; OPT, conflict; Afghanistan, drought; India, floods; Haiti, floods; Burundi, drought; Mozambique, floods; Sudan, Darfur conflict.

and the beneficiaries or affected populations in emergencies. This has challenged Christian Aid to have clear discussions with partners about how they ensure affected populations are involved in designing and planning emergency programmes, and how partners provide feedback and complaint mechanisms in that process.

But how well do these procedures support partnership principles during emergency work, and how are these principles maintained under pressure in rapid response?

Interviews with Christian Aid staff across the organisation and the country-specific case studies all identified the importance of trust and existing knowledge and relationships between Christian Aid and its partners as essential for determining an effective emergency response through partnership. Where the process of partnership agreements and relationship building had established a good understanding between Christian Aid and its partners, this understanding became a social resource that made delivering an effective emergency response to international standards easier to do in a collaborative way that was much more strongly in line with partnership principles, even when capacities of partners or Christian Aid teams differed.

Increased media attention and emergency appeal funds create new pressures to show results in a short space of time, or to report on the impact that funds have made. Consulting with and being accountable to partners and the communities they are working with is key for principles of equality and transparency. This had worked well where there were different staff working together and communicating well, who were equipped and responsible for managing the 'push' (responding to head office requirements, donors and the media), and managing the 'pull' (emergency needs, partner support and consultation) in the immediate weeks following the disaster.

In addition, a significant factor was the continuity and ownership for managing the partnerships in the emergency response by the ongoing country programme manager, with humanitarian expertise provided by humanitarian professionals integrated into the country or regional team. Long-term knowledge and investment in partnership builds the kind of trust that enabled Christian Aid partner GARR in Haiti to know that a verbal commitment from Christian Aid for initial response funding would be honoured, and they were then able to use their trust with a local shop to be given food for distribution.

Box 5: Introduction to Christian Aid's Partnership Principles (taken from Partnership: the Cornerstone of Christian Aid's International Work, 2004)

Working developmentally:

- promoting partners' rights to control their own direction, as Christian Aid controls its own direction
- recognising power imbalances and avoiding over-dependency
- long-term commitments and core funding where appropriate
- willing to help partners through difficult times – non-judgemental while retaining good stewardship over resources
- coordinating with co-funders, particularly ecumenical agencies.

Compatibility – shared goals, values and complementary strengths:

- partnership as a means to achieving shared goals
- open dialogue
- identifying each other's goals, approaches and values
- agreeing about whether both parties share goals, approaches and values sufficiently for an effective relationship
- identifying and encouraging complementary contributions of knowledge, skills, contacts and resources.

Clarity – around expectations, commitments and responsibilities:

- respecting partners' commitments to a range of stakeholders as Christian Aid has commitments to a range of stakeholders
- being open about different stages of the relationship
- maintaining dialogue and exchange when funding relationships end.

Mutual accountability and transparency:

- both partners being open to constructive criticism, feedback and dialogue, providing a response and, where appropriate, bringing about change
- agreement on financial and narrative reporting requirements.

But scaling up this model requires investment in partnerships before emergencies arise, identifying gaps and capacities. Enough 'surge' staff to call on in an emergency are also needed. They should be integrated well into the team to live up to principles of transparency, accountability and consultation in the first days and weeks following a disaster.

The humanitarian accountability partnerships (HAP) initiative was identified as an important mechanism by which Christian Aid and partners have strengthened their accountability in emergency response. Investment in discussions and training on accountability beforehand provided for a much stronger application of accountability in emergencies and reinforced trust and understanding between Christian Aid and its partners.

In Christian Aid's experience, partnerships deliver strong humanitarian work when there is an active and conscious understanding of risk and risk management incorporated into the programmes being implemented and in the partnership discussions and consultation. This includes a clear emphasis on knowing and applying disaster risk management approaches, but it also includes understanding and managing the contextual, institutional and programmatic risks.

2.3 Resilience, DRR and preparedness

Being ready for natural hazards such as cyclones, earthquakes, drought or floods before they happen and taking action to reduce their impact saves lives and millions of pounds in potential losses. Prevention might include appropriate planning and construction, livelihood diversification or new farming methods, early warning systems, evacuation or shelter of people and valuable assets. Investing in partnerships for emergency work begins with investing in prevention and the partnerships for DRR and resilience work.

Christian Aid's Building Disaster Resilient Communities (BDRC) project, funded by the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), worked in seven countries over five years.³³ The project supported local partners working with vulnerable communities to identify the risks they faced, what capacity their local community had to address these risks and what external support they needed from local government, scientific experts or Christian Aid. An action plan would be developed that encompassed work on three levels: political advocacy; small physical infrastructure projects for mitigation of

disasters at the level of individual communities, and improving livelihood resilience.

Participation and accountability – supporting partners in inclusive DRR

Analysis of global efforts to reduce disaster risks recognises the importance of ensuring global and national commitments on DRR reach the local level.³⁴ An important way that Christian Aid has been able to do this through partnership is in training and accompanying partners to use participatory vulnerability and capacity assessments (PVCAs). These assessments involve local communities in identifying risks and strategies to tackle them. They are central to empowering communities as part of DRR work and building local preparedness and response capacity. Using appropriate participatory techniques can enable views of marginalised groups, women, young people and different ethnic groups to be shared and inform action plans.

In El Salvador, PVCAs helped communities identify flooding risks from the river Lempa as a key concern, and were supported to make links with national partners with more advocacy experience who helped them to successfully petition the local government to dredge the river.³⁵ This also led to longer-term relationships between the local and national partners and better communication between the community near the river Lempa and the local government.

In Malawi, Christian Aid trained and supported partner Evangelical Lutheran Development Service (ELDS) to reduce disaster risks in the village of Machemba. Through the PVCA process led by ELDS, the village developed a plan of action and set up grain banks by using savings and credit schemes to ensure they could replant if crops were destroyed. They also put in an irrigation and water harvest system to support the cultivation of land in the lean periods. As a result, the village no longer had to sell off household items or livestock in desperate times. The irrigation system meant they were able to grow crops in the dry season. Men did not have to move away for work and more families stayed together, and thus were better able to support each other.

Supporting partners to use inclusive DRR methods with communities through PVCA processes were further strengthened by discussions and training on HAP. In Mali and Burkina Faso, partner meetings for PVCA training imbedded HAP principles from the start, and staff and partners were able to discuss the importance and practicality of being accountable and transparent to the communities and beneficiaries.

These examples illustrate how principles of participation can lead to tangible differences. They also highlight that better and more inclusive partnerships do not end with the northern agency and its southern local partner, but need to be fulfilled throughout the aid chain, ultimately resulting in greater ownership of aid efforts by the primary stakeholders – the intended beneficiaries. Because national and local partners are grounded in particular social, political and cultural contexts, they are more able to address the accountability gap that has been long bemoaned in humanitarian assistance.

Importance of peer support and learning to strengthen local capacity

In the Philippines, a significant strength of DRR work has been in building linkages and supporting peer learning that strengthened local capacity. The project supported the establishment of an ongoing DRR learning circle between local partners and community representatives that supported continued DRR learning, awareness raising and peer-support. Linkages for particular projects connected partners and communities with scientific experts, for example in geophysics or meteorology.

Christian Aid work on DRR in Quezon province in the Philippines with local partner the Social Action Centre (SAC)

Northern Quezon brought together scientific expertise and local communities to prevent disasters. Community members from Infanta and General Nakar municipalities met with local government disaster coordination councils, the local government weather bureau (PAGASA), and the University of the Philippines National Institute of Geological Sciences (UP-NIGS), radio networks and churches to address the threat of flooding along the river Agos.

The partnership between Christian Aid and SAC Northern Quezon delivered a fully functioning community-centred early warning system that provided a window of 1.5 hours ahead of emergency situations for preventive action. But strengthening local capacity was an even more important result. An independent evaluation identified the key to successful achievement of the early warning system was the development of a direct link between communities and government structures within the scientific community via UP-NIGS, the Manila Observatory and PAGASA.³⁶

These examples highlight the importance of moving beyond bilateral partnerships to consider the 'ecosystem' of actors in a given context, and to consider how international agencies can support and strengthen networks between diverse actors.

Box 6: CARRAT

Christian Aid Rapid Response Assessment Team (CARRAT) in the Philippines is an initiative that brings Christian Aid partners together to provide rapid response surge capacity across partners.

