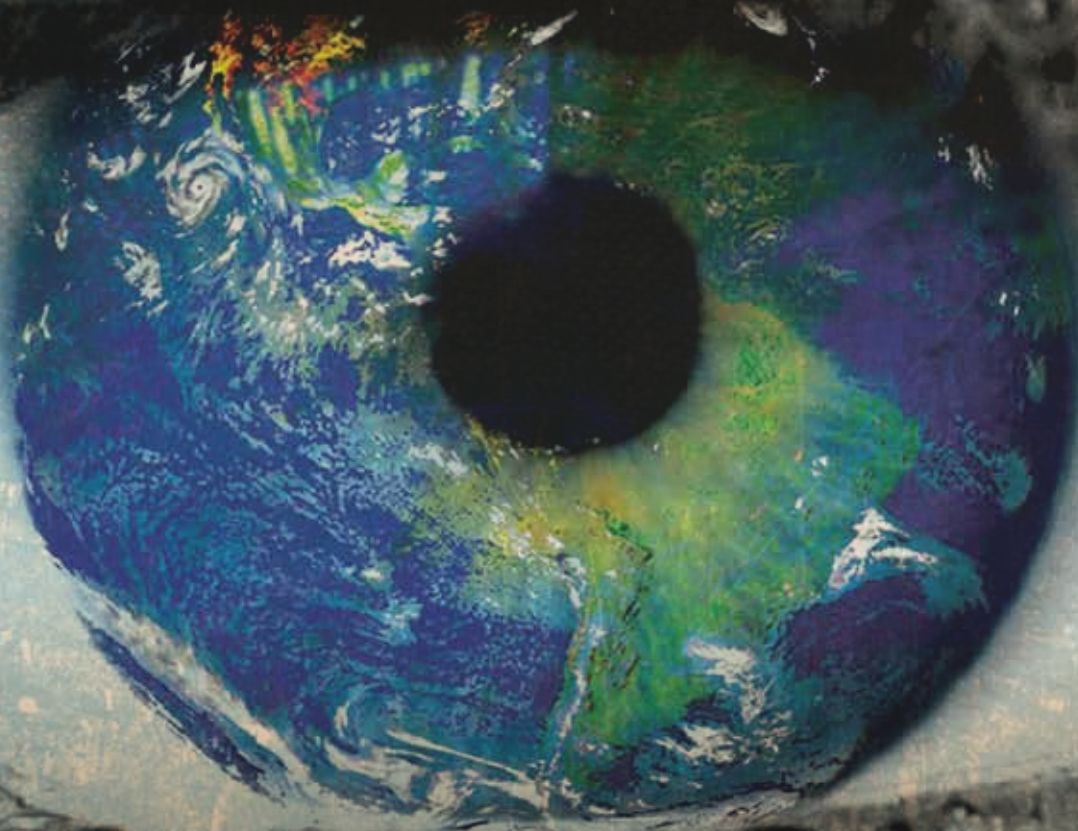


The **networker**



A CHANGING WORLD

The diversification of aid and development

Effectiveness

Approaches to effectiveness, transparency
and Theory of Change

Also

Lessons from Kony 2012
Development through a local lens

ISSUE 102 | OCT-DEC 2012

bond

A CHANGING WORLD

5

The diversity of aid

Eleanor Davey examines how an historical perspective can inform current thinking and understanding

8

A changing world: Smart NGOs

Modern NGOs need to invest in their own professionalism

10

After the MDGs: what next?

Mark Lowcock sets out some of the emerging themes beyond 2015

12

A changing world: An NGO perspective

Jane Cocking gives a humanitarian perspective on the evolving role of NGOs

13

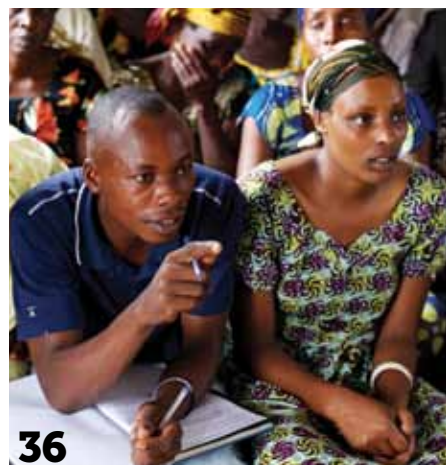
A changing world: The view from the middle

New models for responding to disasters and emergencies

16

A local approach to aid: Preparation is better than cure

Local solutions to local problems can result in a more effective response



36



30



17

FEATURES

4

Development futures: Which way next?

The Bond Annual Conference 2012 tackles head on the big debates and challenges facing our sector in 2013 and beyond

18

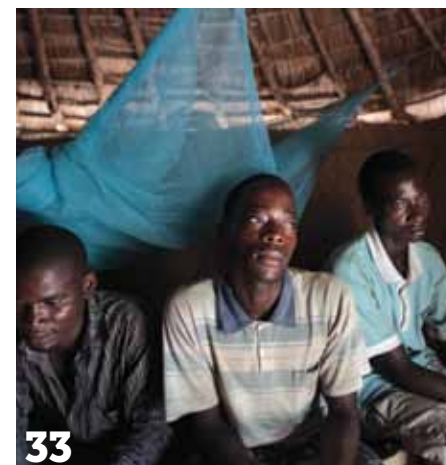
Parliament and International Development

Alice Campbell-Cree outlines a new Bond resource for NGOs and parliamentarians

19

Communicating the complexity of development

We must help the public and critics understand that saving lives isn't cheap or easy



33

21

The moving image: a local lens

A Ugandan-born videographer explains the advantages of hiring local journalists

31

Is all publicity good publicity?

What lessons can NGO campaigners take from the Stop Kony 2012 campaign?

35

The importance of a strong brand

As NGOs strive for greater effectiveness, their brand will become increasingly important

36

In the spotlight

Interview with Phil Vernon, Director of Programmes, International Alert

39

Insurance for NGOs

NGOs and specialist insurance brokers explain their approaches and solutions



EFFECTIVENESS

25

Approaches to effectiveness

International HIV/Aids Alliance and Handicap International give their perspectives

27

Improving effectiveness

Use the Bond Health Check to assess your organisation's strengths and areas for improvement

28

Theory of Change: the essentials

What is Theory of Change and how are NGOs putting it into practice?

Editorial



I've made meeting leaders of Bond member organisations a top priority over my first six months in the job. I've found a hugely diverse, vibrant and ambitious sector. But also one seeking to answer some big questions.

First, about our context: What do the huge and rapid changes in the outside world really mean for global poverty and development, and our work as NGOs – from the growth of new global economic powers in the South to austerity and media attacks on aid, threatening to undermine our wider commitment to development.

Second, about the ends of our work. With the deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals just three years away, a far-reaching debate is underway about what the fundamental goals for development should be "post-2015". In a fascinating piece in this issue, DFID top official,

Mark Lowcock sets out some of the emerging themes. Bond ensures that UK NGOs, through the Beyond 2015 Group, are central to this debate, as part of a growing international campaign with civil society across the globe.

And finally, about the means. Given all this, how do we, as NGOs, best contribute to development? For example, how can we know if we're really being effective? Are we getting too close to government or does a closer relationship help us to influence the bigger agendas? What new models of funding will be available in the future?

That's why the theme of this year's Bond Conference is *Development Futures*, where we will be promoting discussion about all these questions. And why, I think it's vital that Bond continues to promote and host debate about practical and strategic options to answer these challenges.

Ben Jackson
Chief Executive

| My Bond is live

My Bond, a new social network for Bond members, is up and running and all members are encouraged to try it out.

Lots of conversations and activity are already happening so why not add your thoughts and ideas. Over time, we hope that My Bond will become a hub for learning, sharing and collaboration; a space where people across the international development sector can share their views, ideas, best practice, successes and failures.

Have a look around and get involved; we hope you like what you see.

Go to my.bond.org.uk to register, or visit our website for more details: bond.org.uk/mybond



About Bond

Bond is a broad network of UK-based international development organisations united by a common goal to eradicate global poverty.

About The Networker

The Networker offers topical and forward-thinking features and opinion on international development issues to inspire thought, debate and action. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of Bond.

Contributing to The Networker

If you have an idea that you would like to discuss or if you would like to comment on The Networker, please contact the Editor, Jemma Ashman: jashman@bond.org.uk

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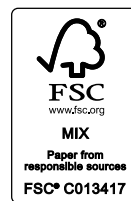
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NEWS

Bond partners with Computer Aid

School children using refurbished computers from Computer Aid



To launch Bond's new partnership with Computer Aid, Bond members can take up a special offer of buy 10 desktop PCs and get 1 free.

Computer Aid refurbish IT equipment donated in the UK by companies, schools, universities, local government and individuals; and send it for reuse in schools, hospitals and charities in developing countries across the world. They work in partnership with local NGOs on projects that provide affordable and accessible internet connectivity and electricity supplies to rural and isolated communities.

| www.computeraid.org

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The support and service provided was speedy and professional, the equipment significant value for money and the new computers will significantly improve our work and service to young people in Sierra Leone.

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This year's Bond Annual Conference, held on 23 October, will tackle head on some of the big debates and common challenges facing our sector.

A rapidly changing world

With the worst economic crisis since the 1930s, the highest hikes in food prices since the 1970s, climate change becoming a present reality and conflict and repression threatening to overwhelm the hopes for freedom unleashed by the Arab Spring, there seem many threats to the prospects for development progress. And yet the levels of people living in extreme poverty has been falling in recent years in all regions of the world including Africa.

While European economies are in deep crisis, many developing countries appear to be booming. How will this global picture pan out? How will it affect the world's poorest people? And what will it mean for

people working in development and the aims and strategies of NGOs in the UK and internationally?

With just three years to go until the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals, and debate and action growing fast on what should follow, the Bond Conference 2012 will explore which way we should go next.

What to expect

- High-profile keynote speakers and distinguished panelists who are experts in their field
- Ten participatory Debates and Workshops designed to challenge thinking and stimulate action
- Bond AGM
- Opportunity to network, renew acquaintances and make new connections
- An exhibition showcasing products and services for NGOs

Information and booking

Full details of the day are on the website and online booking is open. Please note that as space is limited and priority will be given to ensure a broad range of organisations are represented: bond.org.uk/annualconference2012

Discuss, challenge, insight

The Bond Annual Conference is the leading event for the UK international development sector. It provides a vital opportunity to come together to discuss and debate some of the critical issues facing our organisations, our sector, and international development globally. It consistently attracts a broad range of high calibre, expert speakers from both inside and outside the NGO constituency.

“

Eye opening, and a great opportunity to learn, explore and network.

Conference delegate

”

Development futures:

Which way next?

THE DIVERSITY OF AID

One of the key challenges facing the international aid system today is how to respond to actors, notably those from the global south, who have not been regarded as part of the conventional humanitarian landscape. Eleanor Davey observes the value an historical perspective can bring to current thinking and understanding.

IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, IF THE USE OF THE TERM 'HUMANITARIAN' BECAME MORE CIRCUMSCRIBED, THE DIVERSITY OF THOSE OFFERING AID REMAINED JUST AS STRONG.

We now acknowledge that there are a range of actors who sit outside the system, or have only limited links with it, yet make significant contributions to the humanitarian endeavour. However, a return to the history of humanitarian action suggests that the mindset with which these actors have often been met – often considered 'new,' 'untraditional,' 'unorthodox' or 'inexperienced' – misrepresents not only the long history of these actors but also the powerful diversity of the humanitarian system's own past.

An increasingly visible set of actors

If contact between various global cultures has a history almost as old as the civilisations that produced them, in modern history the geopolitical rise of what is referred to as the global south dates essentially from the aftermath of the Second World War.

As a distinctive entity in the Western mind, the 'third world' (as it was then called) emerged in the post-war period. Starting with the Chinese Revolution of 1949, and continuing with such events as the Bandung Conference to promote Asian-African cooperation and the Cuban Revolution, the global south forged an identity independent of its colonial history. The decolonisation process subsequently brought geopolitical reality into line with the increased assertion of southern autonomy and difference. Historically speaking, development aid largely dates from this period. In its early phase, development programmes reflected the desire of western states to retain at least some of their privileged influence with the newly independent nations, as well as their concern that poor or volatile post-colonial countries risked falling under Communist influence. Over time, international development frameworks gradually established their distance from these Cold War era aims, though they remain

subject to criticism for their lack of inclusivity.

The re-emergence of southern actors

More recently, as donors and operational actors, southern stakeholders have gained greater recognition from the international aid system. Regional powers such as China, India, Russia, Brazil, Turkey and Saudi Arabia are increasingly shaping global political, economic and cultural processes, including in the field of humanitarian action. They are providing significant humanitarian resources to an expanding number of organisations, many of which operate largely through networks independent of the formal system. Regional organisations, including the Association of South East Asian Nations, the African Union, and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, have developed mechanisms and policies for humanitarian action. National and international humanitarian actors from the global south include secular NGOs, religiously-oriented associations and networks, diaspora groups, welfare-style support groups, and government charitable organisations. In some cases, for example in responses to Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar in 2008, southern actors carry the bulk of the responsibility for providing relief.

