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THE ROLE OF HUMANITARIAN AID IN CONFLICT

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Abstract

Purpose: The term 'humanitarian aid' has outgrown its traditional Red Cross definition of 'providing swift emergency assistance to people in disaster or emergency situations'. Today humanitarian action is commonly defined in a broader sense. The study sought to establish the role of humanitarian aid in conflict.

Methodology: The research was purely qualitative. Desktop literature review was conducted. Critical analysis of the literature was conducted.

Findings: The study found out that it is important to reiterate that humanitarian aid is not neutral in the midst of conflict. Aid and how it is administered can cause harm or can strengthen peace capacities in the midst of conflicted communities. All aid programmes involve the transfer of resources (food, shelter, water, health care, training, etc.) into a resource-scarce environment. Where people are in conflict, these resources represent power and wealth and they become an element of the conflict. Some people attempt to control and use aid resources to support their side of the conflict and to weaken the other side. If they are successful or if aid staff fails to recognise the impact of their programming decisions, aid can cause harm.

Unique Contributions to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study advocates for the use of conflict sensitive planning and programming in humanitarian intervention. In addition, it is recommended that coordination of efforts is by far a very important aspect that needs to be put into consideration in order to maximize the impact of humanitarian assistance. The researcher further recommends the use of Anderson DNH frame work, whose primary purpose of the DNH framework is micro conflict analysis, project planning and programme quality, and impact assessment of programme on conflict.

Keywords: *Humanitarian Aid, Conflict, Emergency Aid, Relief Aid*

INTRODUCTION

The term 'humanitarian aid' has outgrown its traditional Red Cross definition of 'providing swift emergency assistance to people in disaster or emergency situations'. Today humanitarian action is commonly defined in a broader sense. According to Minear and Weiss[1] rendering humanitarian aid entails "activities undertaken to improve the human condition." in the same vein, this study adopts the definition by Minear and Weiss as a way of removing ambiguity, by using humanitarian aid and "relief aid" synonymously. Also known as emergency aid, relief aid is used in reference to any provision of aid during an emergency that is meant to attend to the immediate needs of people.

Mary Anderson's 'Do No Harm' or DNH framework for analyzing capacities and vulnerabilities may be used to further define what the "immediate needs" of people are. Relief aid meets people's needs, or their "immediate requirements for survival or recovery" as defined by Anderson. A definition of human requirements for survival is provided in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25, which states:

> "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing and housing and medical care, and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."[2]

In sum, a comprehensive definition of "relief aid" refers to any provision of aid during an emergency that is meant to attend to a person's immediate requirements for survival or recovery, which include food, clothing, housing, medical care, necessary social services, and security when a person is faced with circumstances beyond her or his control. In contrast to relief aid, development consists of long-term projects that aim to better the welfare of society as a whole.

Humanitarian aid in this paper has been distinguished from development aid as follows. In conflict situations, development is often labelled as "reconstruction" or "rehabilitation". Although post-conflict reconstruction is important work, these terms reaffirm the stereotype that development is a peacetime-only activity. This study adopts Mary Anderson's definition of "development" as "the process by which vulnerabilities are reduced and capacities increased."[3] This means that improving a society is to reduce that society's vulnerabilities, thereby making the population less susceptible to disasters. The most efficient way to remove vulnerabilities is to use that society's pre-existing capacities. This definition of development requires the project to improve both the autonomy and strength of the society. Further, Anderson distinguishes "development" from "sustainable

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[1] Minear and Weiss, *Mercy under Fire: War and the Global Humanitarian Community* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 18.

[2] United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights,* resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948 (Geneva, United Nations, 1948). http://www. un. org/Overview/rights. html

[3] Cain, "The Rape of Dinah: Human Rights, Civil War in Liberia, and Evil Triumphant,"268.

development" by asserting that sustainable development is reducing societal vulnerabilities and increasing societal capacities in a way that does not compromise resources for future generations and promotes the achievement of human rights before any other goal.