The frequent number of emergencies in the Philippines challenged Christian Aid to build disaster preparedness and response capacity across development and emergency partners. CARRAT was formed to increase the capacity of the Christian Aid Philippines office to respond to disasters. The objectives of CARRAT are to: build up the capacity for

hazard monitoring; lead the emergency response in each of the main islands in the country (Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao); and make trained staff available within 24 hours to assess, plan and coordinate the emergency response programmes.

CARRAT is composed of staff of local and national partners strategically positioned in different parts of the country. It increases capacity to respond to disasters through a pool of experts, geographically pre-positioned in different regions, who bring knowledge of diverse cultures and experience.

Raymund Daen from Christian Aid partner Community Organisers Philippines Enterprise (COPE) BICOL, working on urban poverty in the Bicol region, was a founding member of CARRAT. He has provided assessment capacity during Typhoon Dorian and during an oil spill that affected the islands. During Typhoon Ketsana he provided 'surge capacity' – extra people to carry out needs assessment work over a month and used this to identify priority areas for response plans.

Asked what the reality of working through CARRAT

means in terms of engaging through partnerships in emergencies, he said: 'Local partners in the affected communities become part of the emergency response. They are treated as partners instead of being just a recipient. As partners, they assume some responsibility and accountability in the conduct of the emergency response. This also helps them to overcome the trauma/fears they experienced during the calamity by way of making them a part of the response and owning the initiatives, and they feel that they are part of the success or failure of the response.'

Once a disaster occurs and emergency response is needed, the partnership approach immediately shifts into a different gear where partners are well-placed to respond.

Investing in DRR builds capacity for emergency response through partnership

Investing in DRR with local partners in areas and communities at risk establishes the relationships that are essential for rapid emergency response and offers an entry point to ensure the response is robust and in line with internationally agreed standards such as Sphere and HAP.

Where Christian Aid and partners work together on DRR before emergencies, they strengthen their understanding of each other's response capacity and understand how they can strengthen each other (for example, understanding local context, training on Sphere or needs assessments processes) and the structures and principles that guide emergency response.

To aid emergency contingency planning and preparedness work, the process of engagement with partners has been formalised through country-level emergency preparedness plans (CLEPPs). The process of formulating a CLEPP can include bilateral discussions with a range of existing partners, previous partners, ACT Alliance members and other relevant contacts in the country, including other INGOs, UN agencies or government bodies. It also involves bringing partners and key stakeholders together to plan for the early stages of an emergency response and to provide peer support to each other in this planning.

Done well, the process of developing a CLEPP is as useful as the final CLEPP itself and increasing emphasis is put upon the ongoing relationship between Christian Aid, partners and relevant stakeholders as part of DRR and resilient development activities alongside emergency contingency planning. This has led to a regular CLEPP updating partner support group in places such as Bangladesh. In the Philippines, Christian Aid and partners have built up a mechanism for cross-partner surge capacity to support needs assessments to standard (see Box 6 on page 14).

2.4 Managing the response

Once a disaster occurs and emergency response is needed, the partnership approach immediately shifts into a different gear where partners are well-placed to respond. An intensified humanitarian partnership starts that brings Christian Aid and responding local partners together to scale up, access emergency funds, increase appropriate technical support, ensure downward accountability and increase monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Redirecting long-term efforts to address emerging risks and needs

Response to early warning signals for slow onset emergencies, such as the East Africa food crisis³⁷ or the food crisis emerging now in the Sahel, requires the commitment and funds to act early. For Christian Aid this can be about re-directing development funds and finding additional funds for disaster mitigation and early response, and accessing DRR funds.

In Marsabit, Moyale, Mandera and Isiolo in Kenya, Christian Aid and partners conducted needs assessments in January 2011 that identified water trucking, borehole maintenance, animal feed and essential animal drugs as the critical needs. It was noted that food was already being supplied by the government and thus communities did not prioritise it. At this time the emergency had not hit the international headlines but the communities were already in desperate need of assistance. Christian Aid subsequently worked with partners Christian Community Services Mount Kenya East (CCSMKE) and Northern Aid to supply water, essential animal feed and boreholes to vulnerable households through Christian Aid core funding and funds from the DFID-funded Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (CBHA).

In May 2011, Christian Aid and partners conducted a follow-up assessment to check the impact of the intervention and the progress of drought. The assessment identified a deteriorating situation because the April short rains had also failed and more than 80 per cent of the population in northern Kenya was now affected, leading to the declaration of an emergency. In July 2011 Christian Aid launched an appeal for the East Africa food crisis and was part of the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) joint agency appeal launched the following week.

Providing humanitarian expertise and supporting local capacity as part of the ACT Alliance

The ACT Alliance is composed of more than 120 church-related humanitarian and development organisations. Members work in 140 countries, employ around 30,000 staff and volunteers, and mobilise approximately US\$1.6 billion each year. In 2010, the ACT Alliance channelled US\$61m in funds for humanitarian response to 150 emergency responses. The alliance is supported by an international secretariat of 22 staff based in Geneva, Switzerland. The ACT Alliance is a member of the International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) and HAP. ACT Alliance members, both national and international,

coordinate at national level through ACT forums. This system brings together national and international church networks and partners to plan joint appeals and coordinate work, and provides a framework for long-term investment in building capacity. Through ACT agencies Christian Aid can support emergency responses without establishing new programmes or attempting to establish new partnerships during emergencies.

Where ACT partners have well-established existing programmes and partners Christian Aid seeks to provide specialist support, expertise and funding. For example, as part of Christian Aid's response to emergency crisis in Pakistan, the organisation provided expertise on cash transfers in emergencies, humanitarian accountability and advocacy capacity to ACT partner CWS Pakistan alongside funding for relief work. As part of our response to the East Africa food crisis, Christian Aid provided humanitarian accountability support to ACT partner Lutheran World Relief (LWF) in the Dadaab refugee camp in northern Kenya. In Egypt, following the return of migrant workers in the wake of the Libyan uprising, Christian Aid led the ACT appeal to support communities affected by a sudden and radical drop in income with cash-for-work programming and psychosocial support.

Targeting the most marginalised and excluded, and enabling their access to wider aid

In south Asia, the combination of Christian Aid humanitarian experience and local partner expertise on issues of social exclusion delivers a better emergency response because the partnership ensures aid gets to the most marginalised. Not only is this in terms of the aid Christian Aid and partners deliver, but also through advocacy support to hold government and donors accountable for ensuring their aid reaches the excluded.

In this way, a strategic partnership uses a small amount of aid to make the much larger emergency response reach those most in need; it makes the whole response more effective. This focus on ensuring the inclusive delivery of emergency response has become an increasing priority over the past five years.

In 2006, incessant rains in the desert state of Rajasthan gave rise to one of the worst floods in two centuries. Heavy monsoon rains engulfed several villages of the 12 or so districts of Rajasthan. Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS), in partnership with Christian Aid and supported with funds from ECHO, constructed 300 houses across 15 flood-affected villages

to meet the immediate housing need. The programme targeted marginalised groups and women-headed households as those most in need, involving them in decision-making and building ownership for the community reconstruction.

In 2007, as part of the Dalit Watch campaign by Christian Aid partners National Campaign on Dalit Human Rights (NCDHR) to monitor issues of exclusion in emergency aid, a research report was undertaken into the Bihar flood response from that year. The report identified a significant failure by many government and international aid programmes to ensure aid reached the poorest and most marginalised and challenged them to revise their approach.

Following Cyclone Laila in 2010, Christian Aid and partner Society for National Integration and Rural Development (SNIRD) in Andhra Pradesh supported excluded communities to rebuild their homes through innovative targeting of emergency aid and advocacy. Indian government aid grants to rebuild houses were available to affected populations following the cyclone, but in order to qualify families had to pay for their own foundations and this meant that the poorest, often in dalit communities, were unable to rebuild.

By funding a partner to work with the community to build the foundations, Christian Aid was able to support 150 families to then qualify for the house-building grant to finish their new homes. Through this partnership approach, and using a small amount of funds, the project was able to leverage substantial government aid and ensure the poorest and most excluded could rebuild their home and lives.

Supporting locally led responses in complex political contexts

Insecure or politically restricted emergency environments can make it very difficult for the humanitarian sector to implement traditional operational models. They are in some cases forced to work through local actors who are 'safer', prepared to take more risks, or less restricted by an authoritarian government.