As a result, southern NGOs are now acknowledged to be a crucial part of the overall humanitarian effort. Their presence has been seen as a challenge or an opportunity, but also sometimes as a threat to 'traditional' humanitarian action. Building the capacity of southern actors has often been seen as desirable, but may mask reservations about unfamiliar forms of humanitarianism. Concerns that actors outside of the formal system may not have a full enough understanding of international humanitarian law, for instance, or of the principles of neutrality and

impartiality, arguably convey a certain level of discomfort and suspicion on the part of the formal system itself. Such concerns are part of what has been described as the 'strong isomorphism' of the formal system: "you" can join "us" on our terms but don't expect any consideration if you don't.¹

Of course, not all responses have been defensive. Others have called for greater engagement and cooperation, and research initiatives have attempted to foster better understandings of African, Asian, Middle Eastern, and Latin American perceptions and practices of aid. Though progress is limited, reform programmes since 2005 have recognised the need to make the architecture of aid more inclusive. Spaces for dialogue or to help southern stakeholders make their voices heard, such as the Humanitarian Forum and the Listening Project, have advanced knowledge of perspectives and experiences beyond the dominant northern framework.

Despite these efforts, there remains a tendency to consider southern actors as 'new' or 'untraditional'. Yet we cannot afford to overlook the fact that humanitarian actors from the global south were not born exclusively with decolonisation or the petrol boom, or after the fall of the Iron Curtain, but rather have a long experience of acting to alleviate suffering and protect lives. And while many of these histories remain to be written in a way that is accessible beyond their immediate cultural or linguistic context, it is paramount that their depth and wealth not be overlooked.

A historically diverse set of actors

Finding ways to place these histories of assistance alongside – and within – the western history of aid will be easier if we do not also overlook the great diversity of the western experience. In effect,

there is no homogenous, 'pure,' or 'traditionally' correct conception of humanitarian action. Instead, there are multiple traditions, driven by a variety of philosophical, moral, and political positions, which have evolved through contact with each other over time, whether by embracing change or resisting it.

The founding of the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1863 was in effect only one amongst many initiatives of its time that reflected a modern 'humanitarian' sensibility; an early account of the humanitarian 'phenomenon' cited the French Revolution, the dismantling of Japanese feudalism, prison reform, poor relief, charitable activity and the temperance movement.² Well before this, religious fraternities from all cultures had been providing aid according to different belief structures; and colonial territories provided a laboratory for the development of medical practices and famine responses that still influence relief today.

In the twentieth century, if the use of the term 'humanitarian' became more circumscribed, the diversity of those offering aid remained just as strong. While an Italian visionary tried (and ultimately failed) to establish an 'International Relief Union' for natural disaster response in the 1920s, Red

Cross bodies vied for leadership amongst each other and with the ill-fated League of Nations, forerunner to the UN. Soviet leaders in the same period had more success setting up a network of left-wing humanitarian associations under the banner of 'International Red Aid,' inheritors of which are still active today. In the 1940s, several faith-based organisations were founded to serve the interests of their religious constituencies across the world. The Cold War saw the emergence of organisations that challenged the International Committee of the Red Cross's emphasis on neutrality and embraced the political ramifications of their humanitarian work. In the 1990s, competition was strong, with states renewing their engagement and NGOs proliferating in the humanitarian hothouse created by increased funding and the eruption of post-Cold War crises.

With this variegated history in mind, there is an argument for viewing the present emphasis on engaging with southern actors as an opportunity to continue and constructively direct the progressive mutation of international humanitarian action. The benefits of a better knowledge of the past are many: greater self-awareness, a more acute critical perspective, a broader framework of ideas to draw

upon. A short-term view of the international aid system misses the opportunity to learn from the rich past to which the system can and should lay claim. In a period in which the international aid sector arguably faces a crucial juncture, a fuller sense of its historical diversity may help reflection on how the humanitarian landscape may look in the future.

Eleanor Davey, Research Officer,
Overseas Development Institute

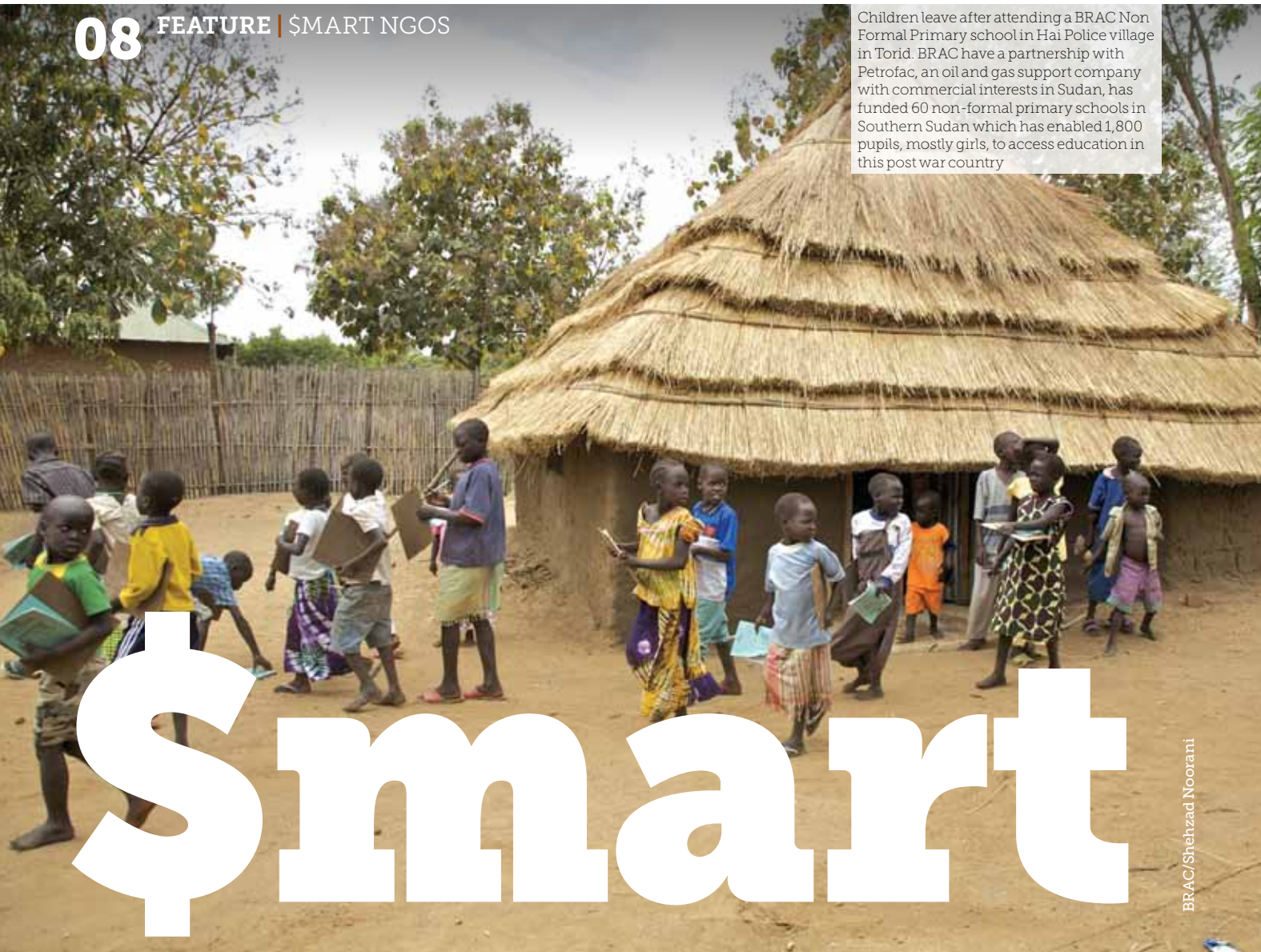
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- ¹Donini, 'Humanitarianism in the 21st Century,' *Humanitaire* 25, 2010.
²Carlton, 'Humanitarianism, Past and Present,' *International Journal of Ethics* 17, 1906.

ODI's Humanitarian Policy Group is currently working on 'A Global History of Modern Humanitarian Action,' aimed at helping the sector better understand its history and make greater use of historical analysis and lessons in current debates and policy-making. It also seeks, through engagement with researchers in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Latin America, to make southern histories and perceptions of humanitarian action more accessible to these discussions. www.odi.org.uk



Children leave after attending a BRAC Non Formal Primary school in Hai Police village in Torid. BRAC have a partnership with Petrofac, an oil and gas support company with commercial interests in Sudan, has funded 60 non-formal primary schools in Southern Sudan which has enabled 1,800 pupils, mostly girls, to access education in this post war country



BRAC/Shehzad Noorani

\$mart NGOs

In a rapidly changing world, modern NGOs are realising that independence is key to survival, and this means that they must invest in their own professionalism, explains Christian Meyer zu Natrup.

It is one of the oldest and somewhat worn debates in the sector: how to make my NGO more efficient and effective? However, the drive for more bang for each charitable buck has now become an urgent necessity rather than a mere aspiration.

The traditional drivers of the NGO efficiency and effectiveness debate are well known. They include the rationale that overreliance on donor grants is financially unsustainable; not only can the future availability of donor grants not be guaranteed, but basing one's funding mainly on traditional donors is unlikely to make independence from the donor's agenda possible,

operationally and ideologically. Another reason is the resource intensive nature of donor bids and the risk associated to them when they fail. However, the most important reason why NGOs should diversify their funding base is simply that implementing grants is often not enough to advance their cause.

Many NGO professionals recognise that they are working in a complex, interwoven world. To advance an issue and achieve sustainable change, it is necessary to address all facets of the issue. That means that if NGOs want to make a difference in the area they care about, they may need to work even

closer with other actors in the same area. This includes businesses that blend profit making with social progress, governments who recognise that they are not best placed to achieve change alone, and academics who like to partner with NGOs to apply their knowledge more efficiently.

It is not just the NGOs that are changing, but the donor landscape itself too. The whole sector is experiencing a shift towards a more diversified funding base and with it, the need for more professional operations. New donors have entered the sector, especially philanthropic institutions and corporate funders, and

are starting to make a sector wide difference. And it is not just the size of philanthropic giving that continues to rise, but its forms too. Innovative concepts such as social impact investments or full-engagement donations change the 'business of giving'.

This presents great opportunities for NGOs, but also a challenge: these donors demand more impact, transparency and accountability from those they give money to. Most are not

“

Innovative concepts such as social impact investments or full-engagement donations change the 'business of giving'.

”

content with just giving money away either, but expect to stay involved. Whilst this offers a particular good opportunity for NGOs to build lasting relationships with new donors, as well as using their clout, influence and connections to engage with other actors relevant for their cause, it also represents an operational challenge.

Philanthropic and corporate donors are often uneasy with the lack of professional processes and safeguards that are common and expected in the corporate world: independent directors, well working internal audit functions, and better performance monitoring to name a few. If NGOs are serious about making a difference in today's socio-political-economic complex, then they must better leverage their own resources, become more transparent and operationally savvy in order to diversify their funding base and be able to better serve their cause.

Self-sufficiency does not happen overnight

Despite these issues being well known, things have moved along rather slowly.

Most NGOs continue to rely heavily on traditional donor funds. The regulations that come with such funds are restrictive, leaving little money left for investments into smart operations, processes and systems.

Yet some actors have successfully made the change. BRAC, a large international NGO from Bangladesh and today arguably one of the largest development organisations in the world, has placed financial self-reliance at the heart of its mission. Applying the concept of social entrepreneurship, BRAC has evolved from being fully donor-funded to over 70 per cent self-financed today.

BRAC can be described as a front-runner in a conversion many western NGOs increasingly aim at. This level of self-reliance allows BRAC to channel its resources to where it best serves its mission, independent from donor resourcing or political preference.

But self-sufficiency did not happen overnight nor did it simply happen by being thorough on ensuring programme effectiveness and cost recovery across all programmes. What BRAC has helped to pioneer is the concept of innovating social enterprise. This concept has transformed BRAC from a somewhat obscure little NGO, initially clumsily named "Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee" to a development organisation working worldwide, employing well over 60,000 staff, as well as training and organising another 60,000 self-employed professionals and teachers. Today, BRAC's programmes are estimated to reach over 110 million people, managing an annual budget of nearly 500 million USD and continue to grow strongly. BRAC's concept of social entrepreneurship is not new, in fact it has been around for more than half a century. But what is new is the scale BRAC has achieved in implementing the concept. BRAC also includes associated businesses in health, retail, agriculture and other industries whose profits are being fed back to its programmes. It even operates one of the largest banks in Bangladesh, BRAC Bank.

Western NGOs are set up differently and are unlikely to ever open a commercial bank (notwithstanding how beneficial this may be for the general public in their home country). But what BRAC has exemplified is that the traditional concept of NGOs is changing. Many NGOs no longer define themselves to large parts by being non-governmental grant executors. Whilst this remains a central, even dominating part of their identity, it is not the only aspect.

Modern, smart NGOs are increasingly striving for self-reliance, not only because the donor landscape is changing so rapidly but because they increasingly recognise that their cause is best served by multi-faceted engagements: working with governments, businesses, and other people and institutions that care about what they care about.

All this requires NGOs to professionalise. A finance team is not merely a costly, 'must-have' function but part of good governance team, reflecting management's integrity, attitude and ethical values. NGO leaders should regard matters such as internal controls, internal audits and clear financial management policies, systems and processes as central to their mission as they support transparency and accountability. Investments here will pay off; after all a good internal control system is the only way to obtain reasonable assurance about the reliability of the data produced as well as effectiveness and efficiency of the operations.

Likewise, a well-structured and organised human resource function is essential to ensure internal transparency and quality of appointments. It also bears the promise of reducing staff turnover, a substantial cost.

The debate about smarter NGOs is not new but it has never been more essential. Having worked closely with NGOs of different sizes, I firmly believe that some NGOs will be able to lead and steer this new development in the sector and prepare themselves for what is to come. Those who are not however are likely to be side-lined, tied up in an eternal struggle for funds or even fall away completely.

