



THE TIME AND
PLACE FOR
HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR INTERNATIONAL AGING

The Time and Place for
Humanitarian
Assistance

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The Time and Place for Humanitarian Assistance

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This book about humanitarian assistance is written for retired Americans as part of the education program of the American Association for International Aging. The term 'retired' has no bearing on an individual's capability, productiveness, or active participation and interest in the world around them. On the contrary, one of the underlying tenets of this book is that retirement is a time of discovery when people can learn and contribute. The term 'American' is used by several of the authors, and designates citizens of the United States of America.

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Preface

Why are Americans generous? Why are we charitable? Why do we care about and help others? One retired American who was asked these questions said, “It is difficult to answer because it touches one’s very soul. To be a humanitarian is to be kind to others, and for me it is a matter of obligation, of duty, and of moral upbringing.”

Moral and ethical questions about America’s obligations to others are not always easy—and they go far beyond individual values.

Should the United States help its world neighbors in time of crisis? Are we responsible or accountable for pain and suffering on the other side of the globe? With so much to be done at home, do we have sufficient riches to solve problems beyond our borders? Is it justifiable to weigh our national interests against those of poor countries where people are dying of sickness and starvation? Should we contribute large sums of money to head off a crisis? Or is it better to wait until a major disturbance erupts?

Americans’ energy and confidence in overcoming hardship are well-known to the world. Stories of our generous spirit and willingness to help mankind are legendary. Undeniably, our magnanimous acts have bettered human conditions in the world.

This book is written for those who care about humanity and civilization. It explains why we as a nation respond to world crises and why we should also care about root causes and long-term solutions, not just the symptoms.

It describes the roles and activities of our public and private sectors. It paints a portrait of individual, national, and world brotherhood. It imparts information to readers who want to be involved internationally, but are not quite sure how they can help.

It poses the question, “How do we determine who to help and, what is more important, who to ignore?” It also says to the reader, “Yes, charity may begin at home, but it needs to be extended far beyond our homeland.”

The book opens with a chapter on American attitudes about humanitarianism and foreign assistance.

Chapter two chronicles the unique heritage of American idealism. Chapter three provides information about some of the types of crises and emergencies that besiege the world today.

Chapter four describes the disaster and refugee assistance projects managed by the U.S. Agency for International Development. Chapter five looks back over the history of the American Red Cross and the United Nations family of relief agencies.

The last chapter profiles a sampling of international organizations and agencies with headquarters in the United States. Organizations are arranged alphabetically, and addresses and telephone numbers are given for readers who want to explore opportunities for contributing.

chapter 1

THE HUMANITARIAN APPEAL

Helen Kerschner

'Assisting disaster victims.' 'Meeting basic needs.' 'Giving non-military aid.' 'Caring for the less fortunate.' 'Being kind to other people.' 'Helping people in emergencies.' 'Supporting sustainable development.'

Just what IS humanitarian assistance? The dictionary defines a “humanitarian” as someone actively engaged in promoting human welfare, a philanthropist, a good Samaritan, a benefactor who gives time and money to needy persons or to socially useful purposes.

Simply put, a humanitarian is “one who helps others.”

America is a generous nation. Each year, millions of individuals, corporations, philanthropic organizations, churches, synagogues, and other establishments give to the needy.

If a friend or neighbor's house goes up in flames, you bring them food. You provide them with clothing. You offer them shelter.

If you come upon a stranger in need, you offer food to the hungry. You provide clothing

for the poor. You visit the lonely. You comfort the infirm.

If a flood threatens a nearby town, you join a sandbag crew. You find out what else you can do to help.

If an airliner crashes in another state, you give blood.

If an earthquake half a world away results in hundreds of casualties, you try and help as much as you can by sending money for the families of the dead and injured.

Few people can ignore cries for help. Emergencies happen over and over, all around the world, every year.

It is true that many relief efforts are sparked by a crisis. But other problems and needs that unfold more gradually—education, health care, employment, the environment, housing, social services—are equally important aims of relief efforts all over the world.

What Americans Think

In 1993, the American Association for International Aging (AAIA) asked more than ninety educators, international development experts, and retired Americans throughout this country to define *humanitarian*

assistance. A snapshot of retired Americans' views follows.

AMERICANS SPEAK OUT

When asked, "What is humanitarian assistance," here is what the retired Americans surveyed said:

- Providing resources to help others
- Aid given to cover basic needs
- People helping people to help themselves
- Giving people a hand up, not a hand out
- Help and care for needy Americans
- All non-military foreign aid relief, and longer-term quality-of-life improvement
- Aid to help keep people alive during times of crises
- Financial and technical assistance to developing countries
- Provision of food, shelter, clothing, medicine, and assistance during natural disasters and man-made catastrophes
- Giving technical and financial assistance when requested to grass roots groups in southern countries, as well as temporary emergency relief due to disasters, war, or displacement
- Long-term development, usually grass roots, that helps ordinary people to be better fed and housed, mainly through their own efforts.
- Economic development and environmental education
- Helping people raise their standard of living
- We help others through emergencies, such as famine, floods, civil war, and then provide tools and know-how so people may better help themselves

Americans' opinions surrounding humanitarian assistance are many and varied. There is no general across-the-board belief or point of view.

Some say it is giving food, medicine, money, or shelter to people living in extreme poverty. Others care more about helping

poor people economically, socially, and spiritually.

Some believe America's first duty is to help people in this country. Others think it is important to help people in far away nations.

To some, the words imply short-term aid in response to emergencies. To others, it is long-term development that can enable people to stand on their own feet.

To many, it is both.

According to USAID, the U.S. Agency for International Development, emergency humanitarian assistance helps to relieve suffering and to stabilize nations battered by disaster or famine.

In USAID's mind, it is a necessary, stopgap solution that helps countries recover from crises, including civil conflict. Often, it opens the doors to the more difficult enterprise of sustainable development.

America Has Good Reasons for Being Generous

Americans contribute millions of dollars every year to relieve human suffering all around the world.

Most contributions are targeted for disaster relief. The international community responds to disasters about once

every three weeks, and spends from \$1 billion to \$2 billion on worldwide relief assistance a year.

Perhaps you have asked yourself, why do Americans, in particular, open their hearts and pocketbooks to relieve people's suffering?

If you are like many people, you probably have at one time or another felt grateful for your good fortune. Possibly the thought came to you in the aftermath of a great disaster. There are no guarantees in life. No one is immune to human tragedy, diseases, or the work of nature.

AMERICANS SPEAK OUT

Why does our country support disaster relief and refugee assistance around the world? Here is what retired Americans surveyed said:

- Judeo-Christian values are a part of our heritage
- We have a strong sense of human decency
- It makes Americans feel they are contributing to global society
- It is right and smart and in America's self-interest
- The giving ethic is part of our culture
- It helps us, it helps others, and it reflects the reality of the global village
- American cultural and religious traditions support giving
- Pragmatic humanitarianism is part of the American value structure
- Americans are touched by the human suffering, and are in a position to help
- Americans have compassion
- Americans feel a connection with world citizens
- It helps America and ourselves
- It makes us feel good—it is the right thing to do
- Americans have a basic generosity of heart

- The American people's sense of community and desire to contribute
- We give based on our religious and moral convictions
- We respond to the needs of those in emergency situations
- Americans tend to be charitable in principle
- Most believe that all humans have the right to decent food, shelter, and health
- It is America's duty as a 'have' nation

That is to say, we are moved to help others because it is the right thing to do. Along with fellow citizens, we give because we are compassionate, decent, generous of heart, and in a position to help. And from a foreign policy point of view, it is good for America.

International development experts agree.

WHAT THE EXPERTS THINK

In answer to a question posed in focus groups around the country, "What is humanitarian assistance," here is what development professionals said:

- Feeding people
- An agenda that is in the national interest
- Government intervention in the lives of people in need
- Feeding people with the ultimate goal of helping people help themselves—unfortunately, humanitarian assistance usually gets stuck on the first step
- Provision of immediate assistance (food, clothing, shelter) during disasters
- Long-term assistance at the community level
- People involved in programs that help them attain better health care, education, and housing
- Short-term relief to meet the most pressing needs and long-term assistance that will have a greater impact and make a difference

Most Americans have a genuine desire to help those who are less fortunate. As a culture, America is generous. And constant news coverage of depressing world events has had a ripple effect in making us far more aware of the world's desperate needs.

Philanthropy is also part of the American tradition. We as Americans are thankful we live in a blessed country—after all, the United States has much it can share. At heart, we are each of us our brother's keeper.

American Views on Humanitarianism and Foreign Assistance

Surveys say most Americans nowadays believe the U.S. should donate to Third World countries for humanitarian reasons, though there is ambivalence in the minds of many about America's foreign assistance agenda.

A 1993 USAID survey confirms the ambivalence. Many of the persons surveyed, 53 percent, thought economic development should be a priority. A whopping 72 percent favored relief for victims of disasters, such as floods, droughts, and earthquakes. In the same study, 77 percent of the persons surveyed said that feeding the

hungry and poor was the most effective type of aid.

WHAT AMERICANS THINK *National studies, surveys, and opinion polls make known Americans' views on foreign and emergency aid:*

Most Americans, 89 percent, overwhelmingly agree that, "Whenever people are hungry or poor, we ought to do what we can to help them."

—*Rockefeller Foundation study, 1992*

Most Americans, 79 percent, favor foreign aid for development projects, such as health care, education, and agriculture.

—*ODC/Interaction study, 1986*

Most Americans, 72 percent, favor giving humanitarian aid to developing countries.

—*U.S. Agency for International Development study, 1993*

Most Americans, 70 percent, think the U.S. should take a leading role in humanitarian aid to victims of wars or natural disasters in foreign countries.

—*ABC News/Washington Post survey, 1993*

More than half of Americans, 59 percent, agree the U.S. should send food, clothing, and medical supplies as an appropriate option for involvement in Third World conflicts.

—*Americans Talk Security study, 1988*

More than half of Americans, 56 percent, approve sending U.S. military forces to Asian or African countries to prevent famines and mass starvation.

—*Times Mirror study, 1993*

Top priority for U.S. government assistance programs to developing countries should be relieving human suffering brought about by civil war and natural disasters.

—*Study for the Pew Charitable Trusts' Global Stewardship Initiative, 1994*

Let it be said, most Americans, when asked, want to do whatever can be done to combat hunger. But Americans' support for humanitarian causes dwindles when foreign aid becomes part of a more complex global agenda.

Links With Development

Humanitarian aid has always been an important part of USAID's mission. The administrator of USAID is the President's Special Coordinator for International Disaster Assistance. USAID's commitment is to:

1. Save lives, reduce suffering, and protect economic assets in the face of disaster.
2. Reduce the vulnerability of populations at risk from natural and man-made disasters.
3. Build local capacity to prepare and respond to disasters.
4. Facilitate a rapid return to normalcy and local self-sufficiency in the aftermath of emergencies and disasters through effective rehabilitation.
5. Preserve basic institutions of civil governance during crises.
6. Support new democratic institutions during periods of national transition.
7. Protect food security and health of highly vulnerable groups who may be at risk due to short-term effects of development policies.

USAID priorities currently are *disaster prevention; mitigation and preparedness; disaster relief and rehabilitation; aiding countries in post-crisis transition; establishing safety nets; and meeting the short-term food*

security needs of vulnerable groups.