Cyclone Nargis hit Burma on 2 May 2008, causing landslides in the Irrawaddy Delta; 140,000 people were estimated killed and 2.4 million affected. The political context and government control over visas and access restricted rapid access by international aid workers and placed the response squarely in the hands of Burma nationals who did not face the same restrictions.

Building on over 20 years of work in Burma, Christian Aid worked with partners to provide life-sustaining inputs such as drinking water, food and nutrition, shelter and non-food items including clothes, mosquito nets, blankets and mats. Partners then began to address post-'shock'-recovery through support to the regeneration of livelihood activities linked to addressing the repair, reconstruction and adaptation of disaster-resistant low-cost homes.

An evaluation of the emergency response used OECD DAC criteria to assess effectiveness, timeliness, relevance, coherence and accountability of the programme. It highlighted particular strengths as effectiveness, timeliness and relevance: 'The relevance criterion was an area that Christian Aid's partners performed well against. While many international organisations became locked into geographically large distribution programmes and have been criticised for failing to adapt programmes to meet recovery needs the Christian Aid partnership model was smaller and more flexible and partners themselves were also much better able to re-orientate programmes to meet needs.'³⁸

The evaluation also looked at Christian Aid's model of humanitarian partnership: 'The Nargis Cyclone presented Christian Aid with an important opportunity to demonstrate the value of its model of partnership and there have been some notable successes.'

It highlighted the importance of prior investment in building partner capacity and knowledge in delivering to international Sphere and HAP standards, due in part to the difficulties of providing direct DRR training in the political context. This has highlighted the importance of developing innovative strategies for DRR programming in a range of political contexts.

While the strong central control of the response by the Burmese government was perhaps unsurprising, the trend is one that seems to be growing. Writing in a recent Relief Web article, Randolph Kent highlighted the growing reluctance by some governments to appeal for international assistance: 'From Burma to China, Nigeria to Kenya, governments in some of the most vulnerable regions of the world are becoming increasingly reluctant to have traditional humanitarian actors behave as they've done in the past – the well-intentioned interventions, "boots on the ground", efforts. As countries look first to their own capacities, then to their neighbours and regional allies, international action through cluster systems and similar mechanisms outside the control of national governments will increasingly be resisted.'³⁹

2.5 Supporting advocacy for emergencies and resilient development

Supporting communities to be empowered, to access their rights to be as safe as possible from natural hazards and to have equitable access to relief in emergencies is a priority from Christian Aid's humanitarian work.

Advocacy by affected and vulnerable communities to influence DRR and emergency response plans leads to reduced disaster risks, impacts and a more effective response. The involvement of local communities in identifying risks and community needs is essential for ensuring national and local development plans are resilient to the hazards affecting communities and that communities continue to develop despite the stresses and strains that affect their lives.

Christian Aid support for advocacy by local partners on DRR in Honduras and the Philippines has contributed to new disaster risk management laws. Particular gains achieved in Philippines' law through the lobbying and advocacy of partners and other local organisations included:

- a shift in the view of emergency work from a reactive disaster response to a more holistic DRR approach
- the mandatory participation of civil society organisations (CSOs) in national and local DRR policymaking
- civil society being recognised as key actors in supporting the implementation of the law
- a focus on people and community-centred DRR
- decentralisation of DRR so that local government, communities and CSOs could have more responsibility and resources for DRR in their areas.

In Honduras, following advocacy by local organisations including Christian Aid partners, the SINAGER law for the National System for Disaster Risk Management⁴⁰ was passed and implemented in 2010. The most direct impacts being the budget increase that municipalities now have to allocate to DRR to support infrastructural mitigation work, training on preparedness and building community level disaster management structures able to respond in emergencies.⁴¹

Support for local-level advocacy has also been part of Christian Aid's work in El Salvador. Bringing Christian Aid partner UNES, with its disaster policy experience and expertise, together with community-level organisations from El Pito and Rio Viejo, strengthened their understanding

of the flooding that was constantly affecting their lives. With a detailed technical understanding of action needed by the local government to dredge the river and reduce the flood risks, they were supported to use these to lobby the local government for support.

Partners organised a series of events to bring together local organisations, private businesses and government in lobbying meetings, peaceful demonstrations, press conferences and government meetings involving wider national level networks. And as a direct result of this work with a combination of support from Christian Aid, local government funds and private sector support, the communities were able to construct 2.4km of levees, clean eight main drains and repair holes in flood defences. Significantly this work also identified Christian Aid partners as important reference actors for DRR work and following this work the government invited them to be part of the national local and DRR planning in the country.

Christian Aid's support for advocacy in emergency response includes supporting partners' advocacy to ensure communities access appropriate and equitable aid and know their rights. Christian Aid also supports local organisations' roles in emergency planning and coordination.

In Haiti, work with partners included supporting their engagement in coordination and information sharing mechanisms such as UN clusters. It also involved supporting partners National Network for the Defence of Human Rights (RNDDH) and Support Group for Refugees and Repatriated Persons (GARR) to roll out awareness raising and information sharing as part of their humanitarian response programmes with displaced communities. At a very basic level, Christian Aid's support for communities affected by disasters may be in simply supporting them to

come together as a collective group to identify their needs. For example, the Poor Women's Community Organisation was supported to organise as part of the response to Cyclone Aila in Bangladesh.

The Dalit Watch initiative by Christian Aid partner NCDHR explored issues of equity and social exclusion in disaster management during the Bihar floods of 2007. Recommendations from *The Affected and the Relief and Rehabilitation: Bihar floods 2007* status report highlighted:

'The differential and discriminated access to relief and recovery measures from both state and other agencies is a stark reality. There is minimum engagement with the vulnerable communities and their access to relief is also minimal. It is quite revealing that dalits have not accessed temporary shelters despite recording the highest proportion of damaged of houses.'

This work by Christian Aid and partners specialised in working on issues of exclusion and marginalisation has contributed to the development of a tool for social equity audits to challenge and encourage NGOs to ensure their aid is getting to those most in need.⁴²

This work has informed ongoing engagement by Christian Aid partners with the national government and donors such as the EU, DFID and others in order to hold them accountable for delivering equitable aid. It has also been incorporated into work with communities in the poorest areas as part of the DFID-funded PACS programme, which works to make communities resilient to natural disasters by promoting inclusive sustainable adaptation and DRR models.⁴³

Box 7: Three areas of humanitarian risk

Metcalfe, Martin and Pantuliano categorise humanitarian risks into three areas: contextual risk, programmatic risk and institutional risk:⁴⁴

- **Contextual risks** relate to the political and social risk factors such as conflict and insecurity, political instability, breakdown in rule of law; cultural dynamics and gender and exclusion issues and economic or development factors
- **Programmatic risks** relate to the risk of failing to achieve programme objectives by being unrealistic and the potential to cause harm, for example by putting civilians in danger or fuelling war economies
- **Institutional risks** are internal to an organisation or sector and can include reputational, financial or corruption risks, operational security of humanitarian workers, increased challenges to humanitarian principles.

Agencies are constantly weighing risks against each other: for example the safety of personnel doing monitoring and training in high-risk areas, weighed against the risks that without training or monitoring the programme will be weaker.

2.6 Risks and responsibilities of the partnership model

All humanitarian work involves risk. Box 7 highlights how these risks might be usefully categorised.

Any approach to humanitarian work, whether operationally or through local and national partners, balances these risks, and manages them, against the humanitarian imperatives to aid those in need during crisis and the benefits that can be achieved through different strategies.