In addition, "relief-aid" and "development" concepts are further distinguished from "development-relief" which is the provision of emergency aid that simultaneously attends to peoples' immediate requirements for survival or recovery, while attempting to reduce societal vulnerabilities and increase societal capacities.[4] According to Inigo Barrena, actors in a conflict consist of individuals, groups and institutions contributing to conflict or being affected by it in a positive or negative manner, as well as those engaged in dealing with conflict. Actors differ as to their goals and interests, their positions, capacities to realise their interests, and relationships with other actors.

Some approaches distinguish actors according to the level at which they are active (grassroots, middle level, top level). In particular, conflict transformation theory attaches great importance to middle level leaders, as they may assume a catalytic role through their linkages both to the top and the grassroots. In any case, it is important to consider the relationships between actors/groups at various levels and how they affect the conflict dynamics.[5] Milton J Esman[6] asserts that the principal actors in the encounter between foreign aid and ethnic pluralism are development assistance organisations and their agents on the one hand, and ethnic communities and their spokespersons on the other hand. The critical intermediary is government. Foreign assistance normally reaches a society through the state as an expression of the latter's sovereignty. Development assistance agencies must negotiate with governments the terms and conditions of the resources the agencies provide.[7]

METHODOLOGY

The application of a conflict analysis methodology for making interventions in conflict management and or humanitarian assistance, according to the Sida manual on conflict analysis8, improves effectiveness in these two areas of peace work especially in places affected by violent conflicts. But in order to fully grasp conflict analysis, this researcher plans to qualify information from data collected through formal and informal interviews. However, the research will mostly assume a desk study approach where material from providers of aid will be analyzed. Such aid providers will include the United Nations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent, authorised government bodies, INGOs and NGOs, civil society groups and other private bodies such as church-based or faith-based agencies or organisations that have been working in Southern Sudan during the period that this study covers

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[4] Anderson, *Rising From the Ashes,* 12.

[5] Inigo Barrena, "Conflict analysis", 4

[6] See Milton J. Esman, "Can Foreign Aid Moderate Ethnic Conflict?"

[7] Milton J. Esman, "Can Foreign Aid Moderate Ethnic Conflict?", 4

[8] See, for instance, Swedish International Development Agency, *Manual for Conflict Analysis* (Stockholm: Sida, 2006), p5

FINDINGS

A Theoretical Approach to Aid

The term "humanitarian aid" has outgrown its traditional Red Cross definition of providing swift emergency assistance to people in disaster or emergency situations. Today humanitarian action is commonly defined in a broader sense; according to Larry Minear and Thomas Weiss it is "activities undertaken to improve the human condition."[9] This study has adopted the contemporary definition of humanitarian aid according to Minear and Weiss, and named the traditional definition of humanitarian aid "relief aid" to remove ambiguity. Also known as emergency aid, relief aid refers to any provision of aid during an emergency that is meant to attend to the immediate needs of people.

Mary Anderson's framework for analyzing capacities and vulnerabilities may be used to further define what the "immediate needs" of people are. Relief aid meets people's needs, or their "immediate requirements for survival or recovery" as defined by Anderson. A definition of human requirements for survival is provided in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25, which states, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."[10] In sum, a comprehensive definition of "relief aid" is any provision of aid during an emergency that is meant to attend to a person's immediate requirements for survival or recovery, which include food, clothing, housing, medical care, necessary social services, and security when a person is faced with circumstances beyond her or his control.

In contrast to relief aid, development consists of long-term projects that aim to better the welfare of society as a whole. Development in conflict situations is often labeled as "reconstruction" or "rehabilitation." Although post-conflict reconstruction is important work, these terms reaffirm the stereotype that development is a peacetime-only activity. This study adopts Mary Anderson's definition of "development" as "the process by which vulnerabilities are reduced and capacities increased."[11] This means that improving a society is to reduce that society's vulnerabilities, thereby making the population less susceptible to disasters. The most efficient way to remove vulnerabilities is to use that society's pre-existing capacities. This definition of development requires the project to improve both the autonomy and strength of the society. Further, Mary Anderson distinguishes "development" from "sustainable development" by asserting that sustainable development is reducing societal vulnerabilities and increasing societal capacities in a way that does not compromise resources for future generations and promotes the achievement of

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[9] Larry Minear and Thomas G. Weiss, *Mercy Under Fire: War and the Global Humanitarian Community* (Boulder:Westview Press, 1995), 18.