International relief organizations, USAID among them, are increasingly having to grapple with what the experts term, "complex emergencies." The difficulty? More and more, humanitarian crises are occurring in regions already buffeted by instability, thus hampering relief efforts.

"A complex emergency is a humanitarian crisis with more than a single source of concern or danger, such as a natural disaster in an area of armed conflict. It is a situation in which prevailing conditions threaten the lives of a portion of the affected population who are unable to obtain minimum subsistence requirements, and are thus dependent on humanitarian assistance from an external source for survival."

—Mohonk Criteria for Humanitarian Assistance in Complex Emergencies

Civil strife kills vast numbers of people all over the world. Many millions of people are forcibly driven from their homes. Political conflicts aggravate and worsen relief and recovery efforts.

WORLD POVERTY FACTS

Tragically, today in developing countries:

- Almost 1 billion of the world's 5.7 billion people live in absolute poverty. The average per capita GNP is less than \$2,000.
- About half the people in developing countries do not know how to read.

- ☐ Half a billion people working in developing countries are unemployed or under-employed.
- ☐ Typically, 50 percent of the income in developing countries is received by 20 percent of the population, while 20 percent of the population receive less than 5 percent of the income.
- ☐ Seventy-five percent of people in rural areas have no access to clean drinking water, and less than 20 percent have as much clean water as they need.
- ☐ More than half a billion people are hungry and malnourished.
- ☐ Almost 20 percent of children in developing countries die before the age of five.
- ☐ Eighty percent of all illness in developing countries is waterborne.
- ☐ One hundred million children in developing countries are always hungry.
- ☐ Fifteen million children die each year from malnutrition and infection.
- ☐ Only 40 percent of the children in developing countries will be able to go to school. Only 15 percent will finish elementary school.
- ☐ Average life expectancy is 54 years in developing countries, compared with 74 years in developed countries.
- ☐ Debt servicing costs absorb 30 percent to 40 percent of all export earnings.

SOURCE: AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR INTERNATIONAL AGING, *A Primer on International Development, 1991*

It has been documented that many of these problems are those of an impoverished and underdeveloped world. Today we know, for instance, that poverty, population growth, and environmental degradation are closely linked.

We know, for example, that poverty results in rapid population growth. When a high percentage of children die, parents are under pressure to have many children in hopes that

some will survive to support them in old age.

Because they are poor and need to feed a growing population, farmers strip the landscape of trees to grow crops. This erodes the soil and sets the stage for man-made disasters.

In 1987, the United Nations World Commission on Environmental Degradation stated:

"A world in which poverty is endemic will always be prone to ecological and other catastrophes."

Pressures exist everywhere in the world. In the former Yugoslavia, for instance, the country's political turmoil has resulted in what some world leaders have described as a "country leaping backward into the Dark Ages."

Other countries, such as Somalia, Liberia, and Angola, are said to have "entered a death spiral in which sovereignty is being dismantled piece by piece; the countries are returning to the wild to be ruled by the gunman and the scavenger."

Military Involvement

Since 1991 there has been unprecedented U.S. military involvement in international relief efforts.

Recent U.S. policy has called for military intervention in trouble spots around the world that has included more than contributing relief supplies. For example, in northern Iraq and Somalia, U.S. troops provided complete protection so that men, women and children displaced by the fighting could safely return to their homes. This was in addition to U.S. soldiers bringing in relief supplies.

Given the current global tensions, many international relief agencies share the belief that a military presence is needed to help alleviate suffering, maintain neutrality in conflicts, maintain respect for national sovereignty, and protect the lives of relief workers.

There are different views, however, regarding the military's changing role in relief operations.

Though some argue that the military has an unparalleled capacity to support relief work, others believe that working side-by-side with the military can be a hindrance.

INTERNATIONAL RELIEF AND THE MILITARY

When questioned about military involvement in relief efforts, here is what the experts said:

- This kind of involvement is an outstanding change, indicating that the government is willing to use the military for peace-keeping purposes.
- Military action in humanitarian causes raises the need for the military to do more work to perfect their transition to peace keepers.
- Humanitarian assignments demonstrate the need for more specialized training of the military.
- Using the military could work, especially if the purpose is to provide logistical support.
- The military should be a last resort, used only for essential transport and logistics.
- The very idea of military involvement indicates "a new world *DIS*order."

Development Is Disaster Prevention

A disaster can eradicate years of development progress in a matter of minutes, according to USAID, while civil conflicts can destroy social, political, and economic institutions. Tragically, a disaster can set the development process back immeasurably.

Disaster readiness measures and appropriate development policies can play a key role in protecting progress by *preventing* disasters or *lessening* their effects.

Emergency relief measures, coupled with longer-term development, not only can help to save lives and relieve suffering after a disaster, but also speed recovery—and in the long run may very well improve the economic, political, and social life of a nation.

HOW DO YOU SAVE A CHILD?

This moralizing story, told and retold by Women in Development specialists, explains how and why relief and development agendas are closely tied.

- If we give the little girl clothing and shelter from the elements, don't we then have to inoculate her so she doesn't die of cholera?*
- If we inoculate her, don't we then have to provide nutrition so her mind and body can develop?*
- If we feed her, don't we then have to provide adequate schooling, so she is literate enough to understand her world?*
- If we educate her, don't we then have to provide proper housing and sanitation, so she can enter adulthood with youthful energy and not be exhausted from parasites and disease?*
- If we house her, then don't we then have to provide some economic stability, which itself implies environmental planning and appropriate technology?*
- If she grows up in a stable environment, don't we then have to provide vocational training, so she can learn a skill that gives her income and a sense of accomplishment?*
- If we help her acquire vocational training, don't we then have to address her role as a woman, including her economic rights and her social status, so she is not isolated from the rest of society or rendered powerless?*
- And finally, if we do all these things, don't we then have to help her nation build its own democracy, so she is not just a recipient of aid, but a participant in her own development?*

Saving a life demands much, much more than the offering of emergency aid. If the goal is truly a humanitarian one of saving a life, then many more actions will have to be taken, one-by-one, step-by-step.

Take the floods in Bangladesh. While international relief efforts in Bangladesh are helping to deal with immediate needs for food, clothing, and shelter, they do not address the causes of the flooding: deforestation in the Himalayas.

The origin of this “natural disaster” is man-made, and if action is not taken soon the problem will be irreversible.

Without enough forests, soil from the Himalayas washes down, silting the rivers and causing them to overflow. The effects are disastrous on both hillsides and delta.

From Pakistan to India, Nepal to Tibet, deforestation has eroded fertile top soil from the hills, triggering landslides and clogging rivers and reservoirs with so much silt that they overflow when they reach the plain of the Ganges River a hundred miles below Mt. Everest.

At the present rate of cutting in the forests, experts say, there won't be any trees left twenty-five years from now.

Bangladesh is not unique in the world. Many other examples

of manmade disasters exist. Manmade disasters hamper relief efforts, and are a potential source of donor exasperation. They plainly require a short-term crisis response, as well as a long-term development response.

According to surveys, Americans are not as willing to help fund development efforts that lead to long-term, sustainable solutions as they are willing to give to temporary, short-term emergency relief. As mentioned before, a large portion of American contributions is allocated toward disaster relief. While these donations certainly help meet basic needs in crisis situations, and may even set the stage for or identify solutions, it is not likely they will result in long-term, sustainable solutions.

As one professional fundraiser aptly put it:

“Give me a good disaster, and I’ll raise a million dollars. Give me a good development project, and I’ll lose a bundle.”

Intervention Is Becoming More Complex

Disaster and emergency relief work is complicated today. The more complicated the problem is, the less likely the public is to support appeals for help.

In many ways, donor apathy to complex, global problems is a result of so many needs in the world. By the same token, donor concern is moved by who is affected, whether the cause is personal or impersonal, whether the solutions are tangible or intangible. The expansion of assistance beyond national borders, military involvement, and the time required to solve the problem are also factors.

Here are two examples:

CONTINUUM OF INTERVENTION

➔LESS COMPLEXITY➔

☐ Hurricane in the U.S. While government and private relief assistance to Hurricane Andrew victims in 1996 could hardly be described as simple, it illustrates the disaster relief end of the humanitarian crisis continuum:

- It was a domestic crisis.
- The purpose of the relief aid was mostly to ensure basic survival.
- The target population was anyone who needed help.
- Individual and institutional support were provided.
- The aid was immediate in reaction to a crisis.
- While aid continued for some time, the major thrust of activity was short-term.

➔MORE COMPLEXITY➔

☐ Water Wells in Kenya. The villagers and their committee worked out an agreement that would assure project ownership. The water project committee then asked all villagers of the Ndome area if they could contribute a full day of labor each week to the project. The people answered yes. Soon the committee got village residents to supply the labor and the money and time to build and maintain the system. An international organization agreed to supply the

materials. This project could be described as a complex humanitarian activity because:

- It was an international development initiative, located in Kenya, a developing country.
- The purpose was to improve quality of life (by promoting better sanitation and health).
- Individual and institutional support were provided.
- It was directed toward a single community.
- The response was pro-active in that it was initiated by the affected community.
- It was planned as a development project that could be sustained over time.

The American people demonstrate heroic courage and quick response to disasters that occur in the U.S., are over quickly, and affect a limited number of people. However, problems half a world away often meet with emotional indifference.

People are not as moved by the tragedy of a flood that takes place in a developing country, is one of many related events, lasts a long time, affects thousands of people, and is a by-product of ecological degradation.

It is one thing to help a disaster relief effort. It is quite another thing to put in place the conditions for long-term change.

Even more complex and confusing is prolonged political strife, which results in widespread death and destruction.

You may have asked yourself, "Why when we have so many

problems at home are we sending money to solve problems in developing countries?"

The truth is, humanitarian support can be as important to the United States as to countries in the developing world.

A Primer on International Development, published by the American Association for International Aging in 1991, provides more perspective:

"In helping [developing countries] deal with and solve their environmental problems; address their health problems, overcome their dependency on crops that produce drugs, reduce their poverty, alleviate their hunger, control their population growth, and manage their use of water, we often cannot help but to help ourselves. A more stable, more prosperous, better fed, healthier developing world can deal with environmental and health concerns and can import more U.S. products that, in turn, can create jobs and reduce trade deficits. But the United States receives benefits beyond those tied to these more obvious interrelationships. It is estimated that over half of every U.S. foreign aid dollar is actually spent in the United States."

Conclusion

Americans play an important role in aiding peoples around the world in times of crisis. When it comes to supporting long-term, sustainable development, however, there is some

skepticism. What is perhaps most important to remember is that the humanitarian response after the crisis may save lives, but it is the longer-term efforts to alleviate problems and improve society that will bring life to the lives that have been saved.

What can be done to make this a better world? If America does not lead, then who will? It has been said that by recalling our past, we can make more sense of the present. The following chapter chronicles the absorbing history of American attitudes about humanitarianism.

chapter 2

AMERICA'S UNIQUE HERITAGE OF HUMANITARIANISM

Marvin Kaiser

The New Colossus

*Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightening, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glowes world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.*

*"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, the tempest-tost to me.
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

—Emma Lazarus (1849-1887)

In this famous poem, whose words are inscribed on the Statute of Liberty, poet Emma Lazarus proclaims the United States a haven for immigrants. America's compassion and mercy to all people, she declares, are basic to America's national character. Commenting on Lazarus' poem, William Bennett, the former Secretary of Education and editor of *The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories*, writes:

"Here is compassion as a national policy, one of America's great national policies."