For Christian Aid, managing these risks in practice through the partnership approach requires investment in partners' ability and understanding of risk. This requires good communication and a good working relationship that identifies capacity and knowledge of partners and Christian Aid country teams. It also requires joint discussions and organisational mechanisms to build understanding and capacity to manage these risks. Together Christian Aid and partners need:

- **Accurate analysis of the context** often by ongoing country presence and programmes before emergencies arise and ensuring good information sharing and communication with partners before and during emergencies. Local partners often have significant understanding of the needs of local communities and the dynamics of marginalisation or exclusion (see example from south Asia dalit organisations), or wider political or conflict issues. But this also needs to be triangulated with expert analysis and information from other organisations, networks or international coordination mechanisms, which may require support for local partners to access.
- **Robust approach to identifying programme objectives** through quality needs assessments and regular review processes that require Christian Aid staff time in terms of monitoring, training and accompaniment of partners. Support for partners to involve affected communities in participatory assessments and apply accountability and feedback mechanisms, and support for partners with their reporting and financial management procedures to ensure programme effectiveness and to fulfil donor reporting requirements.
- **Support and training to country teams on delivering and reporting to recognised international humanitarian standards and applying innovative humanitarian responses.** The combination of Christian Aid humanitarian staff, Christian Aid country programme staff and partner staff can bring together important skill

sets for appropriate and innovative emergency work such as cash-based responses in Haiti and Egypt, earthquake-resilient shelters in Haiti, participatory vulnerability and capacity assessments, and HAP accountability mechanisms for displaced populations.

- **Effective security and financial risk management strategies** that include risk-management processes with the partners. Christian Aid supports partners with financial management training and accompaniment and includes partners' security risk management and security training needs in their approach (see box 8 overleaf).

A clear understanding of where risk lies across the partnership model and how to manage that risk has implications for scaling up emergency response rapidly and for work in fragile or insecure contexts where humanitarian aid is delivered by local actors. The UN OCHA report on good practice for humanitarians in complex security environments *To Stay and Deliver*⁴⁵ identified significant room for improvement in tackling the inequities between international and national aid workers in terms of providing adequate security resources, support and capacities.

Working through local partners requires Christian Aid to invest in their ability to manage risk also. This has included security training of staff and partners (see below) and advocacy to include local organisations in the UN humanitarian security initiative *Saving Lives Together*, as outlined in the Christian Aid review of collaboration between UN and humanitarian actors including local organisations.⁴⁶

Sharing risks and responsibilities. All humanitarian agencies need to engage in strategies of risk management and balance risks against each other. An example of this might be when procedures to manage financial risk require paperwork and banking systems that delay the start of a response, but a delay to the response creates programme risks that humanitarian needs will not be met in time. Agencies are constantly weighing risks against each other: for example the safety of personnel doing monitoring and training in high-risk areas, weighed against the risks that without training or monitoring the programme will be weaker.

Partnership approaches score highly in terms of programmatic, contextual and institutional risk when there is a clear joined-up approach to managing those risks and sufficient staff to provide appropriate accompaniment. Nevertheless, working with local partners is often seen by donors or the wider sector as inherently more 'risky' than direct operational work.

In interviews in Haiti, the capacity of local organisations to scale up, undertake more work and manage and report on much larger sums of money was seen as very high risk.⁴⁷ In a couple of cases, funding relationships based on initial small grants by large donors such as the UN were not developed because the organisations were not able to report back to required standards, but this seemed to be when a hands-off approach had been taken, without any practical support or accompaniment.

For Christian Aid, the scaling up of work, training and financial and security management required to undertake an emergency response through local partners was managed through a scaling up of accompaniment and an increase in staff to provide a much closer and intense partnership approach during the emergency than in longer term development work.

Sharing benefits and recognition. Along with sharing risks and responsibilities for delivering to international standards and reporting requirements is sharing the benefits and recognition for humanitarian work. Working through partnership requires an understanding of how to communicate the joint work undertaken and delivered between partners involved.

Benefits and recognition, much like responsibility and risk, are shared in large-scale projects through partnership agreements and funding agreements signed with donors. Communication and media work also requires a clear understanding between partners, both in terms of how

partners and communities will be portrayed and also risk management of publicising activities. Where the resources for communication and media work lie with the larger international agency, commitments to sharing recognition and ensuring appropriate consultation should be included in partnership principles and agreements at organisational level and then rolled out.

In interviews, partners and staff tended to agree that Christian Aid takes a position of reduced visibility in some countries where the partner may get a higher profile and Christian Aid would lead in international or UK, Irish and EU recognition. In certain countries Christian Aid's profile has been modified in discussion with partners to manage risks associated with having a very clearly Christian name. So on the whole Christian Aid does not have branded projects in those countries. But this lack of visibility has also been recognised by staff as a reason why Christian Aid can be disadvantaged because donors want to fund the agencies they can 'see' in evidence, which can preference a more operational presence.

In addition, partners highlighted the opportunity that working with Christian Aid provided in terms of bidding for donor funding to which they might otherwise not have access. In Haiti, while recognising the challenge of financial reporting, partners felt Christian Aid's support for their emergency response work and donor funding had been an important means for them to strengthen their capacity and credibility with wider donors.

Box 8. Security risk management – Training partners and ACT in Ethiopia

As part of Christian Aid's commitment to support partners' security, the organisation is rolling out security and emergency first aid training designed exclusively for partners. A course in Ethiopia in October 2011 comprised two intensive three-day courses. These involved 38 staff from 11 local partners and seven ACT Alliance members.

While local partners may have an increased knowledge of the environment and

context, this can often lead to mistaken assumptions that they are automatically safer. In Christian Aid's experience there is typically a lack of formal security guidelines or a security culture that could put their staff and programmes at risk. Training partners in security and emergency first aid helps identify gaps in security systems and facilitates a systematic discussion on security and safety that identifies where Christian Aid can support them as part

of its DRR and emergency preparedness work.

Feedback from the Ethiopian workshop welcomed the training, called for more regular updates, and agreed that participants would lead as security champions within their local organisations, using security resources for organisational discussions, including:

- a security training DVD developed by Christian Aid for use as basic security induction

- ACT Safety and Security Guidelines – to adapt for internal use
- staff Safety and Security Principles for the ACT Alliance.

Christian Aid is now following up with participating agencies to create a Security Contact Group for peer support in mainstreaming security assisted by a new full-time ACT Alliance security coordinator post.

In some cases the partnership with Christian Aid had enabled local partners to build capacity, recognition and then access funds directly from donors. In other contexts, joint work had enabled partners to get recognition for their work through awards. For example, Christian Aid partners Confederation of Voluntary Associations (COVA) and VAN Kashmir Network received awards for the relief and rehabilitation work done in Kashmir between 2005 and 2006.

Infrastructure needed for the partnership model

Christian Aid's role as a risk manager for humanitarian funding is essential for delivering through the partnership model in an emergency. Interviewees for this report felt that Christian Aid shares important financial and reputational risks with partners and that this was key to the work's success. A challenge for the partnership approach experienced by Christian Aid and some local partners in the Haiti earthquake response was the considerable infrastructure or organisational losses that occurred and which undermined the ability to work. Partners identified a significant challenge in dealing with the loss of offices, equipment, staff, and the houses and family members of staff. While Christian Aid supported partners in their plans to respond to the emergency, it did not have clear mechanisms to support their offices and infrastructure needs. Through another ACT partner, the local partner was able to access a grant to cover their organisation's office and infrastructure costs, which then enabled them to respond with Christian Aid.

It became clear during the interviews that the factors that contributed to effective partnerships in emergencies between a donor partner and their local partners were the same factors that the UN and IDB back donors identify as key for NGOs managing relationships with donors for emergency work. For example:

- establishment of previous relationship, trust and capacity
- knowledge of humanitarian response practice and systems (where the local partner does not have such knowledge, the model depends on the donor partner being prepared to undertake training and increase that knowledge)
- local partners that are well prepared, trained in DRR and working in areas of existing expertise, whether in terms of thematic knowledge and experience, or geographical knowledge and relationships with affected communities

- sufficient staff with the expertise to support scale up, manage risks and build capacity.

In the next chapter the report looks at a the partnership approach in the recent emergency in Haiti, including what went well and lessons learned to improve response.

3. THE PARTNERSHIP APPROACH IN A RECENT LARGE-SCALE EMERGENCY - THE CASE OF HAITI



Christian Aid/M Gonzalez/2010

Before the Haiti earthquake in 2010, Figaro Alourdes worked as a food vendor on the streets of one of the most deprived areas of Port-au-Prince. Christian Aid partner Aprosifa recruited her as one of its food distributors, providing free, hot meals to hundreds of vulnerable people who were left with nothing after the quake. She gave away 80 meals each day, and sold any she had left over for a small profit, providing extra money to help her support her family

When a magnitude 7 earthquake hit Haiti in January 2010, it was already the poorest country in the western hemisphere, with 70 per cent of the population living on less than US\$2 a day. Eighty-six per cent of people in Port-au-Prince were living in slum conditions, and half the population of the capital had no access to latrines and only one-third had access to drinking water.