Christian Meyer zu Natrup,
Director, MzN International
Development Experts



Feedback is welcome:
chris@mzninternational.com
www.mzninternational.com

MzN International Development Experts is a non-profit association of technical experts and development professionals who work with donors and NGOs to make NGOs and aid more efficient.

AFTER THE MDGS: WHAT NEXT?

Despite a degree of scepticism and mixed achievements in some areas, by and large the MDGs should be regarded as an overwhelming success argues Mark Lowcock – but the key consideration is what happens next.

In the mid-1990s, as a lowly official in what was then the Overseas Development Administration, I was periodically tasked with writing briefing papers for John Vereker, then the Permanent Secretary, for meetings he attended with his counterparts in the OECD on the state of global development.

These meetings, which took place in the dark basement of an unattractive 1960s concrete office block in Paris, ultimately led to the agreement in the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD of a series of international development targets, to which DAC members committed themselves as the framework to guide their aid programmes.

Developing such a framework was regarded at the time as rather racy. It had not been tried in a serious way before, at least in that forum. Even racier was the boldness of the targets: halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, sending

every child to school, reducing under-five mortality by two thirds and maternal mortality by three quarters. Sceptics at the time thought such targets were too ambitious and aspirational to be taken seriously.

The international development targets subsequently became one of the key building blocks for the Millennium Development Goals agreed by the membership of the United Nations at the summit in 2000.

What difference have the MDGs made?

With the 2015 deadline for achieving the MDGs now nearly upon us, Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary General, asked David Cameron earlier this summer to co-chair a panel, together with the presidents of Indonesia and Liberia, to advise on what might succeed the MDGs. So it is timely to ask the following questions:

- What is the track record of the MDGs?
- What difference has having a set of goals made?
- What should we think about in developing the new framework?

The sceptics have been confounded. Development has progressed faster over the last 15 years than in any previous time in human history. This builds on gradually accelerating progress since the end of the Second World War. Between 1955 and 2005 average global life expectancy, which is perhaps the most basic of all measures of human wellbeing, surged from 47 to about 67 years.

The main poverty target in the MDGs, reducing the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day by half by 2015, was achieved 5 years early. And not just because of progress in China or other parts of East Asia. By 2008, most people in Africa, for the first time since measurement began, were judged to be living above the extreme

poverty line. The world also reached the target of halving the number of people without access to clean water 5 years ahead of schedule. Access to a basic education for children has improved dramatically. Infant mortality has plummeted.

Numerical, time bound and easy to understand

Of course, not all the targets have been met. The naysayers pounce on the problem areas. But by any benchmark, progress has been extraordinary. The analogy I like is that of the (fictitious) high-jumper who announces that he is going to beat the world record of two metres 45 centimetres by jumping four metres. In the event, he only manages three metres 50 centimetres. Is this an appalling failure or an act of extreme brilliance?

Aid has helped secure this progress. Whether aid contributes to economic growth and poverty reduction is still contested. My own view is that the most careful, recent and rigorous analysis establishes a positive causal relationship. But it is hard to be precise because there are so many other determinants of growth and poverty reduction.

At a simple level, it is worth noting that global aid levels increased from roughly \$60 billion a year a decade ago to over \$120 billion a year now, exactly the period in which we've seen the fastest progress on the things aid is supposed to contribute to. For some of the MDGs, the link between aid and progress is easier to establish: no one seriously disputes the impact dramatic increases in childhood immunisation, funded by aid, have had on reducing infant mortality, or the role aid has played in financing education for children previously out of school, or the impact of programmes to combat diseases like HIV/AIDS and malaria.

The MDGs are numerical, time bound and easy to understand. They have been helpful in winning support for greater efforts on global development among taxpayers in richer countries, helping to raise global aid levels. They have proven a valuable organising framework for aid providers working together in each country to support progress. And, because they have become part of the policy framework in many developing countries, they have helped promote a constructive dialogue between developing country governments and their international supporters.

This is not, of course, to say that the MDGs alone are responsible for the progress we have seen. Countries

progress largely as a result of the policies and actions of their governments, institutions and people. Over the last 20 years, an improvement in economic policies, a decline in conflict and violence and the end of the Cold War, bringing with it changes in the nature of the relationship between the poorest countries and better-off ones, have all facilitated faster development. But it would be churlish to deny the role of international agreement on the MDGs.

Key considerations in developing a new framework

So international agreement now on what should replace the MDGs really does matter. What should the answer be? Well, the role of the panel the Prime Minister will be co-chairing is to help answer that. And then it will be for the member states of the United Nations, taking the work of the panel and the advice of the Secretary General, to negotiate a new framework.

Here are some of the things that matter.

First, there are still three years to go before the end of 2015. We all need to stay focused on maximising progress towards the current goals between now and then. Do that well, and we will transform the lives of tens of millions of people in the poorest countries. Do it less well, and we will be letting those people down.

Second, there is a real value in retaining goals describing the basic opportunity we would all like every fellow human being to have. An income large enough to avoid constant hunger. The chance to go to school. A reduction in unnecessary child and infant death from killer diseases. Ending the global scandal of unnecessary death among women in childbirth. The income poverty MDG sought only to reduce by half the numbers living on less than a \$1.25 a day. What about the other half? And what's so great about a \$1.25 a day anyway? It should not, I hope, be contentious to agree a new set of basic aspirations for everyone on the planet. And let's make them numerical, time bound and easy to understand again.

Third, it would be valuable to reach a broader agreement than has existed at some points in the past on the enablers for development. In the UK, for example, we think that open societies and open economies are conducive to progress. We think that a market economy, appropriately regulated, is conducive to growth.

We think that property rights, the rule of law, peace and stability and individual freedoms are important.

Fourth, there are many issues facing the world that require collective global action and which were not addressed in the MDGs. Climate change, sustainable development and other environmental challenges are prominent examples. When asked, what many poor people say they want is jobs, justice and security. How do we best address these issues? In particular, how do we ensure we retain the clarity and simplicity of the MDGs, from which much of their impact arises, while at the same time recognising the complexity of the development process?

Fifth, how do we ensure that the voices of the poor – those people whose lives the agreement of the Millennium Development Goals was especially intended to improve – are heard in all the discussions? The post-MDG debate is not just for governments, NGOs, private businesses or international organisations. The voices of individual people and families need to be heard too.

Mark Lowcock,
Permanent Secretary, DFID

MARK LOWCOCK: PROFILE



Mark Lowcock was appointed Permanent Secretary on 9 June 2011. He is one of the five executives on the DFID

Management Board. Mark began his career in DFID (formally the Overseas Development Administration) in 1985. From 1992-94, he was Private Secretary to Baroness Chalker, Minister for Overseas Development. From 1994-97, he was Deputy Head and latterly Head of the DFID Regional Office for Central Africa (based in Harare). He then became Head of European Union Department until 1999, before returning to Africa as Head of the DFID Regional Office for East Africa (based in Nairobi). In 2001 he was appointed Director, Finance and Corporate Performance, before being promoted to Director General, Corporate Performance and Knowledge Sharing in 2003. In April 2006 he was made Director General, Policy and International and then in April 2008 he was appointed Director General, Country Programmes.

“THE SCEPTICS HAVE BEEN CONFOUNDED. DEVELOPMENT HAS PROGRESSED FASTER OVER THE LAST 15 YEARS THAN IN ANY PREVIOUS TIME IN HUMAN HISTORY.”

A changing world: an NGO perspective

International humanitarian aid, including from NGOs, is often too little or too late. In the Horn of Africa in 2011, few agencies responded on an appropriate scale despite warnings of an impending crisis since the previous August.

Action is needed to mitigate disaster crises

Around the world, people talk about building resilience to cope with disasters; but donors spend less than one per cent of their development aid on disaster prevention, preparedness and risk reduction. And if it's tough now, what will we do when three global trends combine? Because at the same time, we're probably looking at more weather-related disasters, more people exposed to them, and the world's pretty poor record of helping fragile states into anything like sustainable development. In short, the need to make humanitarian assistance more and more effective could hardly be greater.

Quality is improving

Much of course has already been done. The spread of standards and more open evaluations has driven up quality, at least in some places. The sector's multiple 'quality initiatives' are cooperating to develop some kind of certification scheme to improve quality

and accountability further. And donor governments have been increasingly generous – at least until now, when the UK's commitment to the 0.7 per cent target contrasts starkly with some shrinking aid budgets elsewhere.

“The role of international NGOs like Oxfam will increasingly be to support local action.”

We must make aid work harder

But we must all do far, far more. First: making the most of all of our aid by integrating it better. We already work to reduce the risk of disasters by, for example, planting trees that can reduce floods and landslides in South America.

We build cyclone shelters, and train local organisations to prepare for disasters in Pakistan. And we support mediation in land conflicts, and promote women's participation in peace processes, as in Afghanistan, to play some role at least in reducing conflict. But we realise that we need a more systematic approach to all this, to integrating humanitarian and development work in the face of sudden shocks and long-term stresses like deteriorating environments.

The second priority is going far further than most of us have done before in building up the capacity of local civil society – and the state – in disaster response. Last year's DFID humanitarian strategy was up-to-date on resilience, but surprisingly behind the curve in recognising that future humanitarian action will – and should – be more about that local capacity than the slow reform of big UN agencies.

Action will be driven by the local

The role of international NGOs like Oxfam will increasingly be to support that local action. At present, local organisations' capacity varies extraordinarily. In Central America, we work with a network of 100 civil society organisations supporting communities at risk from disasters; in some regions, there is nothing like that. 81 per cent of our humanitarian funding is still spent on activities that our own staff carry out. While we easily find partners to cope with small, medium, or slowly-developing crises, finding those that can cope with sudden 'mega-disasters', like Pakistan's floods in 2010, is inevitably more difficult.

But the direction of travel is clear. Increasingly effective, and accountable, humanitarian assistance must be more local. Building local capacity must be central to humanitarian action, as capacity building has been in development for years. Just as development action, in many countries, must be more focused on disasters – on building resilience, and, when disasters strike, being more agile in changing the direction of aid programmes to respond to them.

Jane Cocking, Humanitarian Director, Oxfam GB



| www.oxfam.org.uk

Water distribution at an IDP camp, Badin, Pakistan. PDI, a Pakistan NGO and a partner of Oxfam, began distributing water in about 30 temporary camps in the flood-affected areas since the day people started to arrive in the cities. (October 2011)



A changing world: the view from the middle

New approaches are needed if we're to get better at responding to disasters and emergencies. Partnerships between NGOs, local manufacturers and logistics providers, brought together by a 'middle-man', could be one solution.

Advance Aid, World Vision and Agility Logistics containers going to Dadaab, Kenya



We have to start to face up to the fact that the world is not very good at responding to emergencies: especially emergencies in the developing world. And if we want to do better we have to change the way that we think about disasters and emergencies, the way we plan for them and fund them, and the way that we respond to them.

Helping developing countries to become 'disaster secure'

An emphasis on pre-positioning and local manufacture of key emergency relief goods can make a real difference to the speed and effectiveness of early-stage relief efforts. Take the procurement and delivery of non-food items for emergencies. Deploying in Africa the estimated \$250 million¹ that is spent annually on non-food items for Africa can improve 'disaster security' as well as boosting local manufacturing, which will help to create or support jobs. Those in work will themselves be more resilient, as will their dependents.

If pre-positioning and local manufacture in Africa of what are, in the main, fairly basic goods, can be boosted, then response times to African emergencies can be cut

dramatically, saving lives, livelihoods and donors' money. But to attain this, a number of (apparently) very difficult things have to be achieved:

- Governments have to be persuaded that there will be another emergency coming along soon and, most importantly, that they can prepare for it
- NGOs have to persuade governments that a larger part of the huge sums of money that they currently throw at emergencies could more usefully (and effectively) be spent before the event
- Procurement must be carried out in a more holistic manner

A partnership in practice

In Kenya, Advance Aid has been working with World Vision, Agility Logistics and a number of local manufacturers to pre-position locally-made emergency kits. These kits have been distributed and deployed around Kenya by World Vision, with containers ready for use in the event of small-scale local emergencies.

As an NGO, but operating as a middleman, or enabler, Advance Aid has been able to bring together the implementing NGO and local manufacturers. A three-way partnership with Agility meant that the goods could be stored at no cost in forty-foot containers given to Advance Aid by Maersk. Agility provides yard-room for the containers and the warehouse management services on a *pro bono* basis.

Having commercial backgrounds, the Advance Aid principals were able to negotiate with both parties – agency and manufacturer – to secure deals that were to everyone's advantage, but the business of supplying non-food items for emergencies cannot be transformed without significant injections of cash. What is frustrating is that this is cash

that is going to be spent anyway. Better value could be gained for it by shopping for goods before an emergency strikes, but neither governments nor (most) NGOs seem to want to manage things this way.

Some of the members of the Inter Agency Working Group logistics sub group in Nairobi have come together to discuss the establishment of a shared warehouse facility where non-food items can be pre-positioned at low cost. Once this facility is in place, work can begin on standardising specifications of goods so that stock sharing becomes possible. This should also take into account what local manufacturers of these goods can make so that there is an alignment between what is locally and commercially deliverable and what agencies want to stock.

In due course, any group that is formed may also move on to joint procurement, making best use of its buying power and the relationships that should have, by then, been established with the local business community.

Will all this come to pass? Ask us again in a year's time.

“Advance Aid has been able to bring together the implementing NGO and local manufacturers.”