The American humanitarian impulse is embedded in the character and history of the United States. Writing in 1952, Arnaud Marts suggested that this commitment, while central to our lives, has not even been adequately recognized by Americans themselves. He wrote:

"If a history of the American people were ever written from a human, personal point of view, it would tell a new story. It would largely be given over to a study of how we have used our political freedom to found and maintain our great network of private agencies— instruments of education, health, religion, culture, reform, character building, social welfare, and humanitarian aspiration. But history is written by students of politics, of government, of militarism, of economics of commerce. Little is said about the generous efforts of private citizens to establish voluntary institutions for the service of their fellows."

Americans are known throughout the world for their friendship and benevolence to those in need. The legacy of compassion, charity, and humanitarianism, described by Emma Lazarus endures today.

Notably, millions of Americans volunteer every year,

and almost 90 percent of all charitable giving is made by private individuals.

In 1993 alone, Americans gave over \$126 billion to charitable causes. Often, the most visible charitable activity is focused on our communities. Both citizens and leaders of our nation, however, remain ever-conscious of the suffering of people around the world. In this decade alone:

☐ We came to know the Somalian city of Baidoa as the *City of Death*. We saw school yards used as burial grounds for famine victims as starvation daily took the lives of 300 people.

☐ We witnessed refugees streaming out of the central African country of Rwanda until there were more people living in Goma, Zaire, than live in Detroit, Michigan. Then we watched them dying from cholera and dysentery, as hometown newspapers ran photos of children clinging with desperate hopelessness to the dead bodies of their parents.

☐ We learned that the long-term deforestation of mountainsides in Nepal, when combined with sudden typhoons, leads to flooding that destroys people, crops, homes, and businesses in Bangladesh.

☐ We received daily reports of political strife destroying homes, neighborhoods, and people in war-torn Bosnia, including children maimed and killed as they played in the streets.

To be sure, the world is beset with desperate needs.

To give an illustration—In the early 1990s the United States joined other nations in responding to the plight of Somalia's strife-torn country by

sending vast amounts of food and supplies to limit starvation. Eventually, the United States deployed soldiers to assure that civilians in need would receive the aid that poured into that nation.

Slowly, and with the ongoing support of the United States, Baidoa, Somalia is fighting its way back to life. While food and jobs are still scarce, schools have reopened and electric lines are being installed. Tribal militiamen who once terrorized others are now learning to build furniture and turn their banditry to productive lives.

Much as the skeptics or pessimists among us might question—"How many times?" "What good has it done?"—rarely has America become so blasé or cynical to turn its back on human need.

Rather, another story emerges—a story of caring citizens of all ages and backgrounds who donated more than \$5 million for Rwandan relief during the summer of 1994.

It is a story that tells of hundreds of doctors, nurses, public health experts, and private citizens who went to Rwanda, Zaire, and Tanzania to work in field clinics and refugee camps; and of popular musicians who

gave benefit concerts to assist organizations such as AmeriCares and Operation USA.

It is an ongoing story of private international relief agencies—including CARE USA, World Vision, Catholic Relief Services, Lutheran World Relief, Oxfam America, the American Red Cross, the U.S. Committee for UNICEF and Operation USA—pouring millions of dollars and sending hundreds of aid workers into Rwanda and Zaire.

Similarly, it is a story of U.S. corporations donating medicine, food, clothing, and farm equipment to ease suffering in Rwanda—valued at more than \$35 million. In addition, it is a story of the U.S. government sending over 33,000 tons of grain and 20 million packets of oral rehydration kits to treat cholera, and providing American troops to ensure that refugees would have access to food, safe drinking water, and medical care.

Compassion for others is part of the American national character. Why?

Americans are moved to help the poor, the homeless, children, and elderly—people who live nearby, as well as half a world away—because they believe they are tied to every one of these individuals. They see these people as neighbors.

Long ago neighbors were easier to know. We recognized their faces and felt the bonds of kinship. Today, our neighborhood extends far beyond our local community—largely due to advances in modern communications.

Today, we sense an ever-deepening truth that we are all members of the human community. When a person is our neighbor, we share responsibility for their well-being.

While Americans tend to take this duty for granted, our humanitarian impulse owes much to our nation's religious and civic origins.

Foundations in Religion

For most Americans, loyalty to friends, family, and neighbors stems, at heart, from their own religious or spiritual convictions. One's deeply held religious beliefs inspire private and public actions. While there is great religious diversity in America, the traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have a particularly strong influence.

The first immigrant groups to America came from primarily Old World Judeo-Christian backgrounds. Numerous scriptural passages offer guidance about a person's central religious

obligations to the poor and distressed. The twenty-fourth chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy instructs:

When you reap the harvest in your field and overlook a sheaf there, you shall not go back to get it: let it be for the alien, the orphan, or the widow, that the Lord, your God, may bless you in all your undertakings.

Book of Deuteronomy, chapter 24

Pleas to love and support one another fill the New Testament. In the twenty-second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus is asked which is the greatest commandment of the law. In that famous passage, he responds:

You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second resembles it: You must love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang the whole Law, and the Prophets also.

Gospel of Matthew, chapter 22

In the twenty-fifth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus expounds on what is expected of those "who love their neighbors as themselves." He says:

I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you made me welcome; naked, and you clothed me; sick, and you visited me; in prison, and you came to see me. The virtuous will say in reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give

you drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you welcome, naked and clothe you, sick or in prison and go to see you?' And the King will answer, 'I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did it to me.'

Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25

There are two principal lessons from this passage that inform those with a strong religious commitment.

The first, and most obvious is that the faithful and virtuous person is one who reaches out to those in need.

The second lesson is even more emphatic. Who among the needy does one help? The passage states that the hungry, thirsty, and sick are the brothers and sisters of Christ. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, helping a stranger in need is the same as helping Christ. Just as one helps a family member in need, one must give relief and support to any person who is hungry, thirsty, or sick.

The parable of the good Samaritan in the tenth chapter of the Gospel of Luke offers a lesson on what it means to be a "neighbor":

But the man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Jesus replied, 'A man was once on his way down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of brigands; they took all he had, beat him and then made off, leaving him

half-dead. Now a priest happened to be traveling down the same road, but when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. In the same way, a Levite who came to the place saw him and passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him. He went up and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. He then lifted him on to his own mount, carried him to the inn and looked after him. Next day, he took two denarii and handed them to the innkeeper. Look after him, he said and on my way back I will make good any extra expense you have. Which of these three, do you think, proved himself a neighbor to the man who fell into the brigands' hands?' 'The one who took pity on him,' he replied. Jesus said to him, 'Go, and do the same yourself.

Gospel of Luke, chapter 10

A neighbor is anyone in need. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, religious followers are expected to recognize and actively reach out with compassion and charity to needy persons.

For followers of Islam, the Koran is also explicit in its commands about compassion and care for those in need. The Prophet declares:

*That ye turn your faces
It is not righteousness
Toward East or West;
But it is righteousness-
To believe in Allah...
To spend of your substance,
Out of love for Him,
For your kin,
For orphans,
For the needy,
For the wayfarer,*

*For those who ask,
And for the ransom of slaves...
Book of Surat 2:177*

In this and many other passages all through the Koran, followers of Islam are commanded, as true persons of charity, to sacrifice themselves by reaching out to the needy who ask and those who are prevented from asking. Active love for one's neighbor means using one's talents and opportunities in the service of those who need them.

Our Colonial Heritage

Humanitarian traditions were firmly embedded in the life of colonial America. Religion played an important, unifying public role. In trying to explain the uniqueness of the American national character, French historian and social commentator Alexis de Tocqueville, wrote:

"I think I can see the whole destiny of America contained in the first Puritans who landed on these shores."

Before the pilgrims landed at Plymouth, one of the first Puritans, John Winthrop, Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, outlined for his followers what life in America was to be:

"We must delight in each other, make other's conditions our own, rejoice

together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our community as members of the same body."

The care of the public, of neighbors, would take precedence over private interests in the new country. Winthrop's legacy was to have Americans carry a special obligation of neighborly and brotherly love into "familiar and constant practice."

Republicanism and Civic Virtue

The humanitarian tradition expanded through the American colonies. William Penn believed God gave men wealth to use, rather than to love or hoard. He declared:

"The best recreation is to do good. There will be time for merriment when ...pinched bellies [are] relieved and naked backs clothed, when the famished poor, the distressed widow, and the helpless orphan...are provided for."

American clergyman and writer Cotton Mather, one of the most celebrated of all New England Puritan ministers, saw doing good as an obligation to God. To help the poor and unfortunate was an honor and privilege. For him, charity was to be both spiritual and temporal—responding to the souls as well as the bodies of those in need. He dreamed of a city in which each

house would have an alms-box with the message imprinted on it, *Think on the Poor*. This was not simply a duty of the wealthy or the elite. Every house, regardless of circumstance, was to attend to those in need.

George Washington, in his farewell presidential address, called religion and morality the "great pillars of public happiness" and the "firmest props of the duties of men and citizens."

American statesman, Benjamin Franklin introduced a secular spirit into the gospel of doing good—transforming public's consciousness from personal charity to the welfare of the public.

Franklin believed that men should show gratitude to God by "...promoting the happiness of his other children." While championing self-help to relieve poverty, he also believed the public had a duty to create conditions in which men and women would be able to take care of themselves.

Commenting on the roles and influence of religious traditions in America on democratic society, Tocqueville wrote:

"Religion in America takes no direct part in the government of society, but it must be regarded as the first of their political institutions; for if it does not impart a taste for freedom, it facilitates

the use of it....I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith in their religion...but I am certain that they old to be indispensable to the maintenance of republican institutions.”

One might conclude the religious influence on American culture is surprising, given our nation’s very deliberate attempts to separate church from state. Once separated, religion could easily become relevant only to the private sphere of individual lives. It would serve primarily to reinforce self-control and provide for the maintenance of moral standards.

Indeed, private religious observance fits well with the individualism that many believe has come to dominate personal and social life in the United States.

The truth is, however, America’s religious traditions move us from acting as if religion were only a private matter, relegated to the realm of personal spirituality. Where one might expect to see a clear separation of the religious and the secular, a central element of the American religious character maintains an interrelationship between religion and the rest of life. The writings of Winthrop, Washington, and Tocqueville attest to this unique character of American life.

Today, churches, synagogues and other religious bodies do an

enormous amount of good work. While churches receive many of the billions of dollars donated to charity, they also sponsor myriad programs in human services, housing, and health, as well as in the international arena such as refugee assistance.

Civic Traditions

Without a doubt, religion has strongly influenced America’s humanitarian tendency, but that alone does not tell the total story. Of course countries around the world share similar religious traditions with the United States. Nonetheless, it is our civic traditions that make compassion and benevolence so central, even unique, to the national character, some political observers say.

Tracing America’s cultural heritage, some historians regard our "republican tradition" to be the essential strand in defining our national character. President Thomas Jefferson stands as the exemplar of this part of our unique character. For Jefferson, the guiding and most fundamental principal of human life is that all men are created equal. This equality is at heart a political equality that is effective only when all citizens participate in the affairs of the republic.

Freedom, in this context, means that all citizens have the right and the duty to participate in governing society. The best defense of freedom is an educated public active in governance for the common good.