[10] United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights,* resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948 (Geneva, United Nations, 1948). http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html

[11] Cain, "The Rape of Dinah: Human Rights, Civil War in Liberia, and Evil Triumphant," 268.

human rights before any other goal. In addition, "relief-aid" and "development" concepts are further distinguished from "development-relief" which is the provision of emergency aid that simultaneously attends to peoples' immediate requirements for survival or recovery, while attempting to reduce societal vulnerabilities and increase societal capacities.[12]

Humanitarian Aid and Conflict

It has been argued that the phenomenal escalation of Sudan's civil war went hand in wrist with the pouring of humanitarian relief aid into Sudan on a massive scale and in terms of billions of dollars.[13] Unfortunately, this intervention barely addressed the symptoms while doing nothing about the causes of the country's suffering. This analysis follows on from the advice of Galtung (1969) that the need to initiate an effective humanitarian intervention goes hand in hand with the imperatives of understanding the intractability and violence of conflict[14]. The intractability in question finds its relative right footing in the fact that humanitarian assistance in times of war has become an issue of growing concern.[15]

In recent years humanitarian assistance provided in situations of war and disaster by donor governments, international organisations like the United Nations (UN), and, particularly, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) has saved hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions, of lives. The provision of food and medical supplies to refugees, displaced persons, and those near the battlefields in Somalia, Rwanda, Zaire, Mozambique, Angola, Liberia, Sudan, and elsewhere constitutes one of the most heroic and life-preserving activities of our time. Major NGOs like CARE, Save the Children, Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, and many less well known organisations have been on the front lines relieving desperate human suffering in Africa.

While the international community increasingly recognises and appreciates the value of these efforts, some analysts have begun to assert that humanitarian assistance on occasion exacerbates conflict rather than contributing to peace. No one questions that the value of this assistance far outweighs its occasional negative consequences, but members of the assistance community find it necessary nevertheless to address the issues these analysts have raised. They want to assess the extent of the damage and consider how to eliminate or minimise these negative consequences.

The urgency of this issue led the United States Institute of Peace to organise a daylong symposium in October 1995 – attended by experts from NGOs, government agencies, the UN, universities, and think-tanks – to discuss and debate the issue of assistance. During the symposium, the principal dialogue occurred among representatives of NGOs. In some respects the conversation was painful, because no one likes to concede that the highly acclaimed humanitarian aid to Africa has some

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[12] Anderson, Rising From the Ashes, 12.

[13] International Crisis Group, *God, Oil and Country* (Brussels: ICG Press, 2002)

[14] Johan Galtung, "Violence, peace and peace research" in *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 1969).

[15] Mark Duffield & John Prendergast, *Without Troops & Tanks: Humanitarian Intervention in Ethiopia and Eritrea* (New Jersey, Red Sea Press, 1994)

negative externalities. Nevertheless, the importance of maintaining the integrity of such endeavours led everyone to engage in an open dialogue. Symposium organisers confined the discussion to Africa both because Africa has featured so prominently in recent aid matters. The outcome has reinforced the though pattern that avers that humanitarian aid does have some influence, consequences and impact on conflict.

In symposium findings compiled by Smock[16], Anderson observed that although NGOs do not generate conflicts, they sometimes contribute to and reinforce violent conflicts pre-existing in the societies where they work. According to her, the negative impacts of humanitarian assistance comprise two basic types: the first results from the transfer of resources and the second involve "the ethical message conveyed by the provision of assistance". In the case of resource transfer, the most direct impact occurs when warring forces and armies gain control of supplies provided for humanitarian assistance, either by imposing levies on humanitarian assistance operations or by stealing supplies. A more indirect impact occurs when NGOs meet the needs of civilian populations, which frees the warring factions to use their resources for war-making. She averred that "resources under the control of one or another warring faction help buttress the power and continuing legitimacy of that warring faction."[17]

Intergroup tensions are also reinforced when NGOs provide external resources to some groups and not to others. For instance, NGOs hire people from certain groups and not others. When NGOs have more funds than local governments, that creates an imbalance between external resources and domestic resources, which makes it difficult for local institutions to build for peace. Also, NGOs hire away much of the best talent from domestic agencies. Illustrating some of these issues in relation to Sudan, Prendergast wrote:

> "To what extent is the international community assuming the public welfare responsibilities of the Sudanese government, thereby freeing resources for the war? Are aid flights from Khartoum to the south supplying soldiers in the government garrisons rather than civilians in need? Is money spent in the pursuit of aid projects providing the government with a source of hard currency used to prosecute the war, and are donated food stocks in the north freeing Sudan production for export (reports say up to a million tons of northern Sudanese sorghum may be exported [in 1995] alone)?[18]

Still in the symposium, Smock recorded Anderson assertions that the second type of negative impact humanitarian aid can have, involves the ethical messages NGOs sometimes convey." When we negotiate with the parties who are at war with each other in order to gain access to the civilians behind the lines they control, when we hire armed guards to protect our staff and our delivery of goods in order to be able to operate in a highly volatile and dangerous situation, when we use the

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[16] See, for instance, David R. Smock, *Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict in Africa*, (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1996), Peaceworks No. 6, p. 5

[17] Ibid

[18] John Prendergast, "Tie Humanitarian Assistance to Substantive Reform," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, July/August 1995, p. 42.

stories of war atrocities to educate and raise funds back home, we become part of the conflict and we convey an implicit message that it is legitimate for arms to decide who gets access to humanitarian assistance," Anderson said. NGOs also sometimes express solidarity with groups engaged in armed struggle against repressive regimes, thereby indirectly reinforcing the conflict. Moreover, the moral legitimacy that accrues to a faction because of support received from international NGOs sometimes makes that faction less willing to engage in peace negotiations. [19]

NGOs send complicated and compromised ethical messages, Anderson argued, in so far as their operations are now increasingly intertwined with those of official agencies. Donor governments and UN agencies increasingly rely on NGOs as their field agents. Moreover, NGOs now collaborate with military forces in the delivery of humanitarian supplies. This raises questions about the nongovernmental and pacific character of NGOs and also suggests they may be adopting some elements of military operating style. Moreover, the military preoccupation with logistics and delivery systems may replace and in turn undermine local capacities to carry out locally initiated developmental activities. The predominant military presence can also undermine civilian control, which in turn slows peace building.

Milton Esman[20] in his works asserted that Some NGOs, notably sectarian agencies, may exacerbate ethnic tensions by favouring one community over another. Another well-informed and sympathetic participant observer of NGO operations, Mary Anderson reached the surprising conclusion that NGOs have seldom been effective in mitigating interethnic conflicts:

> [Through] operational dilemmas encountered in providing aid, NGOs – whether focused on relief, development, human rights, or peace – have, to a greater or lesser extent, inadvertently exacerbated rather than lessened it [conflict] and its consequences. In some cases the negative consequences have been profound and costly.[21]

Anderson further cites as one of many examples the tragedy of the refugee camps in Goma, Zaire, near the Rwandan border. There NGO supplies intended for destitute refugees were distributed through refugee "leaders." These leaders proved to be officers of the Hutu militia whose fighters had committed genocidal atrocities against unarmed Tutsi civilians. The Militias were using the camps and the supplies provided by NGOs for conscription, training, resupply, and sustenance in preparation for the reinvasion of Rwanda and the renewal of civil war against the Tutsi regime.[22]

The challenge of humanitarian aid on conflict

In situations of conflict, it has been argued that any externally introduced resources and externally induced policy changes have distributional consequences.[23] Better still, there are those who have

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[19] Op cit

[20] Milton J. Esman, "Can Foreign Aid Moderate Ethnic Conflict?", p. 4

[21] Mary Anderson, *The Experience of NGOs in Conflict Intervention: Problems and Prospects* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Local Capacities for Peace Project, 1995).

[22] ibid

[23] ibid

concluded that such humanitarian interventions affect communities differently. Since humanitarian aid introduces fresh resources or allocate and/or re-allocates existing resources in new patterns, all these modalities of assistance have potential implications for conflicts. Some interventions may be conducive to peaceful coexistence and equity; others may aggravate tensions and precipitate conflict. Some present cruel dilemmas. Food and medical supplies intended to sustain the victims of civil wars may be hijacked by military contingents of their own ethnic community, leading their enemies to interdict all humanitarian assistance.