Howard Sharman, Senior Consultant, Advance Aid.



| www.advanceaid.org

References

- ¹GHA Report, 2010.
- ²The State of the Humanitarian System, ALNAP, July 2012

Further reading
Advance Aid blog:
<http://blog.advanceaid.org>
Humanitarian Logistics Association:
www.humanitarianlogistics.org
IAWG: <http://iawg-africa.org>

SELF HELP AFRICA reaches global efficiency with the help of PS FINANCIALS



There are 80 million smallholder farmers in Africa living on less than \$2 a day and a third of the people in the Sub-Sahara are chronically hungry. Self Help Africa was formed in 2008, following the merger of two agencies with a 25 year track record of African development.

The organisation seeks to support rural African communities to grow more and earn more from their farms. The focus of the organisation's work is on strengthening existing structures such as farmer cooperatives and associations, improving access to markets, strengthening training, knowledge and farm support services and improving the access that rural people have to credit.

At any time, Self Help Africa has between 40 and 50 live projects operating across Africa (in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Togo, Uganda and Zambia). These projects are funded by a range of institutional donor grants, trusts and foundations and the general public in areas as diverse as food security, sustainable rural livelihoods, market orientation, public/private partnership, research, learning and advocacy.

The problem – Multiple systems operating in multiple countries

Alison Cowan is the UK based Finance Manager. She shares responsibility for providing support to the six African heads

of finance as well as for UK accounting. She explains the challenge:

"There were various systems in the different offices – Sage, Pastel, QuickBooks – and some were even using Excel. This created confusion and a lot of manual work in order to gain an accurate worldwide picture. We recognised that we needed a common system so that we had unified and standardised information. We needed everyone to know what they were doing, whilst using the same terminology as each other. All of the reports also needed the same look and feel so that we could compare like-for-like across countries".

Currency issues and fund accounting

Initially, Self Help Africa sought to adopt a low cost system. However, when they attempted to implement the system in Zambia it was found that it couldn't accommodate their requirements (for example, the large number of digits, because of inflation, in most African currencies).

Self Help Africa realised that it needed a global system and produced a list of requirements. Multicurrency capability was obviously high on its priorities as well as the ability to accommodate fund accounting. This would allow them to track grants and restricted funds given for specific projects to ensure that they had been used for the purpose intended.

Complex reporting requirements

"As producing bespoke reports for donors is so important, we needed software that was highly flexible, allowing both our internal processes as well as the more demanding requirements of our donors to be accommodated.

"Every accounting system can produce basic income and expenditure reports but we needed to be able to produce reports in donor formats, such as for the EU – previously this had required exporting data into a spreadsheet and a lot of manual effort. If funds had been spent in more than one country, we would have to develop one-off mechanisms to consolidate reports manually".

Local, global and statutory reporting needs

Flexible nominal ledgers were critical to allow each country office to adapt the system to their local requirements whilst still allowing worldwide consolidation. Another essential was the ability to report on income and expenditure categories in different ways, in order to comply with the statutory requirements of the Charities Act.

THE SOLUTION

Flexible and user friendly system

"The primary attraction with PS Financials was its flexibility. We had free range to set up the nominal ledgers in whatever way we wanted. We also liked the way that all of our country offices can access information in real time. We were able to tick the box on the reporting requirements and it obviously supported use of different currencies".

"We also liked the way we could customise the system to suit our needs, making it as user-friendly as possible. We were able to set up and define our own data input forms which minimised the possibility of user input errors so that, for example, a purchase invoice would automatically be posted to the creditor's account."

Helpful people

"The PS Financials staff were also very good. After the initial meetings, we fired lots of questions at our initial contact and ran through a lot of information. Once we'd agreed to go ahead, we were handed over to an implementation consultant who was exceptional."

THE TRANSITION

Fast implementation

Self Help Africa wanted – and received – a tight schedule for the system install so that it could go live in the UK at the end of April 2011 and roll out to the African offices immediately afterwards.

Easy worldwide deployment

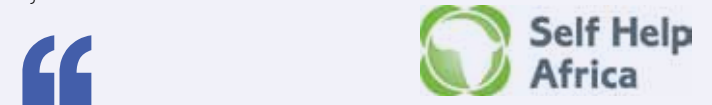
Having project managed the UK implementation, Alison felt sufficiently confident with the system to undertake the implementation in the African offices herself. Using a terminal server meant there was no software to install and all the reports were already set up to meet each country's requirements.

Equipped with user guides, instructions and telephone support from PS Financials, she had to spend just 10 to 14 days in each of the African offices to roll out the system globally.

Although there were some initial concerns regarding the connectivity and internet infrastructure in some African nations, there has been minimal operational downtime since implementation and the service has been much more stable than expected.

Integration with donor database

Self Help Africa uses Salesforce to manage project information, HR and to track income and relationships with its donors. Its in-house IT expert has developed a facility to integrate the information from PS Financials practically with "just one click".



The consistent accounting systems and procedures and the shared access to real time accurate data means that Self Help Africa now functions financially like one global organisation rather than a number of disparate international offices



THE BENEFITS

Self Help Africa benefitted significantly from adopting PS Financials:

- The charity now has uniform reports across all territories without having sacrificed the need to accommodate local requirements. This supports a greater level of transparency than was previously possible.
- The new accounting system was implemented in an incredibly quick time frame – enabling the trustees and management early access to accurate, real time and global information to support more confident decision making.
- Self Help Africa was able to save significantly by implementing the system and training its people throughout the six African reporting hubs itself.
- In contrast to the manual effort involved to produce institutional donor expenditure reports in the previous system, Self Help Africa can now produce these with simply a few clicks of the mouse – so significant operational costs have been saved.
- The time saved in dealing with operational matters and preparing financial reports in different formats means that the heads of finance in each country are now able to spend more time on strategic issues – undertaking critical analyses and identifying ways to improve the effective use of the charity's resources to provide help to the African communities it exists to serve.

Alison concludes "The consistent accounting systems and procedures and the shared access to real time accurate data means that Self Help Africa now functions financially like one global organisation rather than a number of disparate international offices".

To find out how PS Financials has helped over 500 local and international charities across the UK and in over 35 countries worldwide visit: www.psf Financials.com or contact: charities@psf Financials.com t: 01733 367 330

A local approach to aid: preparation is better than a cure

An increasing number of African, Asian and Latin American entrepreneurs are proving that 'local solutions to local problems' often result in a more effective response.

The international aid system is experiencing considerable transformation. Today the priorities are risk assessment, disaster-preparedness and resilience, with a focus on the empowerment of local communities in Africa and Asia.

Supply chains have also come under the spotlight. Humanitarian and development organisations are forming strategic alliances, partnerships with home-grown suppliers to deliver a more localised approach to aid, and at the same time injecting money and self-sufficiency into local economies.

In light of this trend, AidEx is inviting and funding 25 unique sub-Saharan African and South East Asian suppliers to attend their annual event in Brussels in October. These suppliers will demonstrate how their equipment and services can make a region more 'disaster secure' and able to respond to their own disasters

without an over-reliance on aid and imported goods. Some of the innovative products and services from African and Asian entrepreneurs are already being successfully applied in-house, empowering the community and boosting their business sector.

According to AidEx Event Director Nicholas Rutherford, "shifting the spending from humanitarian response to humanitarian *preparedness* can help save time, money and lives. By identifying centres of future

emergencies and stockpiling humanitarian goods nearby, with a preference for local suppliers, we are also massively reducing carbon emissions by cutting out air-lifting."

Below, three suppliers explain their perspectives and roles in humanitarian aid.

BOND IS A MEDIA PARTNER OF AIDEX 2012.

For more information about this global humanitarian and development aid event:
www.aid-expo.com

“ I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT AFRICANS ARE BEST PLACED TO SOLVE AFRICAN PROBLEMS AND THAT IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF AFRICANS TO ADDRESS THE MANY CHALLENGES THAT IMPEDE OUR DEVELOPMENT. ”



Thermal fleece blankets distributed in Afghanistan by Mahavir Overseas



Supplier: MAHAVIR OVERSEAS, INDIA

Mahavir Overseas is a one stop solution for a range of humanitarian and crises products.

Our products are for basic day-to-day needs: hygiene kits, kitchen sets, tarpaulins to provide temporary shelter and save items from further damage, sleeping mats, waterproof tents, and wash kits with buckets and jerrycans to save drinking water.

We try and carry out many processes in-house so that the order

can reach the people in need as quickly as possible. We have an in-depth understanding of the logistics required to deliver to remote areas.

Our products are predominantly found in refugee camps in Africa and Asia, but there are occasionally orders from Europe and Latin America. In the next two years we are planning to launch four or five new products specifically for relief camps. We have long-term agreements with many international NGOs.

Avinash K. Jain, Mahavir Overseas

Supplier: GHANA BAMBOO BIKES INITIATIVE, GHANA

Ghana Bamboo Bikes creates employment opportunities and sustainable livelihood job skills for young people through the building of high quality handcrafted bamboo bikes for international export and the manufacture of multipurpose bamboo bikes suitable for the high terrain and rough roads traversed by Ghanaians.

The initiative has created direct employment opportunities for 10 poor farmers and 20 bamboo bike assemblers at a higher wage than most other Ghanaians. These 30 people each represent a household about five, with the knock-on effect of about 200 people benefiting directly.

We collaborate with a lot of local and international organisations but our major obstacle is the lack of funding to scale up the business. In this part of the world, it is very tough to get the financing needed for innovative social enterprises.

In my view, the only way for Africa to continue to positively develop and meet the Millennium Development Goals is to break out of the donor-recipient mode and build a sustainable organisation that tackles some of its development challenges head-on. I strongly believe that Africans are best placed to solve African problems and that it is the responsibility of Africans to address the many challenges that impede our development.

Bernice Dapaah, Ghana Bamboo Bikes Initiative

Supplier: SUNFIRE SOLUTIONS, SOUTH AFRICA

SunFire Solutions is the leading Solar Cooker promotion and development agency in Southern Africa for solar cooker technologies.

Cooking and lighting costs consume the bulk of African household's income and time. Our solar cooking and lighting systems are maintenance free, easy to use and start making a difference from day one. Once purchased there are no further "fuel" requirements meaning that we aren't creating a culture of dependence.

Demand for our products is growing rapidly especially with the dual squeeze of the global economic crisis and the negative effects of climate change. The demand for sustainable solutions, not just in Africa but worldwide, is growing significantly.

We work with many NGOs and are continuously looking for quality partners to help expand the reach of the business. Partnering with well-established NGOs and development agencies has the twin benefits of putting technologies into the hands of communities that really benefit from them and increasing awareness of abundant renewable energy resources many people are unaware even exist.

Our main difficulty in spreading sustainable energy solutions is finding reputable NGOs that share our same agenda and vision. Unfortunately we are finding a reluctance and sheer unwillingness of 'aid suppliers' to use African-based supply companies often due to the unfounded preconceptions of administration and cost attached to doing business in Africa.

Speaking from experience of both, I can say that doing business in Africa has far less administrative hurdles and expenses than doing business in Europe. It's time to put negative perceptions aside and address the challenges at hand.

Crosby Menzies, Sunfire Solutions



Solar cooking and lighting systems are maintenance free and easy to use.

The UK Parliament and International Development

Bond is developing a comprehensive online resource to both support organisations to understand how they can engage with parliament and to encourage parliamentarians to be more active on international development issues. Alice Campbell-Cree explains.

The strength of UK public support for international aid and development efforts is reflected in parliament's long tradition of engagement with it. Indeed, this has established the UK as one of the world leaders in the fight against global poverty.

There are currently two major acts directly relating to international development which have been passed by parliament, the International

Development Act 2002 and the International Development (Reporting and Transparency) Act 2006. There is now a bill before parliament which, if MPs honour established cross-party commitment to legislate, will enshrine in law that 0.7 per cent of the UK's Gross National Income (GNI) be spent on official development assistance.

Engaging with parliament

There are many bodies and mechanisms through which parliament engages with the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the UK's development policies, and demonstrates its strong, on-going cross-party support for development issues.

Bond interacts with parliament in a number of ways including Bond working groups' support of, and collaboration with, All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPG) such as those for International Development and the Environment, on Anti-Corruption and on Latin America. Bond also works closely with the International Development Committee.

HOW PARLIAMENT WORKS: THE STORY OF 0.7%

In 1970, a UN General Assembly resolution for the first time called for developed countries to allocate an aid expenditure of 0.7 per cent of their Gross Domestic Product (later changed to GNI) to developing countries. While the UK, along with many donor countries, welcomed the target, UK aid as a percentage of GNI fell throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In 2003, Bond and other NGOs launched the 0.7 campaign, aimed at securing a government timetable for reaching the target. By 2005 it was a key demand of the Make Poverty History campaign, supported by over 500 NGOs.

Bond continues to work closely with its member organisations in demonstrating public support for the 0.7 per cent target and ensuring the government honours its commitment to enshrine it in law. A joint Bond and UK Aid Network briefing outlines five key reasons why the UK must reach and maintain this target.

bond.org.uk/pages/ukaidagenda.html

2005

NOVEMBER 2005

Tom Clarke MP launches a private members' bill on reporting and transparency in aid at a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Overseas Development. This bill includes a requirement of the Secretary of State for International Development to indicate in each annual report his assessment of the year he expects the target for expenditure on official development assistance to amount to 0.7 per cent of GNI will be met by the UK.

An Early Day Motion is made supporting this reporting bill. The bill is then passed and becomes the 2006 International Development (Reporting and Transparency) Act.

2009/10

SEPTEMBER 2009

Prime Minister Gordon Brown announces commitment to make 0.7 per cent legally binding.

JANUARY 2010

The Labour government publishes a draft bill which would require the UK to allocate at least 0.7 per cent of GNI to Official Development Assistance from 2013 onwards. The International Development Committee undertakes pre-legislative scrutiny of the bill, making a number of recommendations.