Thomas Jefferson saw this ideal as achievable in America because people were not divided into economic and social classes. One of the outcomes of this tradition was the willingness of the American people to collaborate in both organized and unorganized activities to benefit the entire community and private citizens.

Alexis de Tocqueville observed that in America, people voluntarily come together to help one another and to enhance the common good.

Charitable Foundations and Corporate Giving

It is this profoundly American belief in personal responsibility and equality that has led to the development of hundreds of social and philanthropic organizations in the United States. Many charities were founded by religious groups, but many others have social, cultural, and business origins.

American businesses are an important source of philanthropy today in the United States. It is estimated that more than 500 U.S. corporations sponsor volunteer programs. Jon Van Til, author of *Philanthropy's Role in Civilization*, writes:

"The practice of meeting community needs outside government has profoundly shaped American society and its institutional framework. In most other countries, the government operates and funds major social institutions (such as hospitals, libraries, museums, universities, and social welfare agencies); in the U.S., many of these institutions are organized, governed and supported by volunteers."

In the United States, three principal sectors carry out the functions of society: (1) private, (2) public, (3) voluntary.

The first is the business or for-profit sector. The second of course is government, and the third is the voluntary or not-for-profit sector.

It is a deeply-held belief that no single institutional structure or sector can by itself—or indeed ought to—meet public and humanitarian needs both at home and in distant lands.

The voluntary sector works on behalf of individuals whose needs are not met by the government or in the marketplace. In essence, it provides a social safety net that

compassionately responds to society's wide range of needs.

A more fundamental commitment to humanitarianism, however, emerges from the notion of citizenship, freedom, and political equality as defined by Thomas Jefferson. The *Who* of citizenship includes all those who have achieved, in Jeffersonian terms, political equality. Politically, at least, they are full members of society.

Citizenship and Personal Responsibility

What is a citizen? Observer and analyst Harry C. Boyte suggests the question can be answered in three ways:

1. A citizen is one who is *rights-bearing*. Civic society, through its leaders, defines and protects these rights. America's *Bill of Rights* pronounces these fundamental rights.
2. A citizen is one who is a member of a *moral community* and who has a shared view of life that is committed to the common good, as opposed to serving only an individual's self-interest.
3. A citizen is one *engaged in the practice of citizenship*, i.e., one who works with others to solve common problems.

Citizenship is an active state where persons work for the common good.

For Boyte, citizens are compassionate and engage in humanitarian actions not merely to serve a private benefit but to

create, serve, and build the community for others as well as themselves.

This notion challenges us to rethink why we are involved in works of charity and humanitarian assistance.

Benjamin Barber, author of *An Aristocracy of Everyone: The Politics of Education and the Future of America*, summarizes the dilemma:

"The thousand points of light through which the lucky serve the needy may help illuminate our humanity, but they cannot warm or nurture our common soul, nor create a sense of common responsibility connected to our liberty, nor provide integral solutions to structural problems. Service retains its moral character, but only as an imperative of the private person....Charity flourishes as an individualist's counter to the private sector's individualist vices...To the extent then that service has been reduced to charity, and civic obligation and civic service have lost their place in our nation's political vocabulary, it is because we long ago bankrupted our practice of citizenship."

As the practice of free people, citizenship is the building of community and of ties that bind people together. Thus, we are compassionate, have humanitarian aspirations, and serve others because we are citizens creating an identification and an attachment with others. Service to our neighbor as free citizens, whether in the

community or in lands far away, becomes not just an act of kindness or charity, but a duty and responsibility. The very continuation of freedom rests on the assumption of this communal responsibility. For Barber:

“Service is something we owe to ourselves or to that part of ourselves that is embedded in the civic community. It assumes that our rights and liberties are not acquired for free; that unless we assume the responsibilities of citizens, we will not be able to preserve the liberties they entail.”

Communities of Action

Service, generosity, compassion, and community are interconnected. Generosity and altruism, as civic ideals, bring us together as neighbors in ways that build community.

Barber believes that the very language of our religious traditions may thwart understanding of the essential relationship between self and community. The language of charity drives a wedge between self-interest and altruism, leading some students to believe that service may be a matter of sacrificing private interests to moral virtue.

The language of citizenship implies that self-interests are embedded in communities of

action; that by serving neighbors, we also serve ourselves. Barn raisings are more than exercises in kindness; every new barn creates new neighbors, extends the neighborhood, and enhances the public community from which everyone benefits.

In a learning environment, the idea of service promotes an understanding of how self and community—private interest and public good—link together. Legal right and civic duty—neither can stand alone—are only the final political expression of that bond.

In this context, liberty is not simply freedom *from* someone or something. It is not a wall around our private selves and private interests. Liberty and freedom provide the context to build bridges between individuals and communities. Barber concludes that, in the end, liberty provides the freedom to:

“...deliver the members of a community from that isolation that is the lot of the individual left to his own devices, compelling them to get in touch with one another, to promote an active sense of fellowship.”

To be generous and compassionate as a citizen involves building community ties. As American citizens, we must diligently safeguard the structures that enhance our freedom and the freedom of others. It is the work

and responsibility of citizens to take such action. While we have taken on a much more individualistic bent to citizenship over the past few decades, according to some commentators, we also hear frequent calls for a renewal of community and of our ties to one another.

Our commitment to service and humanitarian assistance are the manifestations of religious and civic virtues.

Beyond Our Borders

America's blend of religious and civic ideals have revealed themselves in different ways throughout time, some political, some economic. Addressing the role of U.S. foreign aid in 1970, President Richard Nixon said:

"There are three interrelated purposes that the United States should pursue through our foreign assistance program: promoting our national security by supporting the security of other nations; providing humanitarian relief and furthering the long-run economic and social development of lower income countries."

As humanitarian assistance becomes muddled in foreign aid issues of security and development, some commentators have criticized the United States for being more interested in social control and economic return than

compassionate toward people in need.

While aid may be intertwined with other motives, America's humanitarian impulse holds steadfast. Moreover, the habit is flourishing as witnessed by the growth in individual giving and the most recent outpouring of assistance to the central African countries of Somalia and Rwanda.

As talked about, there has been a gradual shift in the understanding of neighbor and citizen. In Governor Winthrop's day, settlers were beholden to each other by proximity. Neighbors were the people next door who frequented the local church, schools, and businesses.

Today, though we still see familiar faces in the market and in our gathering places, we also are aware of the trials and tribulations of people on other shores and in remote parts of the world.

America's civil rights movement embraced both the religious and civil traditions of this nation. Civil rights advocates committed themselves to building a more just and liberated world—a world which not only respected the uniqueness of individuals, but which also spoke to people's need for interdependence and community.

The enormous power and vision of America's religious and civil inheritance resonate in the "I Have a Dream" speech of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.:

"When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up the day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing the words of that old Negro spiritual. 'Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last!'"

Compassion and Interdependence

Why do Americans commit to serve and help others? Many centuries ago Isaiah said, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Since the earliest colonial days, compassion and interdependence have been fundamental to the vision and character of this land. While these roots spread from various religious traditions, almost from the beginning they have been joined by a civic tradition, which defines freedom and liberty as a duty—a responsibility—to build a society that fosters the good of all its members.

American idealism has endured as an important part of our national life since first expounded by John Winthrop and

Cotton Mather over 300 years ago. Modern technology has greatly changed how we view the world. In some cases, we know more about the faces we see on television and their lives than we do about the people down the street or in our places of worship and commerce.

Conclusion

The American people continue to give generously. We support humanitarian causes through an ever expanding network of people.

The Peace Corps and VISTA, built on a vision of President John F. Kennedy's creed—"Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country"—symbolize American ideals of service.

In recent years, our nation's leaders have renewed the call for compassion and citizen service from both old and young. At the same time, private, public-serving programs and institutions actively encourage giving and volunteer activities both at home and abroad.

While our nation has sometimes turned inward, and as citizens we have become individualistic, an undying resilience of vision and spirit exists in the unique character of

this country. It is a resilience that beckons us, as a country, and as private citizens, to embrace the vision of our nation's founders.

Whether we respond to starvation in Somalia, cholera victims and orphans in Rwanda, political strife in Bosnia, hurricanes in Florida, floods in the Midwest, or earthquakes in our country and abroad, we are people rooted in a unique blend of religious and civic virtues.

Our morality demands a compassionate embrace of neighbors close-by and beyond the sea.

The next chapter looks at the variety and complexity of conditions in the world that have created the need for humanitarian help and assistance.

chapter 3

CATASTROPHES, CRISES, AND OTHER EMERGENCIES

Helen Kerschner

*THOUSANDS FLEE AS HURRICANE MOVES
INLAND □ CHILDREN STARVE AS FAMINE ENTERS
THIRD YEAR □ INTENSIFYING CONFLICTS
DISRUPT POWER AND SUPPLY LINES □ Medical
Teams Rush to STRICKEN AREA □
EARTHQUAKE DEMOLISHES CITY. . .HOSPITAL
COLLAPSES □ HUNDREDS MISSING AS
AVALANCHE BURIES VILLAGE □ FIRE RAGES
OUT OF CONTROL. . .TOWN EVACUATED □
COASTAL RESIDENTS BRACE FOR TIDAL WAVE
□ TORNADOES RIP FOUR STATES: \$100 MILLION
DAMAGE □ DISASTER DOLLARS: Federal
Relief Is Estimated at More Than \$1.5
Billion*

Newspaper headlines, like a river in flood, can be heartrending. Regularly, the radio and television newscasts and daily newspapers recite the toll exacted by serious disasters. World and national news reports tell of life and death, human

suffering, tragedy and destruction, financial and property loss here at home and around the world. Some catastrophes, crises, emergencies are a product of natural forces, others the result of man's actions or neglect.

As a single event, a crisis, catastrophe, emergency can last a moment, a month, or a lifetime. It wreaks havoc any time, any place. Above all, it has the potential to shatter untold numbers of lives.

An Example From American History

In 1871 the grand city of Chicago, built of wood, was almost destroyed by a great fire. Legend has it that the fire was started by Mrs. O'Leary's cow when she kicked over a lantern. The fire, one of the most famous disasters of U.S. history, killed several hundred people and destroyed some \$200 million worth of property.

This is how a journalist from the *New York Times* reported the disaster October 10, 1871:

CHICAGO, Illinois — My associate in the City has been compelled to abandon his post, owing to the utter impossibility to keep

up telegraphic communication. One third of the citizens of Chicago are positively homeless, and ruined. Roads are thronged with fugitives who are vainly seeking shelter for the night. The spectacle is one that will probably never be witnessed on this Continent in a century. The calamity in Chicago has awakened the deepest sympathy throughout the country. Three square miles in the heart of the City burned, 12,000 buildings destroyed, loss of \$50,900,000.

The news story's visual images made readers *see* as well as *understand* the urgency of the crisis. A masterpiece in reporting, the article set a new standard for contemporary writing about disasters.