The earthquake killed 220,000 people, injured more than 300,000 and affected more than 3.5 million. More than 293,000 houses and 4,000 schools were damaged or destroyed, and 1.5 million people became homeless, living in camps or with host families. Twenty-five per cent of civil servants were killed and 60 per cent of government and administrative buildings were destroyed or damaged, seriously weakening the capacity of the government to respond. The UN resident coordinator and many of the UN country team were also killed.

At the time of the earthquake, Christian Aid had been working in Haiti since 1979, supporting local partners in development and emergency response and as part of the ACT Alliance forum. Christian Aid had an office based in Port-au-Prince that was destroyed in the earthquake, trapping staff and injuring NGO colleagues. Partners also lost staff and had buildings destroyed in the earthquake, or opened them up to homeless people in the immediate aftermath. But they were also among the first to respond.

On the basis of existing partnerships and established contracts, Christian Aid was able to support partners' immediate response efforts in Port-au-Prince and in areas of displacement. Sharing offices and resources between ACT Alliance members, even in the absence of functioning banking, communication or import systems, Christian Aid was able to use innovative cash-based programming with existing partners to provide market-oriented responses that provided food and reinvigorated the functioning markets. The following are some examples.

Christian Aid partner Aprosifa, based in one of Port-au-Prince's slums Cite Soleil, was one of the first organisations on the ground to deliver 237,115 hot meals through a

market-based emergency food distribution programme that paid community women food-stall holders the cost of raw food and expenses to cook hot meals for 70 to 80 people who were without food and going hungry.

Partners GARR, RNDDH, and POZ (Objective: Zero AIDS Promoters)-SIDA, with long-established links to communities in urban and rural areas through their development and human rights work, were supported with additional humanitarian expertise from Christian Aid to cost an appropriate food basket, identify and prioritise with community members the beneficiaries in most need, and roll-out cash distribution relief projects to 5,645 households (28,227 individuals). The assessment was carried out within a couple of days, with distributions taking place within 10 days of the earthquake.

These pre-established relationships and experience allowed local organisations to work quickly and closely with people affected by the earthquake to target assistance where it was needed most, utilising local knowledge, resources and markets, and innovative approaches such as local trader-run food kitchens and cash distributions.

In total, during the first year of emergency response, Christian Aid's work with partners supported 60,063 people (or 12,013 households).

ACT Alliance partners collaborated well during the emergency, sharing office space, meeting regularly to prepare a joint ACT appeal and, in the case of FinChurch Aid, running a programme from within ACT Alliance partner LWF. An independent evaluation of the ACT appeal was undertaken in the end of 2011:

'In the external evaluation team's view the ACT response stands out as a model of an integrated and holistic response based on clear principles of human dignity and respect for the Haitian people. Considering the major revision of the 2011 Sphere Handbook with new additional emphasis on protection and psychosocial aspects of disaster response, the ACT/Haitian partner response in ways has been cutting edge in its spontaneous attention to these aspects of people's needs and rights.'

However, the evaluation found that delays in the distribution of funds in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake for some ACT Alliance members with significant bureaucratic procedures did cause serious delays and problems, and this included Christian Aid. It was an issue experienced by many response operations scaling up work to such a rapid degree in the immediate aftermath of the large-scale emergency,

highlighting the importance of building more adaptive procedures. Another emphasis was on strengthening coordination and this was echoed by interviewees for this case study who felt there could have been better coordination in terms of shared local partners and the implementation of projects. This is even more important where ACT partners were rapidly scaling up programmes

The immediate emergency response consisted of the following:

237,115 hot meals were distributed

2,388 households (12,000 people) received dry food or cash vouchers for food

5,645 households received cash to meet their basic needs (28,227 individuals).

In addition, 10,060 hygiene kits were distributed, helping more than 50,000 people; 1,200 people received water purification tablets; 600 received water containers; and 1,000 gallons of water were distributed.

In total, 15,318 people received medical assistance from emergency teams; 7,829 people received psychosocial support; and 2,459 households (more than 12,295 people) were supported with emergency shelter, ranging from plastic sheets to temporary shelters.

and their presence in country. Coordination was a big issue for all, with the UN highlighting that the influx of large amount of organisations new to Haiti to help with the response added to this problem.

Christian Aid partners were already responding through their networks and contacts when Christian Aid made contact within 12 hours of the immediate aftermath. Christian Aid then helped partners identify priorities, provided humanitarian expertise and gave financial support. This gives a clear example of how partnerships can deliver in emergencies through the combination of local

expertise and knowledge of communities, combined with emergency response expertise where necessary through accompaniment and training.

The role of Christian Aid as a burden- and risk-sharing partner both financially and programmatically, alongside partners with the contacts and knowledge of the community and country context (to reduce contextual risk), helped deliver a fast and appropriate immediate response. In the absence of functioning banking and communications systems in Haiti, trust, investment in long-term relationships and knowledge of each other's capacity (both between partners and Christian Aid, and between partners and their communities) and immediate emergency staff support to the country programme were key factors in enabling a fast and effective response in the immediate aftermath.

In the next phase of programming, however, delays in grant disbursement and emergency activities did occur. Significant learning in the three-month real-time evaluation (RTE) strengthened weaknesses in procedure and identified the importance of regular review and emergency management.

Managing ongoing contextual risk and programmatic risk as a coherent part of a massive global emergency response effort requires detailed engagement with UN coordination. The partnership model encourages local and national partners to be part of emergency response coordination. However, access and inclusion of local and national organisations to UN coordination meetings was an issue. Local actors highlighted problems with prompt information and some meetings not accessible for French – let alone Creole – speakers. Significant learning identified in the international Haiti RTE has been the importance of ensuring UN coordination meetings are inclusive of local and national actors. This is not an easy thing to achieve. In the meantime partnership INGOs such as Christian Aid and ACT agency staff need to be part of coordination meetings with partners, and try to facilitate greater inclusion of local actors.

To ensure ACT Alliance members are informed by and influence the overall UN coordinated emergency response, there is a need to build coordination and advocacy capacity into their surge work. However, for partnership INGOs this should not be an alternative to ensuring coordination structures include local and national actors. One recommendation by UN interviewees was that ACT agencies provide support for a dedicated full-time ACT advocacy coordinator to link with the ACT programme coordinator and local partners, and to ensure the ACT Alliance is adequately influencing and informed by high-level humanitarian response planning and implementation.

Christian Aid partners were already responding through their networks and contacts when Christian Aid made contact within 12 hours of the immediate aftermath.

Another key factor has been managing of the 'push' side of humanitarianism in terms of pressure from donor public and media, and donor reporting. Leadership by the country programme manager and support from experienced managers in the Caribbean region were key in leading a strong response on the ground and managing head office communication, information and coordination needs. This was complemented by practical humanitarian programme support staff who knew the humanitarian funding and programme requirements. But problems or gaps were experienced as a result of staff turnover, or long recruitment processes.

Delivering an emergency programme required a much closer partnership process, that we have called 'intensified humanitarian partnership', involving significant accompaniment, capacity-building, communication and negotiation with partners and this required substantial staff time, knowledge and capacity. Surge capacity, staff continuity, recruitment and training – including for management of rapidly scaled up financing of projects – remain key determinants for both Christian Aid and partners in being able to scale up and deliver an effective emergency response.

In the next section the report looks at the main lessons from Christian Aid's experience of partnerships in emergency work that have implications for the humanitarian sector.

4. LESSONS FROM CHRISTIAN AID'S EXPERIENCE



Christian Aid/M. Gonzalez-Noda

A malnutrition centre run by local partner Aprosifa in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Despite the loss and destruction they suffered, local partners were quick to respond after the 2010 earthquake

Learning from Christian Aid's experience has implications for humanitarian agencies working with local organisations in emergencies and for the development of best practice in accompaniment and support for locally led responses. Christian Aid's experience also has implications for the kind of attitudinal change required across the sector to enable greater support for the partnership approach to humanitarian work. Below are 14 lessons drawn from the organisation's experience from the principles that guide the approach, to the DRR and preparedness, and the response and recovery.