MAY 2010

All three major parties reiterate previous election pledges made in 2005, to reach 0.7 per cent by 2013 and to enshrine this commitment in law. The 2010 coalition agreement restates this commitment.



A BOND RESOURCE

Go to the Bond website to find out about APPGs and Select Committees working on international development issues, as well as the process of parliamentary mechanisms such as Private Members' Bills and how they can be of use in your work.

In the autumn, Bond will be launching a new resource where parliamentarians can learn about, engage with and support the international development sector and form and maintain active relationships with our members.

To be involved or for more information contact Alice Campbell-Cree, Bond Parliamentary Assistant: acampbell-cree@bond.org.uk

2011/12

THROUGHOUT 2011

Several parliamentary questions are asked regarding the timeline of the 0.7 per cent bill, demonstrating cross-party support.

JUNE 2012

Mark Hendrick MP is successful in the Private Members Bill Ballot and introduces to parliament the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Bill. The second reading is scheduled for July 2012.

NGOs mobilise their supporters in the constituencies of Croydon South and Watford to urge their MPs, whose bill readings are scheduled for the same day, to allow sufficient time for Mark Hendrick's bill to be debated.

JULY 2012

The second reading of the International Development (Official Development Assistance Target) Bill begins but is adjourned until March 2013.

Communicating the complexity of development

Through the words and images we choose to use, we must help the public and critics understand that saving lives isn't cheap or easy, argues Tony German.

Kevin McCullough argues quite rightly (The Networker, issue 101) that the images we use should reflect the world as it is – not some outdated or simplistic picture. I would argue that the NGO sector also needs to ensure that the headlines we use, particularly for fundraising, don't give unrealistic expectations which ultimately provide ammunition to those arguing against aid.

We all know that whilst £3 may buy a bednet, the cost of distribution and making sure it is used properly means that the cost of preventing malaria is much higher. Peter Singer's excellent book *A Life You Can Save* looks at a range of estimates for saving one child's life over a year. Estimates vary, from Jeff Sachs' \$200, to PSI's estimate of \$820 through to the high end estimate of GiveWell at \$2,367.

Let's take the \$300 figure Singer quotes as Bill Easterly's estimate for saving a life through all of the World Health Organisation's work on malaria, diarrhoea, respiratory infections and measles. If they had \$300 who wouldn't want to save a life at that price?

Many will argue that lots of students and people on a fixed income or people who are out of a job don't have \$300 – but they might be able to afford \$3. That's true, but surely we can do better at tailoring the message so that we effectively engage everyone who wants to fight poverty at whatever level they can afford. I believe we can do this without giving the impression that saving a life or helping build a livelihood or getting girls into school is easy or unrealistically cheap.

Complex messages clearly explained

The world provided \$133 billion in ODA in 2011. It sounds like a lot. But consider all the things aid is expected to do; respond to humanitarian crisis, help with water and sanitation, help deliver on MDG commitments on health, education, gender and nutrition, help reduce conflict and address climate issues, help improve governance and so on. It is easy to see that if we over claim for aid, critics will respond by saying aid doesn't work. Instead we need to give a clear picture of

what aid actually delivers to recipients and the strengths and limitations of aid in the context of other resources that can help reduce poverty and promote development.

This is a difficult and complex message to get across to the public but one that is important if we want people to have a better understanding of the fact that aid is rather a modest resource in relation to the complex and long term goal of poverty elimination. This is particularly difficult for organisations who need to fundraise who know that a '\$2 a month' message is so much easier to convey. But the long term benefits of taking a more nuanced approach could really help with wider engagement and response.

Engaging all our audiences

As we begin to discuss how the MDGs evolve to address (I hope) a renewed global commitment to eradicate absolute poverty, we need to engage all people – supporters, governments, parliamentarians, the media, poor people and their CSO representatives in a more realistic debate about what aid can do. We must also do better at showing how other resources including those from the private sector, military and developing country governments can be used more intelligently to address poverty and promote development.

The world continues to change but it is not enough for the NGO sector simply to respond. The sector needs to play a real part in setting the agenda based upon real evidence of what works and what is likely to happen in the future.

Tony German, Co-founder and Executive Director, Development Initiatives



Development Initiatives is an organisation focusing on the gathering, analysis and use of data and information to eradicate poverty. www.devinit.org

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THE MOVING IMAGE: A LOCAL LENS



Continuing The Networker's closer look at the advantages of working with local journalists, photographers and film-makers, Ugandan born videographer Abubaker Muwonge shares his thoughts.

In these uncertain times of decreased funding and dwindling communication budgets, the need for NGOs to effectively communicate the impact of their projects is greater than ever. Within the international development sector, the ability of the moving image to provoke and inspire has led to it becoming a powerful tool for engaging with stakeholders and investors. Indeed, the fact that so many western organisations are opting for the

recipient friendly medium of video is no surprise. However, their decision to fly in western film crews is perhaps more surprising. Given the heightened demand for accountability, transparency and cost-efficiency, the choice seems financially, socially, and not to mention environmentally, impractical.

With a deeper understanding of context - specifically culture and language - local crews are not only unhindered by logistical factors, but are

also able to bring subtleties into the moving picture that their western counterparts cannot. Moreover, utilising local media talent also offers a sustainable source of income for professionals. This has a knock-on effect for communities in terms of supporting independent media, challenging generic stereotypes and strengthening local economies in developing countries.

Abubaker Muwonge, an experienced videographer based in Uganda's capital, Kampala, discussed his experience of such issues with Paris Carr of Africa Interactive. As well as being employed as Director of Photography at a national television network, the 32-year-old cameraman has worked on the film projects of many international NGOs, the World Bank and UN agencies.

Q What is the nature of the media in Uganda?

The media in Uganda is poor, not independent but developing. Most media houses are privately owned and wages are extremely low. Media managers prefer to employ young and inexperienced people that they can pay less, rather than hiring trained and experienced workers. Media organisations make abnormal profits here; they can afford to pay well but deliberately don't. The government also closes media houses it believes to be against it; journalists are dragged through the courts of law and many are



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Bernd Kort / Africa Interactive

“

An independent media can challenge the government's poor policies without fear.

”

threatened with death. During demonstrations and riots they suffer injuries at the hands of security forces.

But many journalists are genuinely patriotic and wish to tell the story as they see it. They, and I, follow a strong belief that it is important for the sake of democracy to expose the security agencies that mistreat and torture civilians.

Q You have worked for many international clients, what impact does this have for strengthening the media in Uganda?

Using local media professionals supports media independence which consequently strengthens the media sector. Working for an international client means a media professional has to deliver the level of quality required by the developed market. Practitioners are forced to acquire new skills and constantly up their game by keeping up with the latest technical trends. Working for international clients pushed me to develop new skills – there is no excuse, no shortcut. I don't want my work to be merely comparable to that produced in developed countries; I want it to be better.

A successful professional who is paid fairly is able to become financially independent. A financially independent person working in the media has more freedom than many of the poor and consequently desperate journalists in this country. Independent media in my country can challenge the government's poor

policies without fear. There is so much corruption in Uganda: poor media practitioners can be paid off by corrupt government officials to stop them from running stories. Media ethics are not important to a poor journalist when their survival is threatened.

Q How can using a local media professional benefit the video being produced?

We know the rules of the game in our own country, where to point the camera and, importantly, where not to point it. We have a better understanding of our culture. I know how to handle an elderly Ugandan interviewee better than a cameraman flown in from London. If a woman is kneeling before her husband, the western crew may interpret it as 'backwardness' or 'primitiveness' without having any understanding of its cultural context or meaning. The local people who are the subjects of the videos feel more confident when they are filmed by their sons and daughters who speak their language, eat their food and experience the same challenges.

Q With so many international clients working in developing countries, why do you think that western crews are still being flown in to document their activity?

Many international clients do not believe in local media professionals; they don't think we are good enough. But we are able to access and rent modern production equipment, and with the internet, the world is a global village whereby we can keep up with the latest style specifics. Local professionals are using the same devices as foreign crews; if there is a gap in quality it is very small. Of course, like anywhere, you need connections and some means of identifying appropriate local professionals for the right job. Essentially, however, when clients use local professionals, they send a message that in Africa things have changed and are still changing, that Africans are capable.

I do believe though, that the specific relationship between local professionals and western NGOs has changed a lot, particularly over the last three years. Recently, the number of

western NGO film projects I have worked on has really increased and my colleagues say the same. It's reassuring because it's evidence that western NGOs are starting to trust us more and more with documenting their work.

Q What are your hopes for the future?

I want to see more competition within Ugandan media: more professional, international and regional TV stations in the country. Recently in Kenya, CCTV and Aljazeera forced a wave of competition which consequently led to journalists being paid a good wage. I want to see that for Uganda. The situation here is changing, but just not fast enough. We need more international players to speed up the process in various ways. I want to see more trained, committed, experienced and motivated professionals continuing in the media rather than deserting it for greener pastures.

As well as wishing for more media freedom in Uganda, I personally would like to become financially independent, own all my own equipment and start my own production house.

Africa Interactive is offering a 10% discount on the production of a first video for all Bond members until 31 March 2013. For more information please visit our website and contact partnerships manager Tshitula Teuns: Tshitula@africa-interactive.com

Currently filming a water documentary in Kampala, Abubaker Muwonge is part of Africa Interactive's network of over 3,000 media professionals in Africa, South America and Asia. Africa Interactive is a social venture strengthening local media talent worldwide. Our dedicated pre and postproduction teams identify and work closely with local media professionals in order to utilise specialised knowledge and expertise. Our collaborative approach enables us to produce creative, engaging and authentic content for a diverse range of international clients. www.africa-interactive.com

Security Management: Time for a new approach



The past decade has seen a dramatic rise in incidents affecting the safety and security of aid workers around the world. Operating in complex conflict, post conflict and disaster relief environments, INGO staff are increasingly finding themselves targets of violence and victims of life threatening incidents.

While risks have increased exponentially, security capabilities and processes available to the sector have not kept pace. As a result, the gap between requirements and capabilities to effectively account for staff has widened to an unacceptable degree.

It is recognised by many in the sector that current processes are failing to provide effective security management for staff in a 21st century operational context. With humanitarian workers operating in more countries around the world and with INGOs increasingly reliant on the efforts of local national staff and in country organisations, the requirement for a new, cost effective, flexible approach to security management is needed now more than ever before.

Any incident can rapidly develop into a significant event affecting the safety of staff. INGO staff are more likely to be affected by routine incidents such as road traffic accidents or vehicle breakdown compared with the more high profile risks of kidnapping or direct violent attack. **It is important that organisations have a relevant security management process in place to account for all staff.**

Often employees do not have a means of quickly informing security managers of their real time situation and managers do not have the right tools to quickly locate their staff and respond effectively.

LOCATION MANAGEMENT – THE CONCEPT

Location management is an innovative concept that, without the cost and invasiveness of tracking systems, enables management to monitor and communicate with their staff around the world. A location management system as opposed to a travel management system is required to react and deal effectively with an incident.

The **Employee Location Management System (ELMS™)** enables oversight of the location and status of **all** staff, both those deployed in country for extended periods and globally

dispersed regular travellers. Where accounting for the actual location of staff may have taken hours or days using traditional methods (spreadsheets, emails and travel data) ELMS™ collapses timeframes.

ELMS™ – THE NEW APPROACH

With years of experience in the security and risk management sector, Track24 recognised the need for a location management system that meets the requirements of international aid organisations with a globally dispersed workforce.

ELMS™ is a centralised, web based interface that enables security managers to interact with staff and disseminate security information at a global, country or individual level. The ELMS™ concept provides a security process for all staff, including local nationals. ELMS™ is a cost effective solution, which allows organisations to account for their entire global workforce and in the event of an incident respond quickly and effectively.

Staff can update ELMS™ in a number of ways thanks to the integration of multiple technologies. With access to the internet, staff can update both their location and status via the website. ELMS™ supports a panic alarm capability via website, SMS or Smartphone App. When away from the office, travelling or working in the field, users can update their location and status globally via SMS or using the dedicated ELMS™ Flare Smartphone Apps (available for iPhone, BlackBerry and Android).

ELMS™ Flare is a powerful feature of the ELMS™ platform. For both security management and staff, ELMS™ Flare provides relevant, unambiguous, up to date data, enabling more effective management of staff and an improved response to incidents.

Your people are your number one asset. ELMS™ enables you to cost effectively account for all of them, wherever they are.

For further information please contact James Cartmell
Email: jc@track24.com
Tel: 0207 4347305
www.track24.co.uk/products/elms



Fymee learning to walk with her new prosthesis with Patrick, a Handicap International physiotherapist, in our orthopaedic workshop in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.



Approaches to effectiveness

Bond members are addressing effectiveness, transparency and accountability in different ways. International HIV/Aids Alliance and Handicap International explain their approach.

Handicap International

Transparency, rather like 'participation', is one of those things whose importance and worth are hard (or even pointless) to deny but which in reality are still hard to define, let alone **do** on a regular, concerted, and consistent basis. At Handicap International we want to take on this challenge.

The reasons we are engaging with transparency are in common with why NGOs more broadly are starting to take it seriously:

1 we have constituencies to whom we should be accountable – the people we work with on the ground, the general public who support us, the wide range of funding organisations that also underwrite a significant part of our work

2 being clear about what exactly we do to the wider world also helps us to better understand our own achievements and challenges

3 our own openness makes our arguments for openness and accountability from others more credible

4 greater access to information on what we do and how we do it may serve to encourage further support from our various constituencies

Although we are already applying and meeting legal and ethical standards, particularly in relation to accountability and reporting, and are therefore employing some of the principles of transparency, it is become increasingly evident that a number of international initiatives are trying to give shape and meaning to the practice of transparency. We have looked at these closely and concluded that we could do more, but that it's vital to do it as a structured process rather than jumping on the latest bandwagon.