WHAT CONSTITUTES A DISASTER

The following highlights some of the main news points of the New York Times story:

- **The Human Element**—*“homeless, and ruined, fugitives who are vainly seeking shelter for the night”*—OFTEN, IN THE AFTERMATH OF A MAJOR DISASTER, MANY PEOPLE, THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN, HAVE THEIR SECURITY TAKEN AWAY.
- **A Historic Event**—*“never be witnessed on this Continent in a century”*—A DISASTER OF SUCH GRAND SCALE USUALLY OCCURS BUT ONCE IN A LIFETIME.
- **Chaos**—*“utter impossibility to keep up telegraphic communication”*—PANDEMONIUM IN THE WAKE OF A DISASTER CAN HINDER RECOVERY EFFORTS.
- **Disaster Costs**—*“loss of \$50,900,000”*—DAMAGES ARE HIGH, RESTORATION AND REPAIR COSTLY
- **Compassion and Caring**—*“awakened the deepest sympathy”*—A CALAMITY ELICITS MANY ACTS OF KINDNESS AND FELLOW FEELING.

Major U.S. Disasters This Decade

Earthquakes, hurricanes, and storms cause some of the world's worst destruction—setting off landslides, and destroying buildings, bridges, and other structures.

In 1976, one of the worst earthquakes of modern times struck Tangshan, China, killing more than 240 thousand people. In 1900, a massive hurricane and storm surge devastated the Galveston, Texas area, resulting in about 6,000 deaths. In 1969, Hurricane Camille killed more than 250 people in seven southern states— from Louisiana to Virginia.

Since 1990, various natural weather crises have engrossed the nation, dominated the media, and touched our hearts. The following cases, drawn from the newspapers, paint a stirring picture of the material and human loss.

Hurricane Andrew

THE SOUTH. 1992 — Hurricane Andrew, moving in from the Bahamas, swept across southern Florida at over 140 miles per hour on August 25, 1992, killing at least nine persons and leveling thousands of homes south of Miami.

By the time Hurricane Andrew ripped through the oil towns and Cajun country of southern Louisiana, more than a million people had evacuated; 230,000 more were left without

electrical power. In the tumult of severe flooding, the death toll rose to twenty dead. The disaster cost in Florida is estimated at \$15 to \$20 billion, with 250,000 people left homeless. The *New York Times* reported insurance claims totaling \$7.3 billion. Damage claims sank five insurance companies, affecting nearly 60,000 Florida customers. A state-run emergency fund protecting policy holders came close to running out of money.

After the Hurricane. Numbered among the victims were thousands of elderly who had migrated to the Sunshine State to spend their golden years. One reporter described them as:

"...sweating in makeshift shelters, searching for food and water...running out of medications...confused, angry and frightened."

Two weeks after the hurricane, the *Homestead Journal* reported residents still spending their days in food lines—and nights looking for a safe, dry place to sleep. After more than a year, many residents were reportedly still living in temporary shelters. After more than two years, many homes had yet to be repaired or rebuilt.

Mississippi River Floods

THE MIDWEST. 1993 — Daily stories about the flooding along the Mississippi pictured the floods as an alternating series of temporary reprieves and continued rises in the river level. The "Mighty Mississippi" started to rise on July 16, 1993, and continued to swell until July 27, when the water began to recede. The river's slow encroachment across the farmlands may have looked deceptively peaceful as it blanketed the land, but the devastation was enormous. By August 12, \$6 billion in damage to midwestern farms was reported, and 22,300 houses had been flooded.

Towns along the Mississippi River from Illinois to Louisiana were deluged—residents suffered severe shortages of drinking water and were left without proper sanitation. Day after day, local news programs televised the devastation—flooded houses and businesses, people and animals scrambling to safety, shelters filled to capacity, farmers lamenting their losses. One journalist wrote:

"The Great Flood of 1993 was a 500-year flood, which means the water is likely to rise that high and cover that much land only once in five centuries."

The Flood's Aftermath. It took about a week to organize relief help. In Quincy, Illinois, thousands of volunteers—locals and out-of-towners—filled their millionth sandbag. A volunteer from Evanston, Illinois, explained as he loaded sandbags: "This is the Midwest. This is the heartland. It's corny, but this is what we do. We help our neighbors." Although the American Red Cross received an average of 50 calls a day offering help. Volunteers were required to complete a disaster training course lasting about two months before they could enter a disaster area.

Some problems, unfortunately, were not easily solved. Jason, 10, saw his ill fate from a different perspective when his friend was making fun of him because of his wrecked home. For Jason, life was difficult. He lamented to a reporter that when friends asked him what he did over his summer vacation, he could only respond, "I got my arm broken and had a flood and now I live in a camper. It's so bad."

Los Angeles Earthquake

THE WEST COAST. 1994 — A giant earthquake tremor shook the Northridge area of Los Angeles, California at 4:31 a.m. on Monday, January 17, 1994. The quake measured 6.6 on the Richter Scale, with two aftershocks measuring 5.1. There were 19 aftershocks measuring 4.0 to 5.0; 143 were calibrated in the 3.0 to 3.9 range. Forty-seven people died, and more than 2,300 people were injured and treated in hospitals. There were 4,700 residents suddenly homeless. Of those who still had a house, 20,000 were without electricity and 60,000 had their water supply disrupted. More than 200 school buildings were seriously damaged. Two major freeways collapsed and had to be closed for months while undergoing repairs. Governor Pete Wilson estimated the total damage costs to be \$15 to 39 billion.

The Quake's Aftermath. The Los Angeles earthquake raised many public issues. At a time when the "social fabric" is said to be

disintegrating and morality declining, the public's outpouring of good will prompted the label, "Los Angeles: the epicenter of good deeds."

Unfortunately, though, despite the many cases of heroic intervention, there is the grim reality that a disaster has a greater negative impact on the most vulnerable segment of a population: the elderly and infirm. With approximately 500,000 elderly people living in the area hit by the earthquake, including 150,000 in single-person dwellings, relocation can be so disruptive and traumatic that it is life-threatening. The *Los Angeles Times* reported on January 31, 1994:

"When someone is frail and disconnected, it is very frightening to make a change, because you can lose sight of who you are."

One outcome of modern technology: While most communication networks were disrupted, the electronic mailing system (e-mail) was up and running just hours after the earthquake, even though individual telephone lines were still down. Modern communications not only provided a means of locating victims, it also permitted outsiders to eavesdrop on the concerns of parents worried about their children—and grandchildren afraid for their grandparents:

"I still haven't heard anything from my son and fiancée. They are in Chatsworth," M.J., 2:54 p.m. Monday, January 17. *"Your son and his fiancée are very, very nervous but fine. They have no water, no power and no gas. He begged that you call his grandparents and her parents,"* L.R., 4:17 p.m. Tuesday, January 18. *"I'm worried about my grandmother. She lives on California Avenue in Santa Monica, five blocks from the ocean."* J.L., 1:33 p.m., Monday, January 17. *"About your grandmother in Santa Monica, some friends who live near her are O.K. Depends on what type of building she's in. I'll be glad to call her for you...,"* M.J.K., 10:42 a.m., Wednesday, January 19."

Meanwhile, as further testimony of people's character and decency: On a typical day, the Los Angeles Police Department makes 550 arrests, but in the 48-hour period after the earthquake, only 128 people were arrested.

The World We Live In

Much has been written of late about the "global village." The meaning is clear. The world is getting smaller every day, and our nation has become an increasingly smaller part of it.

OUR WORLD, A GLOBAL VILLAGE
If the world were a village of 1,000 people there would be:

☐ 564 Asians, 210 Europeans, 86 Africans, 80 South Americans, 60 North Americans

☐ 183 Catholics, 84 Protestants, 33 Jewish, 175 Moslems, 128 Hindus, 55 Buddhists, 47 Animists, and 295 "others" without any religion, or Atheist.

☐ Of these thousand people, 60 would control half the income and 940 would earn the other half. There would be 500 who would be hungry, 600 living in shantytowns, and 700 would be illiterate.

SOURCE: *IRED Forum*, Development Innovations and Networks

One has simply to pick up the daily newspaper or turn on the television to see that our world is getting smaller. War in Bosnia, a cyclone in Bangladesh, famine in Somalia, an earthquake in Mexico, flood in Colombia—modern technology makes it easy to know what is happening in the world.

Most of us can remember at least one disaster in our lifetime. We are more apt to recall disasters that fall close to home because they are on our turf. We can relate to them. We understand how they affect us and our neighbors. And we normally hear more about them.

Though disasters in our hometowns and across the nation claim most of our attention, the awareness of world disasters and related problems is growing.

Types of Disasters

USAID has developed a classification for disasters occurring in international settings. The agency classifies disasters according to their speed (quick or slow) and complexity.

DISASTER COMPLEXITY INDEX
USAID puts international disasters into three categories.

☐ **Quick-Onset Disasters**—Earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, severe storms, and other natural phenomena that appear suddenly are classified as quick-onset disasters.

☐ **Slow-Onset Disasters**—Drought-induced famine and other long-term intractable situations in which people are displaced or otherwise severely affected are slow-onset disasters.

☐ **Complex Disasters**—Disasters classified as complex are usually a combination of natural and man-made events, such as a drought and civil strife. They are complex because political or military factors impede delivery of relief supplies and frequently threaten the security of

relief workers as well as the affected population.

SOURCE: USAID

Most of the world's biggest disasters in the twentieth century occurred far from our borders.

According to United Nations officials, a natural hazard becomes a natural disaster when the resources of the country affected are inadequate to deal with it. The lower limit is 1,000 dead and \$50 million in damage.

But this criterion glosses over different effects that natural disasters have in "developed" versus "developing" nations. In a developing country, a natural disaster might have a death toll far exceeding the thousand-death threshold with only minimal property damage. In a developed nation, the reverse usually is true, with higher property damage and lower death tolls.

MAJOR WORLD DISASTERS

Below is a snapshot of some of the world's most devastating calamities:

☐ **Pestilence. EASTERN EUROPE. 1914-1915**—An outbreak of typhus killed 150,000 people within a 6-month span in Serbia. From there, the disease spread north and east to Poland and Russia, eventually causing the deaths of approximately 3 million people.

☐ **Landslides. KANSU, CHINA. December 16, 1920**—An earthquake caused the collapse of cliffs where thousands of peasants were living in cave homes carved into the sides of the 100 foot high clay cliffs. The unstable cliffs sheared off and toppled into the valleys below.

destroying more than ten cities and killing more than 180,000 people.

☐ **Famine.** CHINA, 1928-29. Three million people died as a result of widespread drought conditions in Shensi, Honan, and Kansu provinces.

☐ **Flood.** NORTH CHINA, 1939—Some 500,000 people drowned in extensive flooding along rivers in North China. Several millions may have perished as a result of famine following these floods.

☐ **Cyclones.** EAST PAKISTAN, May 28-29, 1963—Approximately 22,000 people died as a result of cyclones in the Bay of Bengal area.

☐ **Avalanche.** SALLANCHES, FRANCE, April 16, 1970—Seventy people, most of them young boys, were killed when a 60-foot high wall of rock and snow hit two dormitories and a nurses' home. The avalanche occurred shortly after midnight and the snow rolled some 1,000 feet before hitting the hospital that housed some 200 children.

☐ **Earthquake.** HUARAS, NORTHERN PERU, May 31, 1970—The resulting shock, which caused an avalanche of ice, rock, and mud from neighboring Mount Huascarián, buried the entire city of Yungay with all its 20,000 inhabitants. The total death toll was estimated to be 50,000 to 70,000 people.

SOURCE: JAMES CORNELL, *The Great International Disaster Book*

Disasters Are Happening More Often

The increasing number of both natural and man-made disasters is resulting in what has been called a "disaster syndrome." The *New York Times*, May 12, 1991, reported on the phenomenon:

"The exodus of two million Kurds from their homes in Iraq...was followed by...a cyclone in Bangladesh, which killed

more than 125,000 people and left 10 million others homeless...."