In assessing of the impact of aid on conflict and the impact humanitarian intervention on the larger context of peace, employing the DNH and RPP analytical frameworks, both Anderson[24] and Peter Woodrow[25] respectively argue that any programming that focuses on change at individual/personal levels, but that never links or translates into action at the socio-political level has no discernible effect on peace. In this regard, humanitarian efforts that focus mainly on the delivery or distribution of relief items but edge on building relationships and trust across conflict lines, increasing tolerance, increasing hope that peace is possible will most likely not produce dramatic transformations in attitudes, perceptions and trust.

The thrusts of the DNH programming of humanitarian aid intervention lays on how to reduce the negative impacts and increase the positive impacts of aid on conflict. In the same vein, the RPP focuses on how to make peacebuilding work more effective. The DNH and the RPP frameworks are somehow hinged on Galtung's[26] conflict triangle, by which he attributes violent conflicts to three basic factors namely Attitudes (A), Behaviours (B), and unresolved Causes (C) of conflict. Both Galtung and Woodrow affirm that the transformation and linkage between the significant changes that take place at individual/personal levels and those that occur at the socio-political institutional level change are critical to the mitigation of the conflict, presumably creating leverages for conflict management and resolution.

Woodrow's RPP[27] treats humanitarian assistance as part of the bigger conflict context. He alludes to some evidence that broader positive impacts are more significant if personal transformations are translated into actions at the socio-political level and vice versa. In this manner, humanitarian interventions either contribute less towards de-escalating the conflict or more towards exacerbating the violence. This thought pattern is closely linked to the work of Galtung in categorising violence into structural, cultural, and direct forms.

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[24] Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support peace – Or War* (London: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 1999). Also see, for instance, Mary B. Anderson (Ed), Options for Aid in Conflict: Lessons from Field Experience (Massachusetts: Collaborative for Development Action, Inc. , 2000)

[25] Peter Woodrow, *Reflecting on Peace Practices Project* (Massachusetts: Collaborative for Development Action, Inc. , 2004)

[26] Johan Galtung, "Violence, Peace and Peace Research" in *Journal of Peace Research* (Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 1969), Vol. 6, No. 3

[27] Peter Woodrow, *Reflecting on Peace Practices Project* (Massachusetts: Collaborative for Development Action, Inc. , 2004)

Like Woodrow (2004)[28], it is rather easy to posit that since there is no perfect humanitarian intervention program, there is also no easy way by which humanitarian interventions can readily diminish conflict. Given that the movement towards peace – both at the macro level and at the project level – often occurs as "two steps forward, one step back" and not in any linear progress, the things that exist beyond the control of humanitarian actors and peace practitioners can go wrong. This is so because like all humanitarian agencies, peace practitioners also make mistakes. While many peace practitioners assert that it is better to try something and risk failure than to avoid risks by doing nothing, Woodrow's RPP's review of experience suggests that negative impacts are not merely "inevitable bumps along the road to peace."[29]

Interventions by humanitarian organisations can do actual harm by making a situation and the lives of people living in conflict worse rather than better. As expected, the RPP framework of impact analysis has established that these negative impacts are not inevitable. Experience shows that there are predictable ways negative impacts occur. Consequently, with greater awareness of how negative impacts occur and how peace agencies contribute to them, practitioners can anticipate and minimise them in their work. Given that conflict management connotes a mechanism that is concerned with defining a conflict as ended (at least temporarily) and deciding on the distribution of values and resources, humanitarian assistance, according to Jacob Bercovitch and Patrick M. Regan[30] should add to the rational and conscious decisional process whereby parties to a conflict, with or without the aid of outsiders, take steps to transform, deescalate or terminate a conflict in a mutually acceptable way. Although this should have been the case with an intractable conflict such as the one of the Sudan, the actual status of things is contrary. Perhaps, this should be the motivation for further research and/or analysis of the current models, theories, and concepts in this field.