Our structure

Handicap International is a relatively large, international, federal organisation – all three factors have a strong bearing on the complexities of increasing transparency in our systems. There have been genuine concerns about the origins and legitimacy of various transparency standards, and a strong sense that such initiatives have proliferated, risking those organisations applying them being pulled in a variety of (contradictory) directions. It has been

important therefore to recognise that there is no perfect transparency, just progressively improving practice. IATI's position of 'publish what you can' is instructive in this regard; it helps to underline the notion of transparency as process, and one from which we learn as we go.

A holistic view of transparency

Being clear on the breadth of the issue has also been important, hence the need to draw in a wide range of contributors, given that it can affect everything from the organisation's own ethics to what it means for IT systems. Being realistic and professional implies having clear objectives for publication and sharing. Referring to the experience of other organisations is, unsurprisingly, a vital addition to this learning. What remains are challenges at a more functional level:

- what changes to monitoring and reporting systems are needed?
- What are the implications in terms of turning large volumes of data into something that's accessible on the web?
- How do we disseminate data and information whilst applying data protection?

Starting the process outside donor conditionality has allowed discussions to take place internally without the pressure of having to meet a deadline. It has also enabled us to focus on transparency's value of and for itself, rather than being subject to some external pressure.

We are just at the beginning of a process without a defined end, progressively working towards influencing policies, procedures, technical approaches and practices. Given this, it's more honest to speak in terms of our hopes for trying to address greater transparency. For this it's probably simplest to refer to the four main categories of what makes transparency important outlined above. Becoming more transparent, and better handling transparency-orientated systems, will, we hope, make us progress towards what counts.

Ian Henstock, Programme Support Officer, Handicap International

Handicap International is an international aid organisation working in situations of poverty and exclusion, conflict and disaster in over 60 countries worldwide.
www.handicap-international.org.uk

International HIV/Aids Alliance



The International HIV/AIDS Alliance was the first international NGO and civil society organisation to publish its data using the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) standard which aims to make information about aid spending easier to access, use and understand. As part of its commitment to transparency and effectiveness, the Alliance initially published details on the IATI registry of 38 projects that are funded through its International Secretariat and implemented by linking organisations in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. Details of new projects as well as updates to the status of existing ones will be added on a quarterly basis.

The Alliance is committed not only to publishing its own data at regular intervals but also to helping the initiative to take off with its southern partners. The resulting data flow means that you should be able to see the architecture of aid from all sides, whether you're a donor, a civil society organisation or community member. You can see where the money's come from and where it goes, creating a chain of compliance. But to work properly, IATI needs everybody to get involved, both in the north and the south.

Mapping data in this way should ultimately lead to improved harmonisation and coordination between agencies, helping to avoid duplication of effort and show up where there are areas that are not being addressed. So in the HIV sector, we will one day be able to analyse whether there is adequate resourcing for programmes targeting vulnerable groups such as men who have sex with men.

The Alliance is now in the process of modelling its monitoring and evaluation system around the IATI

standard as well as providing support to its linking organisations to be able to start moving along the path towards greater data transparency.

Transparency and effectiveness go hand in hand. The Alliance is an active participant in Bond's Effectiveness Programme, supporting the process to develop the Improve It Framework, a framework for proving and improving effectiveness, by piloting the measuring tools in its own monitoring and evaluation processes. Liza Tong, the Alliance's Programme Manager for Evaluation, Research and Learning believes that being involved in the Bond programme has led the organisation to reflect on its own programme quality and put in place similar principles.

"We found that we share many of the same values, in terms of helping to give communities a voice and empowerment issues, and focusing on value for money and accountability," she said. "The effectiveness group provides a solid platform for NGOs to exchange learning and experience and to build on one another's approaches."

As well as improving its upward accountability to donors, the Alliance is expanding its accountability to beneficiaries by looking at social return on investment methodologies which measure their perspectives on the impact of HIV interventions. With the Khana Integrated Care and Prevention Programme in Cambodia for example, the method has enabled participants to quantify their own benefits in the form of social, health and economic-related values, and the Alliance is now looking to develop further cost effectiveness studies relating to HIV prevention programmes for most at risk groups.

Farai Matsika, Data Analyst, International HIV/AIDS Alliance

The International HIV/AIDS Alliance is a global partnership working to support community action on AIDS in developing countries.
www.aidsalliance.org

“International HIV/AIDS Alliance is expanding its accountability to beneficiaries by looking at social return on investment methodologies which measure their perspectives on the impact of HIV interventions.”

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Strengthening your organisation's capacity

The Bond Health Check and resource portal is a 'one stop shop' to effectiveness designed specifically to strengthen the capacity of your organisation. It has been developed by NGOs through the Bond Effectiveness Programme and will be launched late September.

The Health Check is an online self-assessment designed specifically to help identify an organisation's strengths and areas for improvement across core functions including leadership and strategy, programme management and external relations. It provides a snapshot of the health of your organisation and shows you what sector best practice looks like.

You can compare your results, anonymously, with organisation's of a similar size, working in the same countries or on the same sectors, providing a valuable insight into where your organisation sits in relation to peers and trends across the whole NGO sector.

The resource portal links to other tools, guides and different approaches and standards and principles for strengthening effectiveness.

Use it to:

- streamline the strategic planning process and maximise participation from board members, partners and staff at all levels within the organisation
- plan for organisational change including a structural or strategic focus shift
- gain credibility and demonstrate to donors that you are continuously improving the organisation
- Strengthen the capacity of the organisation so that it is equipped to achieve programme outcomes



Go to the website or contact us for full details:
bond.org.uk/effectiveness
ngoeffectiveness@bond.org.uk
020 7520 1042

VIEWPOINT: TREE AID

"The Health Check gave us the opportunity to systematically look at a whole range of areas across the organization in a different way than we had before. The self-assessment process provided a way to arrange the discussion in way that enabled all staff to participate.

Following an analysis of the results, we made changes to the way we do things. One example is the development of our new sustainability strategy. Thanks to the Health Check we realised that we needed to make our approach to ensuring sustainability more explicit and to share evidence internally and externally in a more robust way, which is what our new sustainability strategy seeks to do.

Part of our analysis of the Health Check was to create action points in each area and these are already leading to positive changes across the organization."

“

The Health Check complimented our existing participative strategic planning process very well.

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Theory of Change: the essentials

The last couple of years have seen a dramatic increase in interest in Theories of Change. Maureen O'Flynn outlines how and why NGOs might choose to utilise them, while James Treasure-Evans shares Concern Universal's experience.

Proponents of Theories of Change believe that it will reform the way that organisations plan for and assess their development efforts.

Increasing pressure from organisations' boards and funders to articulate long-term impact has encouraged many to look for new and better ways to represent what they do. Many funders, organisational development providers and consultants are using Theory of Change to help NGOs focus more directly on long term change rather than project focussed outputs and outcomes, and to help them to direct their energies more clearly. But what are they really; and how do they differ from or complement log frames? Will this "new idea" really transform the development sector's ability to achieve results?

What is a Theory of Change?

Essentially, a Theory of Change is what it says on the tin: a theory (a system of ideas intended to explain something) about how change happens, and how

we – through our organisation or programme – intend to work to influence these changes. It is no more than a powerful way of involving the right people in thinking about how to shape the future.

When did they first emerge?

Theories of Change may be fashionable, but they are not new: the term first emerged in the mid 1990s in response to the challenge of assessing the impact of complex social development programmes, particularly because the assumptions that inspired them were poorly articulated and stakeholders were unclear about how the change process would unfold. This lack of clarity reduced the likelihood that all of the important factors related to the long term goal would be addressed.

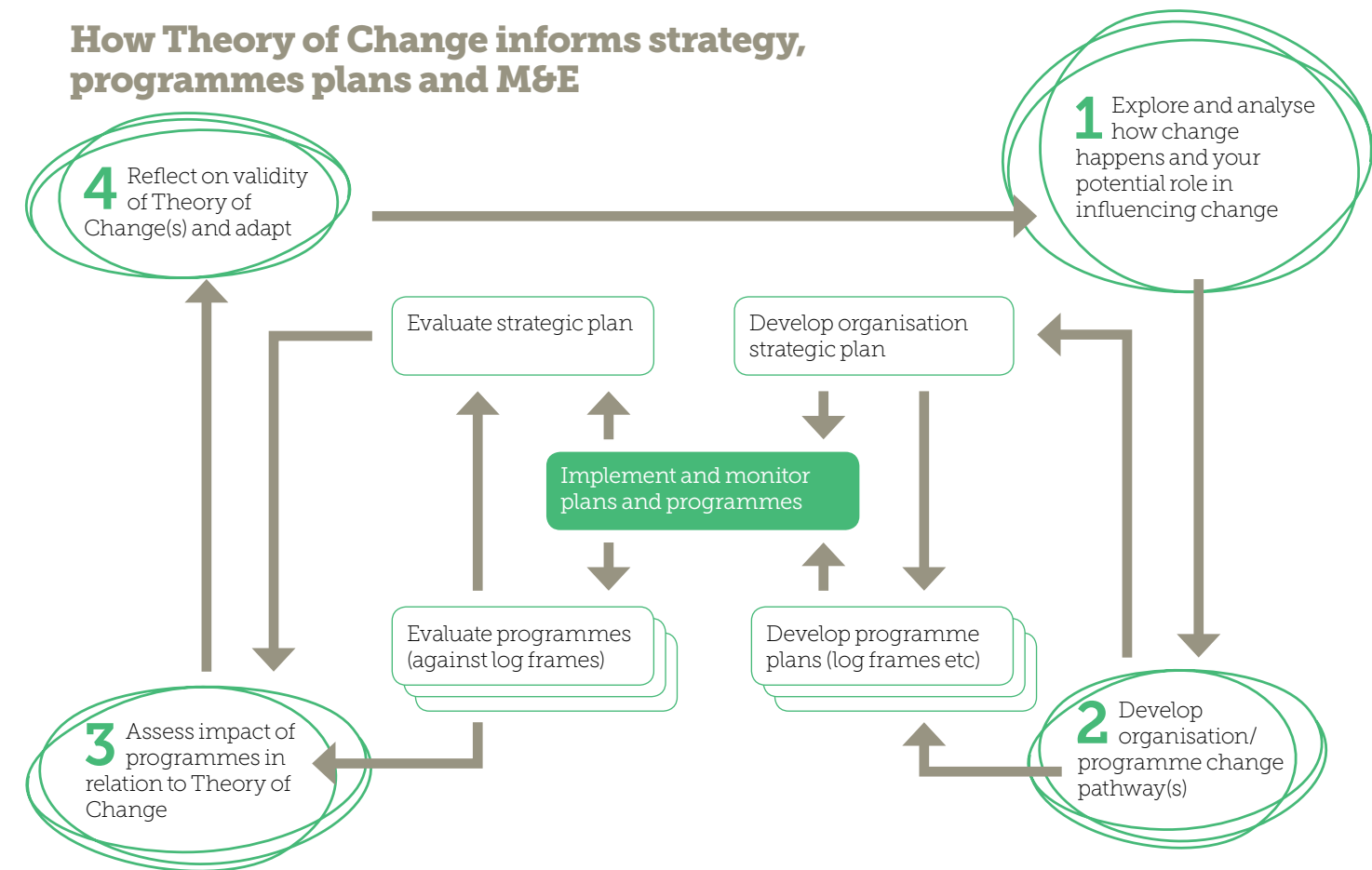
Interestingly, 15 or more years later, these issues still compromise our ability to assess impact effectively: Largely driven by donor demand, NGOs are so focused on developing their log frames and proving that they achieved what

they set out to do, that they seldom have time to look up and reflect critically on how their efforts fit into the bigger picture of change. Consequently, they fall into the trap of implementing "successful" projects and programmes (according to their log frames) which have actually had little or no positive impact on changes in people's lives. They may even result in negative and unintended impacts.

How do they complement other planning and evaluation processes?

The diagram opposite illustrates how Theory of Change supports and informs planning and evaluation of both organisational strategy and individual programmes. The key thing to note is that Theory of Change is not a planning document but it does provide essential analysis for effective planning. In relation to impact assessment, an analysis of your programme effects in the context of how you understand

How Theory of Change informs strategy, programmes plans and M&E



change to happen and your specific change pathway will enable you to answer the all important "so what" questions:

- What actually changed as a result of our efforts? For whom? How significant is this?
- Did we work in the right way with the right people? At the right time?
- So, is our theory of change working? What's wrong with it? What do we need to do differently?

What benefits will it bring?

As part of its review of Theories of Change in 2012¹, Comic Relief asked partners what benefits emerged from developing and using a Theory of Change. Answers included:

- Developing a common understanding of the work and surfacing any differences
- Strengthening the clarity, effectiveness and focus of our programmes
- Providing a framework for monitoring, evaluation and learning throughout a programme cycle
- Improving partnership by identifying strategic partners and supporting open conversations

- Supporting organisational development in line with core focus and priorities
- Using theory of change to communicate work clearly to others and as a reporting framework.
- Empowering people to become more active and involved in programmes

These benefits should be balanced against the fact that, in order for Theory of Change thinking to really transform the way we think and work in development, we need to invest time, resources and energy into understanding how to develop and use it effectively. The Papers developed to inform the Bond Improve It Framework offer a valuable starting and reference point for thinking about how to start developing a Theory of Change.