Investing in knowledge, principles and structures

1. Organisational principles for partnership based on mutual accountability, transparency and complementary strengths must be built into the international non-governmental organisation (INGO) corporate identity as a humanitarian actor. These principles should guide relationships between INGOs and local partners throughout the disaster cycle from DRR to response and recovery. Staff training on how these principles are applied in practice is a key part of INGO staff induction.
2. Being accountable to affected or vulnerable communities requires prior investment in the principles and mechanisms for downward accountability and transparency among INGO staff, partner staff and the community members themselves.
3. International NGOs and local partners should build their emergency response capacity and knowledge of relevant Sphere and HAP standards and commitments as part of joint contingency planning. Ideally this should be part of local or national disaster planning processes involving governments in at-risk countries.

Investing in partnerships for DRR

4. Investing in DRR programmes with vulnerable and disaster-affected populations is the first step for many communities and organisations to move from coping to developing despite disasters. The relationships and participatory processes essential for effective DRR programming at local level also establish the understanding and relationships that can help ensure effective emergency response.
5. Contingency planning between INGOs and local partners and the communities they work with are an essential process for building trust, knowledge and understanding of each other's approaches, work, capacities and staff. This emergency response planning should be undertaken in line with core partnership principles, should seek to strengthen peer support mechanisms that enable local and national actors to support each other and should build understanding of government disaster management structures.

Investing in partnerships for response

6. Scaling up emergency response work to standard requires both INGO and local partners to be able to increase their capacity rapidly, whether through trained volunteers, newly recruited staff, additional accompaniment for financial management and reporting, increased monitoring and evaluation, coordination and advocacy or technical expertise. Surge procedures (including additional human resource capacity to recruit and support surge staff – see below) should be a key part of contingency planning and DRR activities with communities based on accountability and partnership principles.
7. Partnerships between INGOs and local partners intensify considerably during an emergency response, and communication and meetings can increase from anything between twice a month to twice a day. The understanding and communication between INGOs and partners should have been established during DRR and contingency planning, but the pressure and additional support needed for a new intensified partnership model should be transparently recognised and opportunities for reflection, consultation and discussion as part of a much more integrated working model should be available.
8. Partnership and accountability principles should also underpin how INGOs manage communication or reporting demands from supporters, donors and media.

Procedures for handling the demands of a high-profile emergency should be incorporated into contingency planning. To avoid priorities being distorted during response, it can help to have a dedicated staff member managing demands for accountability to supporters and public separate to the emergency response manager or country programme lead.

9. Increased management and human resource support to both INGO and partner staff is essential and can determine the effectiveness of an emergency response. The increase in workload, delivering to scale and intensification of engagement between INGO and local partners requires appropriate support to staff to manage workloads, performance and tensions. There may also be specific staff needs for those personally affected by the emergency such as psycho-social welfare or access to loans or grants for lost homes or possessions. These needs should be considered in contingency planning and should be reviewed during the emergency response.
10. Commitment to long-term development work should be maintained where appropriate and possible. INGOs working with partners in emergency response and long-term development should safeguard continued support for relevant and appropriate development projects throughout the duration of the emergency and continue to provide appropriate support and oversight.

Investing in partnerships for advocacy

11. Advocacy support to local partners should be a core part of all humanitarian work from DRR to response and recovery to influence governments responsible for protecting citizens from avoidable disasters and coordinating an emergency response. So advocacy training and support that enables local organisations and national networks to push governments to reduce disaster risks, address vulnerabilities and ensure appropriate and accountable emergency response efforts are essential.
12. As part of contingency planning, INGOs and local partners should seek to establish and maintain ongoing relationships with donors, UN agencies and the wider humanitarian presence in the country. New funding partnerships rarely start in an emergency so access to emergency funds will depend on credibility and visibility with donors before the emergency, and INGOs have an important role to play in facilitating recognition for the

credibility and visibility of their local partners in this sector.

13. Once an emergency response is under way, dedicated staff for coordination and advocacy work are an essential resource to strengthen the integration and complementarity of the INGO/partner work within the wider response. How to resource the international coordination and influencing capacity should be part of contingency planning to enable local partners to lead this process as much as possible with support from the INGO in terms of training, facilitation and accompaniment.

Risks and responsibilities of the partnership model

14. INGOs and local partners working in partnership need to establish the principles and procedures that enable them to take on and manage risks for delivering the emergency programme together. Working with local organisations in emergencies requires a shift of power to local partners and their staff. It inherently requires more trust and less direct control on the part of the INGO that is responding to the emergency with its local partners. Risks associated with this approach are managed through building trust and understanding, training and preparedness, and regular monitoring and review.

Clearly the scope of this research has meant that some areas are not covered. A detailed set of knowledge gaps are provided in Annex 2 and it is our hope that these will be followed up by Christian Aid and others at a later date.

More substantively, the recommendations outlined above reinforce calls for a new business model and approach to humanitarian aid. This has implications that reach beyond the humanitarian system and carry implications for how development and vulnerability is thought about and acted upon. The next concluding chapter explores these issues in more depth.

5. CONCLUSION



Christian Aid/Mike Goldwater

In Kade Bade village near Konni in Niger, women clear unused stony land in order to plant more crops. The project started with 40 women, but now there are 120 women from this village and 200 more coming from five other villages: 60 per cent of them are widows. The women have dug 10 wells so they can water their crops in the dry season, and grow maringa, a year-round nutritious crop. The region has been affected by food shortages in recent years and projects like this enable communities to come together to support each other

The future of the humanitarian sector: aid agencies or enablers?

The future of humanitarian aid will be defined as much by the need to invest in disaster prevention and early action, as it will by the growing frequency, unpredictability and complexity of emergencies. Both these factors call for a permanent local capacity to prevent and, crucially, to respond to emergencies of varying sizes played out in a range of cultural and geophysical contexts.

In a recent Reuters poll of 41 aid agencies asked to identify the top 10 ways the humanitarian sector needs to change, the need to work more closely with local people to avert disasters and reduce their impact came third.⁴⁸ The importance of lobbying governments to invest more in reducing the risk of disasters came fourth.

Nowhere in the list of priorities came the vision of a future in which humanitarian response is primarily managed and led by governments and local people. It seems that while many aid agencies recognise the need for investment in DRR and early action, the real implications of what this investment means for the shape of emergency response has yet to be fully appreciated.

In countries with relatively strong governments and institutions, there exists a growing reluctance to call for international assistance in the face of even a national emergency such as Thailand's recent floods.⁴⁹ National Disaster Management Associations in Pakistan, India, Central America, the Philippines and elsewhere have extensive experience of managing disasters, and these standing disaster management structures are being successfully replicated at local community level in many of the same countries.

How local communities and particularly affected or vulnerable men and women in those communities are able to influence government policies is and will become increasingly important for the future of the humanitarian sector. This is particularly important where poverty, exclusion and marginalisation contribute to vulnerability and lack of appropriate emergency relief. Supporting excluded and marginalised groups to influence policy on DRR and emergency response – and holding governments accountable for their implementation – will be key.

In countries defined as fragile, in conflict or where governments are not strong enough to deliver effective disaster management policies, it will be essential to find innovative ways to build local capacity in DRR and

emergency response. Insecurity or lack of humanitarian access in areas of Somalia, northern Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan and Afghanistan have shown the need for a humanitarian sector able to work collaboratively and build security cooperation with local partners into the more mainstream humanitarian approach in those areas.⁵⁰

Understanding the humanitarian partnership model between international humanitarian actors and local partners and how it can live up to principles of equality, transparency and accountability is the pathway to the future of the humanitarian sector. Humanitarian aid agencies need to strengthen their ability to facilitate, accompany, support and build capacity of their local partners as the core of their delivery model. This means building this work into long-term resilient-development programmes, investing in community-level DRR, preparedness and emergency response.

It also means supporting and facilitating the networks and structures necessary for the accountable governance of disaster management structures and policies. This is particularly the case for marginalised and excluded women and men who are often most vulnerable to natural hazards and least able to access appropriate aid.

Christian Aid's experience shows the important facilitating role an international humanitarian agency can and should play as an enabler and facilitator of local capacity, to build effective governance of disaster risk management and emergency response for resilient equitable development. But changes are needed at the international level.

Christian Aid's experience of working through partnership in emergencies ranging from small-scale communities hit by floods to major earthquake-affected fragile states demonstrates some of the priority areas for change that should be considered by all actors in the system.