Meanwhile, a cholera epidemic is spreading across Peru and other South American countries, and earthquakes recently have struck Costa Rica and Soviet Georgia. And, 27 million people in six countries in North Africa face death from starvation and civil war in what the relief agency Save the Children has called the worst famine in Africa in living memory."

Similar to our worry over the effects of T.V. violence, some international experts think Americans will become indifferent to the suffering caused by disasters. The *New York Times* quotes officials of private relief agencies who say that the string of refugee crises and natural calamities across the globe has dried up outside donations as well as "their own energies."

According to Lisa Mullins, Program Director, Disaster Response and Resources for INTERACTION, a Washington-based coalition of 132 relief agencies (that includes CARE and Oxfam America), there has been "a remarkable confluence of natural disasters."

Al Panico, director of international relief for the American Red Cross, forewarns that so many tragedies at once will result in donor fatigue when "people get tired of seeing starving people on television." As one editorialist put it:

"How can I help the flood victims in Bangladesh? I haven't even gotten over seeing the tragedy of the Kurds in Iraq."

Perils of Poverty, Population Growth, and Environmental Degradation

Natural and man-made disasters are not the only desperate situations that individuals and governments confront. In developing countries, where about 77 percent of the world's population live, a host of other problems are braved daily—especially poverty.

Today, we know that poverty, population growth, and environmental degradation are closely linked. We know, for example, that poverty results in rapid population growth. When a high percentage of children dies, parents are under pressure to have many children in hopes that some will survive to support them in old age. Because they are poor, and need to feed a growing population, farmers strip the land of trees to grow crops. This erodes the soil, which makes them poorer, encourages them to clear more land, and sets the stage for man-made disasters.

In 1987, the United Nations World Commission on Environmental Degradation stated:

"A world in which poverty is endemic will always be prone to ecological and other catastrophes."

Conclusion

Experience tells us that disasters can happen at any time, in any place. No one is immune to an earthquake, flood, or cyclone. But there is much the public can do to help once a disaster happens—and, in some cases, apply solutions for preventing destruction.

The "disaster syndrome" poses a threat to the humanitarian appeal. In some respects our heightened awareness of disasters is a manifestation of the information age in which we watch the latest earthquake and flood on the nightly news.

"Quick onset" disasters are also a result of very real conditions of today's environment. The relatively new complex disaster category seems to go hand-in-hand with the increasing complexity of society.

The maze of problems in today's world not only makes it harder to understand disaster causes but makes it next to impossible to address the effects. And, while Americans are concerned about human suffering, many have difficulty supporting government or private

sector responses when we believe that suffering could have been prevented had it not been for political conflict or war.

With such a state of affairs, can an individual do? We can contribute money. We can give our time. We can write our policy leaders and decision makers. We can make known our views. But the question goes far beyond individual action—What can our government do?

The foundations for our nation's humanitarian spirit were laid down by the first settlers to these shores. Benjamin Franklin, began each morning by asking, "What Good shall I do this Day?" and concluded each evening by asking, "What Good have I done to day?"

Chapter four provides a fascinating narrative of the many significant ways the U.S. Agency for International Development reaches out to world neighbors in need.

chapter 4

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S ROLE: WHAT, WHERE, AND HOW? *Catherine Tomsheck*

"From North Korea to the Persian Gulf and the Middle East to the unfinished business in Haiti and Bosnia, problem areas abound....The public is inclined to tune out foreign policy, but the world will not let us ignore it."

—DAVID S. BRODER, *Washington Post*,
October 8, 1996

The United States government agency responsible for humanitarian assistance is the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID. Created by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, USAID works in countries throughout Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, and the Middle East—and since 1989 in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Besides humanitarian disaster and refugee assistance efforts, USAID oversees long-term development projects. USAID's goals are to improve health and

population conditions, protect the environment, promote economic growth, and support democracy. With its long-term development programs, USAID is trying to make permanent improvements in the daily lives of desperately poor people. In this chapter we cover specifically the disaster and refugee assistance projects run by USAID.

A Brief History

The United States government began sponsoring humanitarian assistance overseas more than 180 years ago. In 1812, the first tax-supported shipment of aid arrived in South America from the United States. A flotilla of sailing ships carried barrels of flour and other supplies to earthquake victims in Venezuela. Since then, countless similar shipments have crossed sea and air lanes around the world. Public monies for humanitarian aid always have augmented private funds, and government officials have long worked side-by-side with private individuals.

Early in the 20th century the plight of the innocent victims of World War I in Europe touched

the hearts of many Americans. Emergency relief for the sick, wounded, and hungry citizens of Russia, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Serbia, and France was started in 1914 by the War Relief Commission.

Both before and after America entered the war, there was an enormous outpouring of money, food, supplies, and volunteers from the United States.

Numbered among them were first generation immigrants who settled in America—individuals who wanted to assist their relatives and friends in the "old country." At the end of World War I, Herbert Hoover, then director of the American Relief Administration, orchestrated U.S. relief efforts throughout Europe and Russia.

Other than post-World War I Europe, the U.S. government did not fund large-scale relief efforts. For the most part it was the private sector (at the hand of foundations or religious missionaries) who gave aid. While the imperial governments of Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, and Denmark contributed aid to countries throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America, with few exceptions, the United States avoided involvement beyond Europe.

In many respects, domestic problems preoccupied Americans immediately after World War I. The American people were not interested in sending money abroad mainly because so many desperate needs existed at home.

Despite the isolationist mood and widespread determination to stay out of the second world war in Europe, Americans were moved by human suffering. During this period, private U.S. citizens sponsored many overseas relief missions. As this work expanded, government oversight became necessary. President Franklin D. Roosevelt commissioned the War Relief Control Board to set ethical standards and manage the response begun by American citizens.

In 1942 the U.S. government created the Office of Foreign Relief and Rehabilitation Operations, committing our country to long-term assistance for the duration of World War II. The end of the war brought a new openness and an increase in public awareness about the immense needs of people and nations far and near.

Immediately following World War II, American relief agencies supplied food, blankets, seeds, and tools overseas. The U.S. military assisted in the war reconstruction effort, particularly in occupied

territories of Europe and Japan. Eventually in 1949, under the Marshall Plan, the U.S. dispensed billions of assistance dollars for restoration of Western Europe.

With world leadership secure, a belief was growing that virtually all problems could be solved with American power, influence, money, and knowledge.

Three historic turning points in 1949 challenged prevailing assumptions of U.S. supremacy: (1) victory by Maoist communists in mainland China, (2) detonation of an atomic bomb by the Soviet Union, and (3) the North Korean attack on South Korea.

Each of these events helped to make U.S. government-sponsored foreign aid a tool in fortifying the world against communism. Decisions about who received what aid depended, in part, on a nation's strategic importance to the United States.

Where Economic Development Fits In

During the post-war period, many foreign policy experts argued that improving people's "economic well-being" was the most promising way to do away with communism. Success of Western Europe's recovery under the Marshall Plan, and lack of a

communist majority in any Marshall Plan country, gave the position credibility.

The argument was a turning point for U.S. foreign assistance throughout the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. America's interests in containing communism and acquiring dependable allies in strategic parts of the world were weighted factors to consider when decisions were made as to which countries would receive assistance.

The Truman administration's position on foreign assistance was primarily one of benevolent protection. In contrast, the Eisenhower administration concentrated on strengthening relations with existing allies.

President John F. Kennedy's foreign assistance policy focused on social and economic development needs of underdeveloped countries throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID, was created in 1961 with the dual purpose of containing communism and helping the poorest nations develop and prosper.

America's foreign aid focus gradually shifted after the Kennedy years. In the 1970s and 1980s the economic growth of developing countries became

intertwined with prosperity in the United States. Now a very significant portion of U.S. commercial trade occurs in Asia, due partially to the enormous economic growth in countries such as Korea, Thailand, India, and Japan—all of which at one time received U.S. foreign assistance.

Free market enterprise became a global phenomenon and led to the emergence of free societies. The collapse of the former Soviet Union and the democratic transition of countries throughout the world are direct the outgrowths of America's support for public and private foreign assistance.

America's humanitarian relief effort, overseen by USAID and its predecessors, has significantly improved the lives of millions over the past thirty years. The life expectancy of men and women in developing countries has increased by 20 percent, literacy rates are up by nearly 35 percent, and primary school enrollments have quadrupled.

With an intensive focus on child survival, the United States has led the world in a successful campaign to reduce infant mortality in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Now to reduce *America's* infant mortality, spur economic

growth, and offer a better education to poor children, USAID is sharing the technology and experience it has gained abroad with the poorest neighborhoods in Baltimore, New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta, and Chicago.

The USAID budget is less than 0.5 percent of the total federal budget, or about \$5 billion. Of those funds, USAID's humanitarian assistance relief programs average \$100 million a year.

Although U.S. foreign aid often was used as a political or foreign policy tool, the one consistent exception to that rule has been the U.S. humanitarian assistance program.

Aid to the world is made possible by the generous support of American taxpayers. USAID and other relief workers, laboring side-by-side, work in countries around the world continuously. Courageous, resourceful, and dedicated, these individuals have saved millions of lives on behalf of the American people.

Mobilization of Aid

As a matter of policy, the U.S. government impartially provides disaster and relief assistance devoid of political incentives.

Traditionally it is given out of generosity. It is an intricate part of America's global involvement. USAID has earned worldwide esteem for quickly and effectively delivering relief to people most in need.

Countries may request USAID's assistance to deal with a plethora of disasters—earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, famine, and man-made disasters caused by civil unrest. Disaster assistance requires skill and speed. A minute wasted can mean lives lost.

When a country requests relief aid, USAID immediately assesses the most appropriate response, determines what materials or supplies are needed, and calculates how quickly the help can arrive.

Local officials identify and prioritize specific emergency needs. Often, in the case of earthquakes or hurricanes, satellite imagery and high altitude photography provide the means to assess damage. Modern technology makes it possible to observe damages to the infrastructure—bridges, dams, roads, buildings.

USAID calls upon resources from throughout federal, state, and local government and the private sector to respond to

disasters. The readily available network of military supplies, personnel, and technical equipment is frequently requested to move supplies and food into remote areas.

In disaster situations, communications and transportation systems are usually disrupted. Support from the military often increases USAID's ability to respond quickly and precisely.

Oftentimes specialists are needed, and USAID finds the experts and gets the right persons to the disaster site quickly. Time after time USAID has called on local fire departments here in the United States.

For example—in 1989 the Fairfax, Virginia fire department traveled with its highly trained dogs to the Soviet Union to aid in finding dwellers buried in earthquake rubble. In 1985 a dog search and rescue team was flown from Nashville, Tennessee to assist in the aftermath of an earthquake in Mexico. In each case, participation by these specially trained fire fighters and their canine partners resulted in the recovery of victims trapped in collapsed buildings.

Putting together a team of the right specialists can mean locating a highly trained hydrologist, doctors, nurses, or even a forester.

In 1984 USAID had to search for a hydrologist. A cyclone had hit Mozambique, damaging the water works in Maputo. Through a national network, a water engineer from South Carolina, who was fluent in Portuguese, was tracked down. Within 36 hours, the local USAID disaster team welcomed him to Mozambique.