Maureen O'Flynn, Trainer of Bond's *Theory of change essentials* and *Impact assessment* courses

References

- ¹James C, Theory of Change Review for Comic Relief, September 2011

IMPROVING EFFECTIVENESS

The Bond Improve It Framework will enable NGOs to assess, manage and report their effectiveness confidently and consistently. The first version will be launched in autumn 2012. bond.org.uk/effectiveness

LEARN ABOUT THEORY OF CHANGE WITH BOND

Bond's one day *Theory of change essentials* course introduces the main elements of Theory of Change, explains how it complements other planning and accountability processes and provides ideas on how to get started. Upcoming training dates:

19 November 2012
11 March 2013

Find out more and to book: bond.org.uk/learn



Developing an organisational Theory of Change: Concern Universal's experience

Developing a Theory of Change has been one part of our ongoing journey to better understand what we do and why we do it. There were three basic drivers behind Concern Universal developing a Theory of Change.

1 some of our country programmes had started to develop change theories for individual projects and programmes and there was an internal push to have an organisational level Theory of Change

2 our main funding partners had begun asking us to explain how we believe change happens, and our contributions to change

3 we saw developing a Theory of Change as a useful tool for a mid-term review of our organisational strategy

To develop our organisational Theory of Change we began by writing a paper on poverty and vulnerability, helping us to think through the processes of social change. The paper explored the underlying causes of poverty and vulnerability and helped us to explore how (social) change happens and how

our work promotes change. This poverty paper, and our organisational strategy, formed the basis of our discussions throughout the process of developing our Theory of Change.

Our Theory of Change is based on the principles of our organisational strategy. It begins by outlining the main challenges facing people living in poverty and ends with our vision of people living in a world where justice, dignity and respect prevail for all. Where the Theory of Change differs from our strategy is that it focuses much more on how we work, rather than what we do, in other words the pathways to change.

Challenges

The greatest challenge that we faced was coming up with a 'theory' that spanned all our work. A number of colleagues, with some justification, believed that it was more important to develop clear theories of change for specific projects rather than work on an organisational theory of change. It was also initially hard to convince people of the added value of a Theory of Change to our organisational strategy. However, developing the theory of change, and thinking in more depth about how our programmes lead to change, was an excellent opportunity for our senior staff to understand how to use the theory of change planning tool and we are hoping this will lead to improvement in project design in each of our country programmes.

Benefits

We have been able to use our Theory of Change in a number of ways:

- as a means to explain to donors what we do and how we learn
- as a reference point by in-country teams to develop project and country Theories of Change
- as an *aide memoire* in project planning
- in setting more specific terms of reference for impact assessments

Since developing the organisational Theory of Change, two country programmes have already developed their own Theories of Change and have begun to use the Theory of Change tool in project planning.

James Treasure-Evans,
Concern Universal

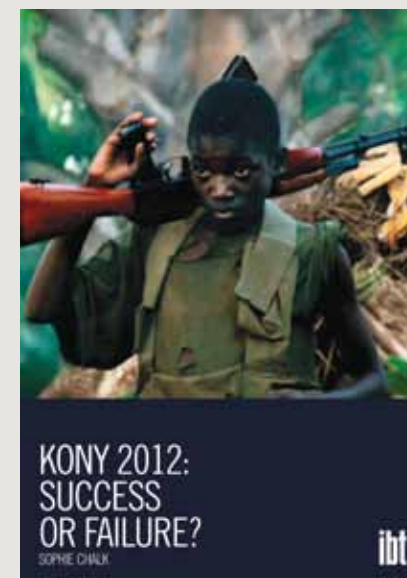


| www.concern-universal.org

Concern Universal is an international development organisation tackling poverty from the grassroots. By building skills and connecting people at all levels in society, we help communities deliver practical solutions with long term impact. To see a diagram of our Theory of Change visit: www.concern-universal.org/theory

Is all publicity good publicity?

Sophie Chalk, author of *Kony 2012: success or failure*, investigates the lessons NGO campaigners might take from the Stop Kony 2012 campaign.



More than 100 million hits on YouTube – this is what most campaigners dream of and was achieved by the controversial *Kony 2012* film. The 30-minute video is the fastest ever video to reach a 100 million hits on YouTube. It's the twelfth film US charity Invisible Children have released and none of their others attracted more than 300,000 hits online, so why did this one have such an impact?

There are two primary reasons for its success. One is the way the video was made and the other is that Invisible Children had a pre-existing network of supporters to promote it and used celebrities to spread the word via Twitter.

Telling a simple story

The video is very glossy, accessible with engaging imagery and music, is written in simple language and it tells a compelling narrative similar to an action movie rather than a development documentary. It isn't complex or 'worthy'; it tells a simple story of how we, the 'good guys', need to catch a 'bad guy'.

Invisible Children promoted the video prior to its launch with emails, tweets and Facebook entries to supporters. Having been emotionally engaged, followers were then asked to complete a simple action – to share the video with friends. They were also asked to tweet 20 celebrities and 12 policy makers. After celebrities chose to support the cause the take-up increased exponentially. Of those celebrities Oprah has 11.9 million followers on Twitter and when she tweeted the day after the launch viewings rose from 660,000 to more than nine million.

Widespread criticism

The video attracted widespread media coverage, some of it critical, which was key in raising its profile even higher. Criticism was mostly due to Invisible Children's policy for a military solution to the conflict. Many NGOs working in Uganda and Central Africa will not consider supporting military action. The video was also criticised for its neo-imperialist approach, for being over-simplistic and not providing any context for the current situation. Invisible Children's financial priorities and transparency were also questioned, leading to a wider debate about its credibility as an NGO.

In Uganda internet usage is limited so not many people viewed the video online. Radio is the most popular form of media and was crucial in spreading news about the video. The response was generally negative because most Ugandans don't believe the military solution will work. Other criticisms



One of the most contentious issues is the question of how to make content engaging, without oversimplifying it.



included that the video gave the impression that members of the Lord's Resistance Army are still in Uganda when they left six years ago, its neo-imperialist approach and the lack of local voices. There were a number of screenings of the video in Northern Uganda but these were suspended after violence broke out.

| An internet sensation

In response to the huge level of interest in Kony 2012 The International Broadcasting Trust (IBT) has published a report, *Kony 2012: Success or Failure?*, which examines why the video was so popular and explores lessons NGO campaigners might take from it.

One of the reports key findings is that Kony 2012 demonstrates the potential of the internet to stimulate a global debate about an issue in a developing country. This is seen as a positive outcome of the campaign.

One of the major negative outcomes identified is the backlash against the video which has damaged Invisible Children's credibility as well as that of other NGOs in Uganda. Some Ugandans interviewed for the report questioned the motives and financial accountability of Invisible Children and this has extended to scepticism about NGOs in general.

So, what lessons can campaigners learn from the Kony 2012 campaign?

■ **How do you go viral?** You need to have an established online network of supporters and your content has to be simple, with an enjoyable cost-free ask. Having a video with a simple message is key in appealing to a wide audience but this can lead to a lack of context.

■ **Geographical boundaries:** Geographical boundaries do not exist online, so you need to anticipate reactions beyond your target audience. The intended audience for Kony 2012 was in America. Invisible Children's previous videos hadn't aroused interest in Uganda so they didn't anticipate the backlash they received. Most interviewees for the IBT report suggest that involving local people can help avoid a negative reaction and ensure a campaign's success in practical terms.

■ **Loss of control online:** When a campaign is online you cannot control the ensuing conversation which for many organisations is a problem and needs to be considered.

■ **Speed of online campaigns:** If your video goes viral you need to be prepared. Invisible Children weren't ready for the popularity of their video and the ensuing backlash and this led to a loss of credibility.

| Simplifying a complex message

One of the most contentious issues which come out of the IBT research is the question of how to make content engaging, without oversimplifying it. Most interviewees agreed that this is one of the greatest challenges for campaigners and one which the Kony 2012 video has failed to address. Development messages tend to be complex. How can we engage while also reflecting nuance?

One solution is to devise different campaigns designed for different niche audiences – one for the US and one for Uganda in this case. In order to provide context and further information, interviewees suggested there are numerous ways to link through to different sources of content online which could be used more effectively by NGO's. They also highlight that we constantly need to innovate to keep up with the pace of new technology online but there is one caveat: that we shouldn't over-saturate the market with campaigns because this will lead to social media fatigue.

While interviewees admit there is now a far greater awareness of the LRA and Joseph Kony as a result of Kony 2012, they question whether simple awareness is enough. The key question is how to achieve deeper engagement. This is a challenge which the whole development sector needs to address.

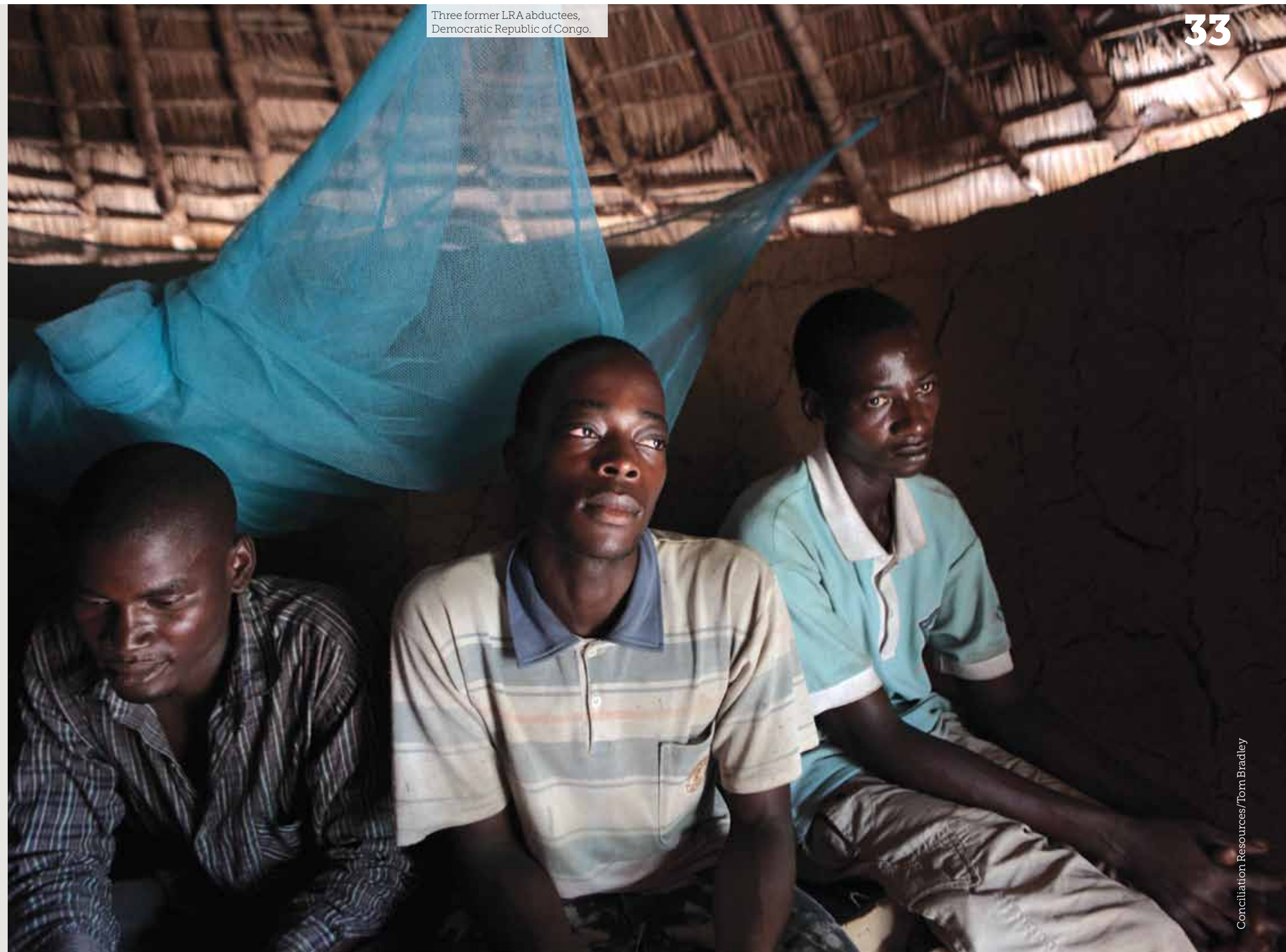
Sophie Chalk, author of *Kony 2012: Success or Failure?*

IBT has launched this report as the beginning of a debate about online campaigning in the follow up to Kony 2012 and will be publishing further research about digital campaigning in the autumn, looking specifically at how the UK public responds to NGO messaging online. IBT welcomes approaches from any organisation which wishes to work with them on this.

IBT is a membership-based educational and media charity working to further awareness and understanding of the lives of the majority of the world's people and the issues which affect them. www.ibt.org.uk

Download *Kony 2012: Success or Failure* at: www.ibt.org.uk

Three former LRA abductees,
Democratic Republic of Congo.



KONY 2012 DEMONSTRATES THE POTENTIAL OF THE INTERNET TO STIMULATE A GLOBAL DEBATE ABOUT AN ISSUE IN A DEVELOPING COUNTRY.





VIEWPOINT

“Kony 2012 was a failure. I recently asked a number of young people about the film and only when prompted did they respond with any form of recognition.

As the saying goes, “there is no such thing as bad publicity” in this case, Invisible Children got what they wanted and more. Or did they? Did they really believe the video would go viral? The video may make some headway with US policies but unfortunately for the children who were abducted, used as child soldiers, raped and those who were left to die, the advocacy calls for military intervention could not and have not

been able to assist the survivors of Kony's atrocities directly.