Priority 1: Improving and scaling up the partnership model

Christian Aid's experience of working with local partners in emergency response has reinforced the importance of investing in the systems, structures, planning, relationships and staff to do this. And experience has shown us that partners should be involved at all stages. It is important that humanitarian organisations know:

- their capacity to provide appropriate support to partners in different countries, and increase that capacity
- their partners' capacity and expertise and know how to strengthen both of these

In countries defined as fragile, in conflict or where governments are not strong enough to deliver effective disaster management policies, it will be essential to find innovative ways to build local capacity.

- the model of partnership and risk management and then build these
- the disaster risks, know who is vulnerable and address these
- the contingency plans for emergency response; keep them flexible and up to date
- the local and national government institutions where the organisation and its partners work and their DRR and emergency response plans
- the donors, sister agencies and alliances in the countries concerned and outside.

Humanitarian organisations are making some moves towards investing in the structures and systems, such as partnership units or organisational partnership policies. But this move is slow and would benefit from a clearer debate with local and national organisations involved in the humanitarian response, and a significant donor realignment towards building local capacity and partnership approaches to disaster prevention and response.

Priority 2: Building local capacity for response into resilience, DRR and early response work

This requires significant financial investment before an emergency happens, which raises some significant questions about how to fund this work. The report by Oxfam and Save the Children on early warning systems in east Africa identified the importance of donors and humanitarian agencies acting quickly when early warning signs are noted.

Early release of funds should also provide opportunities to work with local organisations and provide locally defined assistance while strengthening the standing response capacity. It would be a move away from a system of funding that consists of 'sudden inputs following public appeals, (which) encourages an emphasis on rapid service delivery, exaggeration of the agencies' own importance and understatement of the role of local people.'⁵¹ Where local and national institutions do not have capacity to lead response efforts directly, there remains a need for donor flexibility to recognise a collaborative emergency response model such as the partnership approach.

Significant reforms are needed within UN coordination and funding mechanisms to provide funding streams for local organisations either directly or through partnership with

peers or INGOs. There has been significant criticism in the past of UN cluster coordination mechanisms that have excluded local actors through language, meeting culture, location and so on.

Innovative approaches to financing humanitarian work will need to engage the private sector and think particularly about how local actors can benefit and contribute to the business model. For example, initiatives such as the Peace Dividend Trust help train local businesses to bid for contracts as part of humanitarian response and recovery efforts and strengthens local business skills, building employment and economic growth.⁵² In terms of DRR, more work is needed to identify appropriate insurance mechanisms that are affordable, promote disaster prevention and reach the most marginalised and vulnerable.

Priority 3: A new role and vision for humanitarian agencies: from knights to mid-fielders?

It seems simple: invest in DRR, invest in building the local capacity for emergency response and then support and accompany that response when it is needed. But for any humanitarian agency whose vision is to deliver direct emergency aid where it is needed, it is about doing yourself out of business.

More than that, it is about challenging the view of affected populations as 'pawns' (passive individuals) and the international community as 'knights' (extreme altruists).⁵³

When affected or vulnerable countries and people are supported to lead their own DRR or response efforts, and allowed to become more like knights in their own emergencies, then the old knights are not as powerful.

The truth is the challenge of the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition for the international humanitarian community to reorient away from supplying aid to supporting and facilitating communities' own relief and recovery priorities is a challenge to the humanitarian community to change their attitudes and how they perceive themselves. The sector should stop scoring goals and celebrating in the public eye but instead they must supercede power and control to national actors, helping to set up the play that enables them to score goals, to save their own lives and get recognition and support for it.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS



Christian Aid/Nazlie Dale

Alikulano Yasho is the chairman of the disaster risk reduction committee in the village of Tombondela, Chikwawa district, Malawi. The village suffers from severe flooding. An early warning system to alert villagers of potential flooding so they can evacuate the area was set up through Christian Aid's partner Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM). Alikulano gets a call on his mobile phone from volunteers who read hydrometric metres at different parts of the river, which indicate if a flood is approaching. When the river levels start to rise, he uses his megaphone to tell the villagers to evacuate

Acting on the conclusions from this report would require action on three mutually reinforcing areas:

- **Change in practice:** humanitarian agencies should develop best practice on collaborative partnership approaches for disaster prevention and response that builds local capacity and then works with that local capacity to deliver emergency response.
- **Change in global perspective:** the importance of DRR and emergency response to building resilience and development makes it central to global development and aid debates; the UN secretary-general should appoint a high-level panel to lead a global review of disaster prevention and response to feed into the post-MDGs framework discussions.
- **Change in funding, coordination and attitude:** donors, UN coordination mechanisms and national government must fund, coordinate and deliver emergency responses as if local capacity mattered. They must develop structures that reinforce and fund best practice working with local capacity in emergency response.

These top-line recommendations are explained in more detail below.

1. Improving and scaling up the partnership model

This requires creating a humanitarian sector with inclusive funding and support structures to resource local communities own relief and recovery priorities.

Collaborative burden-sharing partnerships between INGOs and local partners are only one tool to build local capacity and support locally led responses. But they are not without their challenges and the sector could benefit from the development of a community of practice for collaborative partnerships in emergency response. Similarly more needs to be done to ensure that partnerships are not simply a contractual model that benefits one side while transferring risk to those least able to bear it. More effort needs to be made by partnership INGOs to professionalise and strengthen empowering partnership approaches in emergencies.

The change in practice would involve the following:

Change in practice:

- **humanitarian agencies should develop best practice on collaborative partnership approaches for disaster prevention and response that builds local capacity**
 - greater investment should be made by humanitarian agencies and donors to develop partnerships with local and national government and civil society before emergencies, and incorporate DRR, resilience and response capacity into preparedness plans.

Where Christian Aid partnerships deliver better aid, it is because there is a long-term investment and presence, trust and commitment. These aspects are hard to address in the current system of international coordination and funding, with such a short timeframe for humanitarian funding. UN reforms and learning from international humanitarian responses have still not led to the structural changes required to address these issues, so a strong realignment is needed in favour of local capacity.

2. Building local capacity for response into resilience, DRR and early response

Since the Hyogo Framework for Action on Disaster Risk Reduction was agreed by 163 states in 2005, the world has come a long way in recognising and investing in the prevention of disasters. As the world moves to consider ecological and environmental implications for sustainable development at the Rio+20 Conference in Brazil in June this year, and begins discussions on a follow-up framework to the MDGs, disaster resilience, preparedness and response must be central to the debate.

The humanitarian sector has still to reform in a way that supports greater integration of emergency response into development strategies, due in part to the push and pull of humanitarian funding structures. These structures require a fundamental remodelling if the sector is going to deliver a resilient, sustainable emergency response.

Change in global perspective:

- **the importance of DRR and emergency response to building resilience and development makes it central to global development and aid debates;**
 - the UN secretary-general should appoint a high-level panel to lead a global review of disaster prevention and response to feed into the post-MDGs agenda.

Changes to humanitarian funding structures, however, cannot wait or local capacity for emergency response will continue to be undermined. As recommended above, a comprehensive review should be undertaken to inform the post-MDGs framework. In the meantime significant steps should be taken to direct funding towards investment in local capacity for DRR, response and recovery as part of sustainable humanitarian action.

Change in funding, coordination and attitude:

- **donors, UN coordination mechanisms and national government must fund, coordinate and deliver emergency responses as if local capacity mattered. They must develop structures that reinforce and fund best practice, working with local capacity in emergency response**
- by 2015 no programme should receive funding from the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) or the UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) that does not involve a local government or civil society partner in a lead role
- disbursement of CERF funds should be speeded up and delays requiring pre-financing should be addressed. Where there is a need for pre-financing, CERF should encourage partnerships between local and INGOs who could provide the pre-financing
- the sector should think about how best to provide incentives and demonstrate genuine partnership; for example through criteria on prequalification or accreditation that requires standards on partnership for INGOs
- managing the problem of supply. Federations and alliance should seek to ensure that members do not set up responses in countries unless they have a historic programme. Instead funds should be channelled to those alliance sister agencies as the partner best placed to respond.

At times, UN coordination efforts in countries such as Haiti have come under significant criticism for excluding national and local organisations to the preference of INGOs through language used, location of meetings, and so on. Initiatives to train and involve local organisations better in UN cluster processes are bearing fruit,⁵⁴ and these and similar initiatives should be supported.