When emergency supplies are not available near a disaster area, USAID can get equipment from one of its regional warehouses in Panama, Guam, Singapore, Italy, or the United States.

USAID has the only disaster supply network in the world. The warehouses, or "stockpiles," are accessible 24-hours-a-day. They contain necessities such as tents, blankets, cots, cooking stoves, auxiliary generators, plastic sheeting, water pumps, hand tools, and other emergency materials.

Many times, as word of the disaster reaches the public, supplies and services are donated. If a particular item is not among those donated or available through the U.S. Defense Department, USAID is authorized to buy it from a U.S. company.

Global Outreach to Every Corner of the World

Humanitarianism truly captures the American spirit. Time and again we reveal to the world the heart and compassion of our people. Since 1970, USAID has assisted victims in almost every major world disaster.

Asia

In 1970, a devastating cyclone hit the coastal regions and islands of East Bengal. The storm left 300,000 dead. In response, the United States distributed \$19 million in food and supplies to the cyclone victims. That year East Bengal experienced monsoon flooding, affecting 10 million people. The United States provided over \$7 million in relief supplies. In each of these cases, USAID's disaster assistance support constituted more than half of all aid for the people of East Bengal.

Latin America

Three violent tremors shook the city of Managua, Nicaragua in 1972. Over 10,000 people died. Half the city was reduced to rubble—and thousands were left homeless. The United States dispensed \$28 million for relief and rehabilitation. An earthquake in 1976 devastated Guatemala. The disaster killed 23,000 people and traumatized 64 percent of the country's population.

USAID contributed \$42 million in relief aid.

Africa

One of the greatest challenges to humanitarian relief workers was the African drought and famine of 1984-1985. The sub-Saharan drought is thought by many to be this century's worst drought. Crops failed, livestock died, food reserves dwindled, and people starved. Throughout sub-Saharan Africa the tragedy affected 30 nations, and 30 million people's lives were at risk. The challenge was monumental, requiring international cooperation and an ability to deal with guerrilla warriors.

Many of the affected people lived in remote areas with few roads, no trucks, miles away from a sea or airport. Despite the logistical nightmare aid workers faced when delivering food and supplies, USAID relief workers gave life sustaining support to millions of people.

The United States supplied more than half of all the food shipped to Africa—over 6 million metric tons of food. People in even the remotest villages knew the origin of the food. In some areas, sorghum, which is red in color, was referred to as "Red Reagan." In western Sudan, a number of village children are named after Ronald Reagan and George Bush to honor America's relief assistance.

The African continent was also the site of a famine *avoided*. In 1992, USAID led the international community in a successful effort to head off a massive drought-related famine in southern Africa.

Approximately 30 million people were affected by the worst drought experienced in southern Africa. During the 1991-1992 rainy season, the region had below average precipitation, with areas in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi getting absolutely no rain. The region needed 11.3 million metric tons of food to survive until the next harvest in 1993.

Much of the food, 7.3 million metric tons, was bought commercially—4 million metric tons were supplied by donations. With lessons and memories of the 1984-1985 sub-Saharan famine fresh in their minds, USAID officials were quick to apply what they had learned.

The key to success was an early response by the southern African countries and the international community. The urgent need to mobilize food and other supplies to the affected people to avoid massive starvation could not be ignored without devastating results. USAID responded quickly by pledging 1.7 million metric tons of wheat, sorghum, beans, maize and vegetable oil. USAID officials sounded an alarm throughout the international community calling for additional donations. The generous contributions of food and supplies

and wise leadership of USAID officials saved millions of lives.

Eastern Europe

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of democratic societies throughout Eastern Europe—USAID has provided disaster and relief assistance to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Albania, Georgia, and Romania. And, as part of the international humanitarian relief operation, Bosnia also got aid.

Southern Kyrgyzstan withstood two earthquakes, flooding, and mud slides in the spring and summer of 1992. The first earthquake measuring 7.0 on the Richter Scale occurred on May 15. That day and for two days following, torrential rains triggered floods and snow avalanches. Mud slides devastated the region. Four people died. At least 50,000 people were left homeless. The destruction of several hospitals restricted emergency medical care. Power lines, roads, bridges, and irrigation systems were damaged severely—some beyond repair. By May 27, USAID released \$25,000 for the purchase of urgently needed medical supplies distributed by the Red Crescent Society.

Just as the people of southern Kyrgyzstan were getting their lives back in order, a second quake measuring 6.5 to 7.5 on the Richter Scale shook the area on August 19. Nature's blow deepened the desperation of people living in the

region. The earthquakes killed 54 people, injured more than 100 people, and left 16,800 people homeless. One hundred thirty thousand people were shaken throughout the region. A third of the medical facilities were damaged—and the homeless faced winter weather in just two months.

USAID's first response was to buy and deliver medical supplies immediately. Providing housing proved more complex. Given the region's mountainous terrain and the likelihood that floods or avalanches could cause further damage, USAID consulted with a housing expert.

Following a "shelter assessment," USAID bought *urts*, dome-like tents indigenous to the region, giving thousands of people a safe, temporary home. USAID's contribution of \$152,715 was combined with offerings from Russia, Kazakhstan, Sweden, Switzerland, Iran, Denmark, and Turkey.

Civil Strife

There has been a mounting number of disasters in recent decades. For example—in 1987, USAID recorded forty foreign disasters around the world. In 1992 the number had climbed to roughly sixty-five. With the fall of communism and break down of the Soviet Union, twenty or so

countries became eligible for disaster aid.

Often, for many countries, the transition to a democratic society results in the eruption of violent ethnic or tribal disturbances. In countries where chaos reigns, food, medical supplies, gasoline, and vehicles of all types often are stolen. Roads, bridges, seaports, and airports may be unusable, making it difficult to distribute food and supplies. Disasters of this type are classified "Civil Strife" disasters—and may require additional support from the military.

SOMALIA

Somalia has been embroiled in a civil war since 1988. In the spring of 1991, the country self-destructed after the overthrow of a repressive military regime. Armed military clans fought over control of the government. Somali militia and armed bandits roamed the country terrorizing urban and rural communities—looting everything. The fighting reduced major cities to rubble, and food production completely ceased. After almost 20 months, some 500,000 people had died, including 50 percent of all Somali children younger than age five.

Total anarchy in southern and central Somalia forced some 1 million people to flee from their homes and live as refugees in other

regions. Humanitarian relief workers warned the international community that without massive intervention, hundreds of thousands of people would die of starvation.

By the summer of 1992, food assistance was immediately needed for 4.5 million people—1.5 million people were dangerously close to starving.

The prolonged war severely damaged Somalia's infrastructure of ports, roads and bridges—making the delivery of food and medicine almost impossible. In August of 1992, USAID dispatched a disaster team to coordinate the U.S. government's humanitarian response. At the request of relief workers, the U.S. military launched an airlift out of Mombassa, Kenya to deliver food to Somalia.

American military aircraft flew daily into four Somali cities. At the same time USAID civilian aircraft carried food to two other accessible cities in Somalia. USAID, the International Red Cross, and CARE coordinated on-the-ground food distribution. Additionally, the Belgians, French, Canadians, and Germans all sent planes filled with food and supplies to Somalia.

Despite the airlift's success in carrying urgently needed food, relief workers realized it was a temporary measure. To prevent the loss of hundreds of thousands to starvation and disease, massive quantities of food were required. The logistics would have to be accomplished under the worst circumstances. As

journalists followed the airlifts to the interior of Somalia, the enormity of the tragedy became all too apparent to the American public.

As more food became available the presence of humanitarian relief workers and journalists increased. Towns aided by the airlift saw an increase in violence. Armed bandits often victimized relief workers. In some cases, workers were attacked by people employed to protect them and the food. Flights frequently were canceled because of violence at airstrips as well as food distribution and feeding centers.

By November, relief workers and the international community understood that unless security in Somalia improved, humanitarian assistance would be a waste—and the death toll would rise. Only half the amount of food needed to avert mass starvation was arriving in Somalia. To compound the problem, a considerable amount of the food was being stolen so it never reached the people in need.

The United Nations convened several meetings with leaders of Somali factions and international aid groups to try to resolve the security problem and design a strategy for the delivery of food. The violence, however, continued. With the country in complete chaos, relief workers asked for military backup—both to bring order and to assist with relief operations.

In early December 1992, the United Nations Security Council approved the deployment of U.S.

military troops to secure the delivery of relief aid in Somalia.

This was a historic decision. USAID and non-profit relief agencies previously had worked with the military to get badly needed supplies to disaster sites. But what occurred in Somalia was unprecedented. Never before had the international community proposed, debated, or approved the use of the military to reinforce relief efforts.

December 1992 marked the first time in history that a military power committed combat troops to a humanitarian assistance mission. With the blessing of relief workers, the United States sent troops to Somalia for the sole purpose of saving innocent people from starving to death.

For months following the U.S. deployment of troops to Somalia, the question of whether to use military reinforcements in crisis areas was widely and hotly debated. At first the joint operation looked as though it would be entirely successful. American soldiers secured safe "corridors," allowing relief workers to deliver food to starving people without incident.

Quickly, and for a medley of reasons, chaos returned to the urban centers. Warring Somali factions engaged U.S. troops. Many times, full combat actions were played out in the streets of Mogadishu. With the death of American soldiers, support for the military presence in Somalia drained away. By the time U.S. troops left Somalia in spring

1994, U.S. military participation in relief efforts looked less plausible.

The debate over when, how, or if ever the military should play a role in international relief efforts continues to embroil relief agency employees, the U.S. Congress, military leaders, and the American public. The importance of this debate cannot be underestimated. Almost 70 percent of USAID's humanitarian assistance resources go to conflict-related disasters.

Disaster Preparedness

Disasters inflict a heavy toll on countries with regard to lives lost and material destroyed.

Worldwide, disasters cause approximately 250,000 deaths and about \$40 billion in property damage annually.

Globally, USAID deals consistently with "repeat disaster countries" in Asia, Latin America and Africa. To try to minimize casualties and material losses related to disasters, USAID has designed special programs in Disaster Preparedness for the most vulnerable countries already buffeted by instability.

Disasters most commonly destroy food production and shelter. Development programs to prevent crop destruction and to support stockpiles of seeds and

agriculture tools should help to prevent famine.

Programs that improve construction of low-income housing with disaster-resistant building materials will one day help prevent deaths from earthquakes, hurricanes, cyclones, and flooding.

Introducing disaster management to developing countries is also material to USAID's mission. Early warning systems, public awareness, evacuation plans, trained disaster coordinators, and public officials trained in disaster management are critical to any effort to decrease mortality and property loss.

A well-trained community with an effective early warning system can mean the difference between life and death. USAID's work in Bangladesh is a good example.

Bangladesh is an over populated country, regularly struck by storms sweeping inland from the Indian Ocean. In the last 25 years, the nation has been hit by 30 major cyclones affecting 107 million people, and causing over \$900 million in material damage. In 1970, a cyclone hit the Bay of Bengal, claiming 300,000 lives.

Fifteen years later a cyclone of similar magnitude hit, and

10,000 lives were lost. The reduction in the death toll is attributed to a country-wide Early Warning System. USAID helped the government of Bangladesh to develop the system. When the second cyclone hit, the storm had been tracked for four days, allowing an effective evacuation plan to work. The majority of people at risk were moved to safety.

sphere of influence of two internationally famous and perhaps most important humanitarian relief alliances: the American Red Cross and the United Nations.