In his analysis of current foreign policy attitudes, Les Aspin, former U. S. secretary of defense, cited two schools of thought on the issues of intervention for peacekeeping, the prevention of ethnic cleansing, and the alleviation of starvation[31]. The isolationist school is reluctant to support intervention except for national security purposes. The internationalist school, on the other hand, supports intervention on the basis of morality and the defense of humanitarian values. Julia Taft also took up this theme, asserting that NGOs embody the internationalist/moralist approach, with a strong commitment to empowerment, peace, prosperity, and economic and social justice.[32]

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[28] Peter Woodrow, *Reflecting on Peace Practices Project* (Massachusetts: Collaborative for Development Action, Inc. , 2004)

[29] Ibid.

[30] Bercovitch, Jacob & Patrick M. Regan, "The structure of International conflict management: An Analysis of the Effects of intractability and mediation" in *The International Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 4. (Washington, DC: George Mason University: <www. gmu. edu/academic/ijps/vol4_1/ Bercovitch. htm> accessed 12 January 2006)

[31] see Peaceworks No. 3, February 1995

[32] Ibid

Pamella R Aal compiled responses to international conflict highlights from the managing chaos conference in a peace work article titled "NGOs and conflict management". In the conference, the following questions were posed: should NGOs be involved in conflict prevention and resolution? If so, how extensive should their involvement be? Effective responses to post–Cold War humanitarian crises often means that many NGOs must go beyond their traditional mission of providing food, water, and medical assistance, into the realm of ensuring political stability and fulfilling governmental functions in failed states. Are such expanded roles appropriate for NGOs?[33] Vivian Lowery Derryck answered these questions with a qualified yes, proposing certain conditions that must be present before NGOs engage in conflict management activities:

- The NGO knows the country and the regional institutions involved in the conflict resolution effort;
- The NGO has indigenous partners;
- The NGO staff has a good knowledge of conflict mediation skills; and
- The NGO's field staff members fully understand the personal risks they are assuming.[34]

John Paul Lederach agrees that NGOs could be very effective in managing conflict, noting that they bring several special qualities to peacebuilding, especially through their particular insights into different cultures, their relationships with local partners, and their understanding of the links between crisis management and long-term sustainable development. He recalled how NGO representatives often talk about their operations as comprising a continuum of relief efforts, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and sustainable development. All of these components are essential to the development of both new and more effective paradigms for peacebuilding and appropriate strategies to deal with specific conflicts.[35]

According to Lederach, there was widespread recognition that NGOs might unwittingly become a party to conflict in the course of their humanitarian relief work; that their actions could be part of a concerted, coordinated effort involving governments, international and regional organisations, and private groups to avert or resolve conflict; that they had the ability to both provide early warning and shore up the political will of governments to act; and that they could give guidance to policymakers in their own countries and encourage community- building and the development of civil societies in countries decimated by war. In short, the work of NGOs forms an important part of the entire repertoire of intervention strategies for dealing with conflict in the post–Cold War era.[36]

Lederach notes that the challenges posed to NGOs by the new types of conflict have become commonplace in the post–Cold War era. These challenges clarified the need for a more comprehensive framework for conflict resolution and conciliation activities on the part of NGOs.

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[33] Pamella R Aal, "NGOs and conflict management", pg 14

[34] Ibid

[35] Ibid

[36] Ibid

Based on both his field experience in conflict situations and his work as a practitioner developing conflict resolution programs to accompany the relief activities, Lederach offered some general observations about the changing nature of the international response to crisis.

In Lederach's view, the NGO community and the international community at large should concentrate on techniques that link crisis management and humanitarian relief activities to the longer term goals of conflict resolution and sustainable development. "We need to develop our capacity to think in decades instead of months to a year," He said, "and to develop ways in which our crisis management activities are imbedded within, and linked to, a broader set of activities which lead to sustainable development." However, the context in which these needs emerge almost always involves settings of protracted, divisive, and deep-seated generational conflict. To move beyond the management of an immediate crisis, according to Lederach, NGOs must change their planning time frames to a long-term perspective. The initial emergency relief response should be linked to a set of activities that leads to the transformation of those conflicts in a way that promotes sustained and comprehensive reconciliation among the warring parties.