- funding to build local and national organisations' understanding and engagement of UN coordination mechanisms should continue as a priority, and where INGOs are working with local partners they must

facilitate partner engagement and understanding of humanitarian coordination processes

- efforts to professionalise the humanitarian sector through systems for accreditation or pre-qualification are welcome, but must include local and national organisations and the partnership skills needed in the sector
- instead, an understanding of the local, national organisations and government bodies and their capacities for emergency response should be developed as part of a national resilience strategy and accreditation process, and those organisations given due priority during response coordination.

3. Beyond emergency and development aid – changing the disaster narrative

Compassion with people affected by disasters across the globe drives people all over the world to acts of generosity and solidarity, and this aid is desperately needed. But this very human reaction to emergency appeals and funding has created its own economic driver that at its worst can create perverse incentives against disaster prevention.

For starters people and donors are much more inclined to give after emergencies rather than give to prevent them. For example, Mozambique, anticipating major floods in 2002, asked donors for US\$2.7 million to prepare and got only half the amount, but US\$100 million was received in emergency assistance following the floods.⁵⁵ Given this, it is understandable that cash-strapped countries might find it hard to invest in prevention unaided. For example, Nicaragua declined to pursue a weather-indexing programme after it had been priced in the global reinsurance market: it cited international assistance following hurricane Mitch in 1998 as an indication of dependable alternatives.⁵⁶

This puts humanitarian agencies and donors in the challenging position of trying to raise funds to prevent the kinds of emergencies to which people are much more willing to give money. The research report *Finding Frames* captured part of this dilemma; it looked at the fundraising for poverty eradication and development agencies through consumer marketing strategies that effectively undermined agencies' own efforts for long-term political change. It seemed from their research that by giving the message that £5 or £10 can solve a problem, albeit an immediate emergency relief one, or a development one, the transaction has taken place and the answer has been 'sold'. Frustration then grows over time when this 'sale' has failed to deliver

After all, if development achievements can be wiped out with one large or several smaller emergencies, what use are they to communities facing disaster risk?

on the promised transaction; the problem is not solved and the supporter feels cheated.⁵⁷

The evidence strongly suggests that if the self-enhancing values of achievement, power and hedonism are activated and strengthened – as they are by consumer marketing – then the positive values of universalism and benevolence are actively suppressed. In other words, the social and political scales are tipped significantly against the emergence of the systemic changes NGOs are interested in.⁵⁸

To a large extent emergency aid has avoided this trap, in part because by its original concept humanitarian aid was intended to support disaster-affected populations through the immediate aftermath of an emergency until their recovery. It was by nature intended to be a short-term transaction. But as complex political emergencies and chronic humanitarian crises have lasted in some countries for decades and as vulnerable communities lose homes and livelihoods annually through small and medium-scale disasters, supporters are already asking why are these things happening again?

The answers are not easy. Funds are needed to invest in DRR, resilience and locally led responses and, ultimately, to save lives. The challenge, however, is not to undermine our long-term goals in the process. A more sophisticated dialogue with the public in traditional and non-traditional donor countries and disaster-affected countries is needed, as part of a global debate on what kind of world we want.

A UN secretary-general High Level Panel to lead a global review of disaster prevention and response to feed into the post-MDG agenda (recommendation 3) could help generate this new debate and a new vision of what humanitarian aid should be.

After all, if development achievements can be wiped out with one large or several smaller emergencies, what use are they to communities facing disaster risk? For the post-MDG discussions to include the needs of those most vulnerable, they need to incorporate disaster risk reduction, prevention and emergency response at their heart.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Christian Aid accountability commitments from July 2008

- Action by Churches Together (ACT) Development code of practice, oikoumene.org/en/activities/act-development-home.html This commits us to upholding pledges relating to the quality of our work, including joint work with other ACT Development participants, and to monitoring compliance through mutual peer accountability.
- Standards and commitments relating to Christian Aid's humanitarian work as a member of ACT International, act-intl.org These apply when we are either supporting or implementing an ACT emergency appeal.
- Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief, ifrc.org/publicat/conduct/index.asp This voluntary, self-policing code commits us to principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence in our disaster relief work.
- Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response – the Sphere standards, sphereproject.org This voluntarily commits us to minimum standards in the provision of water supply and sanitation, nutrition, food aid, shelter and health services. It also provides indicators against which we can measure our performance in emergencies.
- Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) accountability framework, dec.org.uk This commits us to having appropriate mechanisms in place to give assurance to the DEC that funds are used for what we say they will be used for, and that our actions benefit those in need.
- The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management 2007, hapinternational.org/projects/standards/hap-standard.aspx This commits us to making our humanitarian action accountable to beneficiaries, for example, by enabling beneficiaries to report and gain redress for any complaints. We contributed to the development of this standard, and will be using peer and self-monitoring. We will eventually apply for external certification, to measure and demonstrate compliance.
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCRC) Code of Good Practice for NGOs Responding to HIV/AIDS, ifrc.org/what/health/hivaids/code We also played a leading role in developing this self-monitoring initiative by the IFRCRC and use it when reviewing our overseas offices.
- ImpACT Coalition (Improving Accountability, Clarity and Transparency), impactcoalition.org.uk This UK charity sector initiative commits us to increasing public and media understanding of the sector by taking a long-term, collective approach to ensuring the public and media have up-to-date, accurate views of what we achieve.
- The Fundraising Standards Board (FRSB), frsb.org.uk/ Our membership of FRSB commits us to compliance with the Institute of Fundraising code of practice and allows us to use the FRSB logo to publicise this.
- Institute of Fundraising Code of Practice on Transparency and Accountability in Fundraising, institute-of-fundraising.org.uk This commits us to self-certifying that we comply with standard practice for major donor fundraising and fundraising through electronic media.
- Charity law (regulated by the Charity Commission) and company law as per the Charities Act 1993, Trustees Act 2000 and Companies Act 1985. These laws commit us to complying with numerous provisions under statutory acts, including: appointment of trustees and governance; internal financial controls and accounting standards; investment of charitable funds; fundraising; political activities and campaigning.
- Charities' Statement on Recommended Practice (SORP 2005), charity-commission.gov.uk/investigations/sorp/sorpfaq.asp#1 This commits us to following recommended format and content in our annual reports and accounts, and enables us to meet legal requirements for accounting standards and register with the Charity Commission.
- Ethical Trading Initiative, ethicaltrade.org Christian Aid's membership of this commits us to ensuring that our key stakeholders in the South (partners and beneficiaries) have a voice in both developing and monitoring labour codes. Alongside our environmental standards, this forms the backbone of our ethical code of practice and informs our buying decisions.
- Setting the Standard – a Common Approach to Child Protection for International NGOs. This commits us to standards constituting a common approach to child protection for NGOs. We fed into its development and are now developing procedures for monitoring its implementation.

Appendix 2: Knowledge gaps

Where sufficient capacity does not yet exist for local organisations to lead emergency response efforts, integrated approaches that include some operational programmes will still be needed. But greater effort and investment in understanding the benefits of building and working through local capacity is needed, particularly where knowledge gaps exist due to a lack of engagement or prioritisation by the humanitarian sector. These are some of them:

1. Building and sharing knowledge and experience of working through local capacity in emergencies; of particular interest is the perspective from local organisations and governments regarding what works well and how that can be strengthened.

Two context-specific areas include:

- working through local capacity in weak fragile states (where churches, mosques, or local organisations may be the most functioning institutions)
 - working through local capacity in emergencies managed by strong, authoritarian governments where local actors may have more access, but similarly where long-term socio-political factors (for example exclusion of certain groups) may play out in the response effort
 - linking local government and civil society capacity through effective DRR, preparedness and response.
2. Options for global financing of locally led resilient development, DRR, emergency response and recovery; what could these look like and how would this work in practice?
 - international development aid
 - early release of humanitarian aid
 - private sector – big business and small business
 - domestic resource mobilisation and taxation.

3. Integrating and strengthening advocacy on accountability at local level for DRR planning and emergency response and recovery plans.
 - What kind of mechanisms can best enable emergency coordination to be accountable at grass-roots and local and national level? How best should UN clusters or national level emergency response meetings be accountable and inclusive of local actors?
 - Learning on experiences of supporting local organisational engagement with UN systems and whether engagement delivers better response in the short- and long-term would be excellent.

ENDNOTES

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- 12 Humanitarian Emergency Response Review, p26.
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