WarChild teams in Uganda believe the video was good for an audience that had no idea who Kony is or what he had done and for encouraging children and young people to get involved in an action. However, as well as inaccuracies about the location of Kony and his band of intimidators, there also wasn't any explanation about how the victims in Uganda had survived and what they have been through to be able to be rehabilitated into society in a meaningful way.

Ultimately, every NGO would want a video or talk piece to get that many “hits” without having the negative publicity it provoked. A well

thought through, balanced piece is what is required. Whether mass mobilisation and comprehensive honesty work as a couple, is another matter.

Yet, the second video from Invisible Children was more balanced and should have come out first. It seems a shame Kony 2012 was surrounded by such negative publicity where the reaction from Invisible Children turned the video(s) into farce and therefore the proverbial damp squib.

”

Amanda Weisbaum, Programme Director, War Child
www.warchild.org.uk

VIEWPOINT

“In bringing the conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to the attention of ordinary global citizens, the Kony 2012 campaign succeeded in drawing in new audiences. However it missed an important opportunity to acknowledge the problem's root causes and the factors that must be addressed to secure lasting peace. In the process it alienated many of the very people it set out to save.

Local people often have the greatest insight into the causes of violent conflict but their opinions are all too frequently overlooked. Through

our practical work in the region we know that in areas where the LRA is currently active – Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo – the few community leaders who have had access to the video feel that it fails to reflect the realities on the ground. In South Sudan, the campaign went unnoticed. In northern Uganda there was a violent backlash in at least two of the organised community screening events (Lira and Gulu).

While Kony 2012 advocated for a military escalation, civil society leaders are united in calling for a holistic approach to solving the problem. Its regional political and

security dimensions require a comprehensive and coordinated response, in which any military effort gives priority to civilian protection and forms part of a broader strategy addressing the multiple dimensions of the conflict.

Simply stopping Kony won't solve the LRA conflict. It is vital to tackle the web of political, governance, social and economic problems which fuel and sustain the violence.

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Kennedy Tumutegeyereize, East and Central Africa Programme Director, Conciliation Resources
www.c-r.org/LRAconflict

THE IMPORTANCE OF A STRONG

BRAND

As NGOs strive for greater effectiveness in an increasingly competitive environment, they can't afford to overlook the vital role that their brand can play in driving their organisation forward and keeping it one step ahead of the rest, argues Anis Qizilbash.

The aid delivery model's metamorphosis into a competitive market-based approach is urging NGO leaders to take a holistic view of how their organisation leverages its brand to raise funding; attract the right people, resources, and partners to stay competitive.

International development cooperation's transition towards greater accountability, transparency and performance-based aid has created a major shift in global development practice. Emphasis on strategic partnerships, innovative forms of financing and new sectorial priorities, and the rise of new donors shifting the balance of power, are examples of tectonic movements, catapulting the evolution of NGO management.

Moreover, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon's recent appointment of David Cameron as co-chair for the Panel on Post-2015 sends a clear signal that foreign aid will gravitate further towards a market-based approach. NGOs must adapt to stay relevant.

A focus on programmes eclipsed the importance of human resources and marketing functions within NGOs, in the past, but now these roles are recognised as equal pillars, alongside programming, to build effective organisations. NGO leaders must now question how their brand helps propel the organisation in all areas. Because a strong brand can engage funders, attract great people and partners in a competitive environment, help demonstrate value-for-money, and reinforce the legitimacy of aid to the public.

A new branding vehicle

Content marketing (or custom publishing) has enjoyed meteoric growth in the private sector over the past two years, and proving to be an extremely cost-effective branding vehicle. Enabled by social media, advancing mobile technology and changing media consumption, content marketing is the creation and distribution of educational and engaging content in different formats.

According to a study by the Content Marketing Institute, 60 per cent of business-to-business marketers are increasing their spend and the professional services sector is enjoying the highest uptake with a 95 per cent adoption rate. Consumer brands like Coca Cola have revamped their marketing strategy towards exciting and sharable content. On the business-to-business side, American Express successfully engage their target audience while amplifying brand mindshare through their Open Forum website.

Content marketing: why and how

A strong brand acts as a catalyst to bring people to the table; accelerates decision making, while powerfully positioning your NGO as a go-to in the sector. It conveys what you stand for, while increasing your credibility. Content marketing's runaway success in the private sector makes it a viable blueprint

for NGO leaders to consider adopting for their brand awareness strategy.

To begin a content marketing strategy, you need to identify your NGO's objectives: is it fundraising, thought leadership, community building, or recruitment drive, because this will determine your target audience and content strategy. Then establish whether you have in-house staff content generators, and whether this is something they should be doing. If not, you need to explore outsourcing or hiring a team. Next, decide the type of content you will create, the delivery platforms, and frequency of publication, while assembling appropriate measurement tools.

Your primary objective should be to consistently deliver interesting content that adds value to your target audience. Producing enough engaging content, regularly, tends to be the biggest challenge organisations face while implementing a content strategy.

But when you get it right you will increase your brand awareness, positioning your NGO as an expert and cultivating familiarity with potential partners, because we all like to do business with people we know and trust.

Anis Qizilbash, founder and director of Global Development Innovation



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NGO leaders must now question how their brand helps propel the organisation in all areas.

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In the spotlight



Phil Vernon, Director of Programmes at International Alert, gives his perspective on some of the big debates and challenges within the UK international development sector.

A changing development space

The 'development' space has broadened and deepened as more and more development actors see conflict as a development issue, and therefore peacebuilding as part of their role. There's been a mainstreaming of understanding that peacebuilding is a critical part of development and poverty eradication, and this is a good thing. On the other hand, I don't think we know enough yet about how to deal with it, especially on the scale of DFID or the World Bank. For a medium-sized NGO like International Alert doing relatively small but hopefully high impact programmes, we see lots of ways to

work on peacebuilding. But when you're a DFID head of country office it's much harder to conceive of how you might spend £100 million a year in support of peacebuilding in Uganda say.

I'm encouraged that accountability is back on the agenda but I get concerned about the confusion between 'countability' and accountability. There's a real danger that in the wrong hands the push for accountability can become a push towards projects and programmes which are easy to count and measure. DFID's big projects and programmes are going to companies rather than NGOs. This is not necessarily a bad thing, but if you're giving millions of pounds to a profit-oriented company there's more risk that they're going to

implement something that's poorly thought through than if an NGO gets a smaller amount of money and therefore has more opportunity to be flexible.

Collaboration is the future. International Alert collaborates with mining companies and oil companies because they understand much better than they used to that they can get things wrong in conflict-affected places and they know they need advice. We collaborate with humanitarian and development NGOs and of course we're looking at possibilities of collaborating with some of the companies which are getting large contracts from DFID and other donors. Fifteen years ago we wouldn't have done this.



From 'Different faces, shared hopes: The human side of conflict', a photographic exhibition on the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Aid and 0.7%

There are arguments for having a target like 0.7 per cent, such as that it's easy for people to get behind a simple figure. But ultimately that's a distraction from the more important discussion which is about the quality of aid: where should it go; how it should be delivered; and what should it be for. It's certainly better to spend less really well than to spend a lot poorly. I think that it's a bad time to be pushing for 0.7 per cent legislation. It would put the government into a difficult position with Tory MPs, and it's well documented that the majority of British people wouldn't support 0.7 per cent were they asked. The government has already made a commitment to increase spending to 0.7 per cent so let's assume that they will stick to it, and we can focus on other issues instead.

Beyond 2015

In some ways, the discussion about what should follow the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is as important as the result of the debate. There are more stakeholders and actors involved now than when the MDGs were being developed, so we should have a really interesting conversation over the next few years, taking it beyond poverty eradication to talk about what human progress really means; what is 'development' in its broadest and deepest sense. The end result will be a compromise of course, and I don't mind if people can't agree because that would indicate that the discussion was as rich and as difficult as it ought to be about such a complicated issue.

I feel that any global framework should have at its core a global vision, perhaps based on the Millennium Declaration, of how we would like to live together in this world of finite

resources. If there were a global framework that set out a broad idea of a 'better world', each country could then figure out how to respond according to its own planning cycle and circumstances. If we try to get too much absolute agreement it will just end up based on the lowest common denominator.

UK leadership

We've entered a new phase of understanding of development. The UK has been a leader in aid thinking, but also became a little bit blind, to be honest. Because the British aid sector was so large and DFID was so powerful internationally, we thought we had all the answers. In the last few years we've understood much better that development is a broader and deeper set of issues than the MDGs, and the question now is how to deal with that.

If the challenge for people in fragile contexts is to develop the institutions they need to manage their conflicts without violence, how does the outside world engage in that process in a useful way while allowing the right institutions to emerge? The risk we run as outsiders is being too keen to help build such institutions, when actually they have to emerge at their own pace. So outsiders can perhaps play a catalytic role. The UK development sector is well placed to help figure this out.

The future of development

As UK NGOs, we have to find new ways of working on development, playing the catalytic role I have mentioned. Development assistance is less about spending large amounts of money, and more about collaboration, partnership

“If you boil development down it's about leadership; it's about individuals and groups taking risks for change.”

and ideas. Sometimes I think that if you boil development down it's about leadership; it's about individuals and groups taking risks for change, and the role of UK development NGOs is probably to help support those people and those groups in a well-informed and effective way.

Phil Vernon joined International Alert, an independent peacebuilding organisation, as Director of Programmes in 2004. He had previously worked in development, humanitarian and peacebuilding in Africa since 1985.
www.international-alert.org

Phil is also a Trustee of Bond member Build Africa, a small charity working in rural Uganda and Kenya to help young people escape poverty through education and income generation projects. www.build-africa.org

A USEFUL PIECE OF ADVICE

A colleague in West Africa once said: 'When I'm designing a project, the first things I look at are the problems and their causes, and the potential solutions. Then I ask myself, of those potential solutions, who might provide them and how might they do that? The very last thing I ask is, is there a role for me and my organisation?'

In the NGO world we too often tend to look for a role for ourselves, first and foremost. That can skew our analysis, as every hammer always seeks a nail. Sometimes, the truth is that we aren't well placed to help, in which case it's better to leave well alone.

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The challenging environment in which many international NGOs work means they often require specialist insurance products that cover a range of eventualities. NGOs and specialist brokers explain their approaches and what makes a good policy.

Looking after staff and assets is a vital part of governance for any organisation. When that organisation works in many countries around the world – including in places that may be remote or dangerous – managing risks poses particular challenges. A number of insurance brokers specialise in products targeted at the international NGO market. But what makes for a good policy?

When Erika Hamer, HR and Office Manager at WarChild, was reviewing the charity's insurance needs, she found her choice of provider was limited because of the countries they work in. All the countries where WarChild works are risky, and only a handful of companies actually work there.

All WarChild staff and volunteers are covered for kidnap and ransom, evacuation and repatriation, as well as international medical and travel insurance. But Erika stresses that as well as the right cover, customer service is an important factor. She switched WarChild's business away from a broker she found difficult to contact. WarChild now use specialist broker Banner, who Erika has found easy to work with.

Self-insurance is an option

Is insurance always the best approach anyway? David Willingham, Head of Risk Financing at Save the Children, says not.

INSURANCE FOR NGOS

“It's vital that all staff understand what to do in the event of an emergency, including how to access support.”



“OFFERING FULL COVER EVERYWHERE, REGARDLESS OF RISK, PAYS OFF IN CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES.”

"With 300 expat staff, plus their accompanying families, operating in more than 30 countries, we know that every year we will have one or two expensive cases where people will have to be taken out by air ambulance. So we meet that cost out of our own funds."

David has devised a model he calls 'capped self insurance' where Save the Children pays into a bank account managed by an insurer. The insurer manages claims and pays bills, but the money belongs to Save the Children. If the fund falls short, costs are met by insurance, but any credit balance is returned to Save the Children.

It is a better use of money to pay costs yourself than to give money to insurers to do it. Insurance is for the unpredictable, not the expected, he says.

| Ensuring consistency

With staff working in different countries, there is the potential to adapt insurance according to local conditions. For example, War Child's staff member in Uganda arranges insurance in-country, which is cheaper than using the central broker.

But a big challenge is ensuring consistency of cover, according to Laura Schauble of Clements Worldwide, another specialist broker.

"Regardless of where we are operating we want to be compliant with all the various jurisdictions that come into play and the various insurance requirements – but also ensure consistency through all locations," she says.

Laura recommends a master programme that evens out the differences. Offering full cover everywhere, regardless of risk, pays off in changing circumstances too. Insuring against kidnap, ransom and political violence will attract a low premium while a country is perceived as low risk. Yet should the situation change, cover is in place. The Arab Spring illustrated the value of this approach.

Ensuring consistency can still allow for cover that reflects local conditions. For example, when insuring local staff in developing countries, insurance administrator Vanbreda offers a system that avoids people on low salaries having to pay upfront costs. "If we're insuring the local population, we will

set up direct settlement arrangements with certain pharmacies and doctors, so people don't have to pay costs themselves and claim them back," says Vanbreda's Angela Rooney.

| Good insurance pays

Having the right network is important. A Save the Children staff member working in Niger recently suffered a suspected heart attack. There was a daily flight to Paris, yet he was unable to get a French visa. The assistance company quickly found a flight to South Africa, and a fast-track visa to get him good medical care fast.

It's vital that all staff understand what to do in the event of an emergency, including how to access support. Laura Schauble says, "The key to surviving an emergency situation is having a team that's well informed about what to do and clear back-up procedures. Any insurance policy is only as good as its implementation."

Sarah Finch, Freelance Writer

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