Finally Pamela[37] noted that while NGOs cannot be expected to solve all the problems associated with humanitarian crises, the new environment in which these organisations operate suggests the following four fundamental roles: early warning functions, human rights monitoring, relief and rehabilitation, and conflict resolution activities. Yet it may be detrimental for NGOs to assume all these roles simultaneously. Of these four roles, the early warning and conflict resolution functions typically engender the most debate, not only because of their relative newness in the repertoire of NGO capabilities, but also because both of these roles subsume many other increasingly important—and, some would argue, controversial—tasks NGOs must consider in carrying out their primary missions during complex emergencies.

Impact of Humanitarian Aid on Conflict - Conceptual Assumptions

Renowned scholars of peace and conflict studies (John Paul Lederach, 1997; John Prendergast, 1996; David Smock, 1996; Mary Anderson, 1999; and Thania Peffenholz and Luc Reychler, 2004) have dedicated much attention to the development of more pragmatic theories, concepts and models of understanding the relation of interplay between humanitarian aid and conflict. Their approach has focused on assessing the impacts of conflict. It would appear that an underlying conclusion has been drawn on the influence, consequences and impact of humanitarian aid on conflict.

Discussions in this chapter have led the researcher to conclude and agree with Andersons sentiments on impact and role of aid on conflict. In addition, the researcher supports views by Predegast and Woodrow on the role of aid on conflict. Furthermore, the works of Smock, Pamella ,Esman and Galtung all support this outlook [38]. In recapitulation, it is important to reiterate that humanitarian aid is not neutral in the midst of conflict. Aid and how it is administered can cause harm or can strengthen peace capacities in the midst of conflicted communities. All aid

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[37] Ibid

[38] See PeaceWorks 3. 4. 5 & 6

programmes involve the transfer of resources (food, shelter, water, health care, training, etc.) into a resource-scarce environment. Where people are in conflict, these resources represent power and wealth and they become an element of the conflict. Some people attempt to control and use aid resources to support their side of the conflict and to weaken the other side. If they are successful or if aid staff fails to recognise the impact of their programming decisions, aid can cause harm.

However, the transfer of resources and the manner in which staff conduct the programmes can strengthen local capacities for peace, build on connectors that bring communities together, and reduce the divisions and sources of tensions that can lead to destructive conflict. To do no harm and to support local capacities for peace requires: careful analysis of the context of conflict and the aid programme, examining how aid interacts with the conflict, and a willingness to create options and redesign programmes to improve its quality. In addition the framework also requires careful reflection on staff conduct and organisational policies so that the 'implicit ethical messages' that are sent communicate congruent messages that strengthen local capacities for peace.[39]

The researcher advocates for the use of conflict sensitive planning and programming in humanitarian intervention. In addition, it is recommended that coordination of efforts is by far a very important aspect that needs to be put into consideration in order to maximize the impact of humanitarian assistance. This recommendation is also supported by authors such as Smock[40], Pamella[41], Esman[42] The researcher further recommends the use of Anderson DNH frame work,[43] whose primary purpose of the DNH framework is micro conflict analysis, project planning and programme quality, and impact assessment of programme on conflict. The intended users for this framework include field staff of international or local NGOs, also widespread among donor agencies (headquarters and field offices). It is primarily targeted at humanitarian organisations, but is also applicable to development co-operation and peace building. In addition, the appropriate level of application is project level.

Framework Analysis: Conflict-Sensitive Aid Intervention

Humanitarian aid interventions, the world over, do influence and/or impact positively as well as negatively on conflict. Whichever level the conflict may be in – i.e. latent, ongoing or escalating, and protracted – it is more often easily affected by external interventions. The interplay between humanitarian aid interventions and the need to manage the conflict is the core of this analysis: balancing between being conflict-sensitive in providing humanitarian aid and wanting the

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[39] Ibid

[40] See, for instance, David R. Smock, *Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict in Africa*, (Washington DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1996), Peaceworks No. 6, p. 5

[41] Pamella R Aal, "NGOs and conflict management", pg 14

[42] Milton J. Esman, "Can Foreign Aid Moderate Ethnic Conflict?", 4

[43] *Do No Harm: How Aid can Support Peace – or War*, Mary B. Anderson, Boulder: Lynne Reinner Publishers, February 1999.

intervention to influence the management of the very conflict or its situation. Using the DNH analytical framework for conflict-sensitive humanitarian aid interventions, it turns out that the act of analysing dividers and sources of tensions between groups becomes very important.

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