Conclusion

USAID has trained over 600 private individuals all over the world to establish effective disaster prevention and management plans for their countries and communities. USAID training not only makes each country a safer place for its citizens, but also builds a reserve of reliable international relief workers. The training paid off when Venezuela sent 30 search and rescue professionals to Mexico to assist after an earthquake. Of the 30 sent, almost half had been trained by USAID.

Beyond any doubt, the availability of international relief and rescue workers, both voluntary and professional, is essential.

The following chapter chronicles the origins and global

chapter 5

THE AMERICAN RED CROSS AND THE UNITED NATIONS

*John McDonald and
Christel McDonald*

non-governmental agencies responded immediately to this enormous human tragedy. The American Red Cross was, as usual, one of the first agencies on the scene to help meet the immediate basic needs of people whose world had totally changed in the forty seconds it had taken to make them homeless.

International organizations whose members are countries, such as the United Nations, are known as international governmental organizations or IGOs. Private, non-profit international organizations whose members are individuals or institutions, such as the American Red Cross, are known as non-governmental organizations or NGOs.

Two international relief organizations that are important to talk about are the American Red Cross and the United Nations.

The American Red Cross

JANUARY 1994—Thousands of people in Los Angeles California sought temporary shelter—victims of a devastating earthquake that demolished their homes, their schools, and their offices. U.S. governmental and

The activities of American Red Cross volunteers in this country are widely known. Less well known, however, are the American Red Cross' contributions to global relief.

In hindsight it appears to be an extraordinary happenstance that the early 1820s produced, within a few years, three great humanitarians whose names are forever linked to the American Red Cross: Henri Dunant (1828-1910), a wealthy Swiss banker, Florence Nightengale (1820-1910), a British nurse, and Clara Barton (1821-1912), an American schoolteacher.

These three people were trailblazers to an international humanitarian movement that now encompasses over 170 national Red Cross Societies in addition to some 300 million members and volunteers.

HENRY DUNANT

The archetype of a Red Cross as we know it today was first introduced when Henri Dunant published his, *Recollections of Solferino* (1862), a dramatic account of the atrocities he witnessed during the French-Italian war against the Austrians. He urged in his book the creation, in times of peace, of a neutral body of nurses and other volunteers, who in wartime protected by an international agreement, could assist the army medical services to care for the wounded, without regard to nationality.

A year after his book was published, in 1863, the International Committee for the Relief to the Wounded was created in Geneva. It was later renamed the International Committee of the Red Cross, or ICRC. The draft agreement that came out of this meeting—the *Convention for the Amelioration of the Fate for Wounded Soldiers of Armies in the Field*—was the forerunner to the Geneva Convention.

Twelve European countries signed the Geneva Treaty in 1863. The United States, in the midst of its own civil war, was not an original signatory—it took almost twenty years before the

United States signed and the U.S. Senate ratified the Geneva Treaty.

Today the *Geneva Convention of 1949 and Additional Protocols* give the Red Cross a humanitarian mandate that goes far beyond the initial intent of its founders.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

Meanwhile, a medical breakthrough occurred in the 1860s that changed the fate of the sick and war wounded forever. Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, was called the “Lady with the Lamp.”

Florence Nightingale dedicated her life to one purpose: championing the practice of humane nursing. In 1854 she organized a unit of 38 women nurses for service in the Crimean War. She and her nurses set up model hospitals for the wounded and introduced sanitary reforms in health care.

As a result of her war efforts, she became a legend. The quality of nursing improved dramatically, and nursing became a noble profession for women. Hospitals were no longer a place to die, but rather a place to be cured.

CLARA BARTON

Clara Barton, American humanitarian, organizer of the American Red Cross, was called the "Angel of the Battlefield." At the outbreak of the Prussian War, she worked behind the German lines for the International Red Cross. She returned to the United States in 1873 and in 1881 organized the American Red Cross which she headed until 1904.

Clara Barton pushed toward the Presidential signature to the Geneva Treaty for the care of the war wounded in 1882, and moved the Red Cross to help victims of natural catastrophes other than war.

Under Clara Barton's leadership, the American Red Cross participated in three foreign relief operations before the turn of the century—(1) aid to starving Russian farmers in 1892, (2) medical aid for the Armenian victims of the Turkish massacres of 1896, (3) and relief for the war orphans and widows of the *Reconcentrados* or Cuban Revolutionaries in 1898.

At the turn of the century, a Congressional Charter conferred governmental recognition on the American Red Cross. The organization became a nationwide institution in fact, as well as in name, and foreign

disaster relief efforts became more centralized.

THE WAR YEARS

With the outbreak of World War I, the American Red Cross stretched its humanitarian horizons. It created new programs such as *First Aid* (1910) and a *nursing reserve* for the Army and Navy (1912). The War Council of the American Red Cross turned the organization into an efficient arm of the government. One hundred seventy surgeons and nurses—and an abundance of medical supplies—were immediately shipped out to the Allied Forces in Europe to help the wounded in England, France, Russia, and Serbia.

At the height of the war, Red Cross volunteers provided canteen service, unpacked and dispensed food stuffs, distributed clothes, made splints and artificial limbs, set up army hospitals, organized lodging, gave guidance and counseling, and arranged for recreation.

They saw first hand the suffering of war victims in France, Belgium, Italy, Russia, Rumania, and Serbia—even as far away as Palestine and Greece. Doctors, nurses, pastors and priests, field directors, cooks, construction workers—all

administered selflessly to the sick, the homeless, the orphaned, the refugees, and the repatriates.

After the war, the U.S. Congress directed the Secretary of War to turn over all surplus supplies to the American Red Cross for cash. Red Cross workers stayed in Europe for several more years to provide relief for refugees and victims of the Bolshevik revolution.

To make the post-war relief operations more efficient, Henry P. Davidson, head of the American Red Cross since 1917, proposed a federation, or league, of all Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies be set up to coordinate the various national humanitarian efforts—and also be the health agency through which to fight the constant threat of epidemics.

In May 1919, Red Cross representatives from Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and the United States formally organized the League of Red Cross Societies. The League expanded in 1929 to include the Red Crescent Societies of Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, and other nations. This non-political, non-governmental, non-sectarian organization, with headquarters in Geneva, immediately began its work to help restore war-ravaged Europe.

INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS COLLABORATORS

The International Red Cross is a coalition of:

- ☐ The International Committee of the Red Cross, or ICRC, a private, independent Swiss institution, founded in 1864 and located in Geneva, Switzerland, with activities that are worldwide.
- ☐ The Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which until 1991 were called the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, founded in 1919. It coordinates the work of the national societies and is also headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- ☐ The International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which convenes every four years in different cities in the world.
- ☐ Countries which signed the Geneva Convention of 1864 and subsequent conventions that are at the heart of the ICRC.

An unforgettable accomplishment of the American Red Cross Commission in Siberia was the rescue of over 800 Russian children who had been sent by their parents in the summer of 1917 from Petrograd (now St. Petersburg) to Siberia to recuperate from wartime deprivations. However, once in Siberia they got cut off by the Bolshevik armed forces, and within weeks were dispersed over a large area in Siberia, taking refuge with families in small villages.

During one of their travels to western Siberia, American Red Cross officials came upon a group

of ragged and hungry children—they soon found out they were the 800 Russian boys and girls who were caught in the civil war that ravaged Russia.

In an extraordinary rescue mission, the American Red Cross collected all 800 children, transported them by train to Vladivostok, where they were put on board of a Japanese steamer chartered by the Red Cross. They crossed the Pacific, traveled through the Panama Canal, and finally arrived in New York. Another ship transported them across the Atlantic and returned them to their anxiously waiting families in Petrograd. By that time it was 1920 and the children had been away from their parents for over two and one-half years. They became known to history as the "Petrograd children."

Another large contingent of American Red Cross officials worked with the Central and Western European Commissions to coordinate relief efforts in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, Albania, Montenegro, Dalmatia, Austria, France, and Italy. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, they provided food for 3,200 undernourished school children living in Sarajevo and Mostar.

AMERICAN ISOLATIONISM

During the American isolationist period, the American Red Cross turned its attention to work at home. The annual report for 1922 shows a record decline in foreign field work and a considerable expansion in domestic concerns. Membership dwindled from 20 million during the war years to 6 million in 1922.

Not so for the Junior Red Cross. A major aim was to bring to schools the knowledge of international understanding and good-will among the children of the world. It set up a National Children's Fund and an international correspondence program.

In 1923, over 100,000 students sent Christmas boxes with small gifts as a sign of friendship to children in Europe. They also sent boxes to Japan which had been paralyzed by a devastating earthquake.

Boys and girls of the depression years made "school chests," filled with supplies—that were shipped to disaster areas in Europe, Turkey, and Korea.

During the 1930s, the American Red Cross stopped sending relief workers to foreign countries. Rather it sent contributions via the League of

Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in Geneva.

The American public's indifference to problems elsewhere in the world mirrored the policies and thinking of American political leadership. The Ethiopian War victims of 1935, for instance, and Spanish Civil War victims of 1936 were ignored by the Americans, as were the casualties of severe flooding and earthquakes in China in the same period.

WORLD WAR II RELIEF EFFORTS

During World War II, the American Red Cross was an invaluable link between service men and women and their families at home. Modern transportation and communication systems allowed the Red Cross to mobilize quickly.

Making blood and blood derivatives available for the wounded was one of the great wartime achievements of the medical field and of the American Red Cross. In peace-time it became known as the National Blood Program in the United States.

From Europe to the Middle East, more than 20 million persons, two thirds of whom were children, had received help from the American Red Cross, directly

and indirectly. Americans supported these efforts generously with donations amounting to over \$147 million dollars in 1942, rising to \$231 million dollars in 1945.

Wartime galvanized the American Red Cross, and brought about a closer collaboration with the International Red Cross partners.

RED CROSS TODAY

The American Red Cross had just barely adjusted to peace-time needs when the Korean conflict broke out, 1950-1952, and Red Cross workers were again deployed overseas. For the first time in the organization's history, American Red Cross foreign service workers were not placed under American military direction, but rather under the United Nations Civil Assistance Command.

The relationship with the UN and its specialized agencies has continued to grow, to the extent that all international relief efforts are undertaken today in coordination with the UN and its family of relief agencies. International Red Cross partners assisted the refugees of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 and Germans fleeing East Germany in the 1960s. In 1968,

they gave technical assistance, know-how, food, and medicines to starving Biafrans during the Nigerian conflict, until the downing of a Red Cross food plane slowed down the operations.

The American Red Cross Foreign Location Inquiry Service, created during World War II, helps refugees track down missing relatives and friends.

More recently, the Red Cross was involved in Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, in relief efforts in war-torn Bosnia, in Rwanda where the number of people displaced by a recent conflict has risen from 90,000 to 350,000, and in Cambodia where 4 million mines are threatening unsuspecting civilians.

The list goes on and on—South Africa, Israel and the occupied territories, Peru, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Tibet, Bhutan. The combined help of all Red Cross entities is more important than ever to alleviate the suffering of innocent victims.

The United Nations System

The Charter of the United Nations, initialed by 51 governments in 1945, is now subscribed to by 184 members. The United Nations, or UN, is

committed to maintaining international peace and security and achieving international cooperation in solving problems of economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian character worldwide.

The UN Resolution, a *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, states that everyone has the *right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of each individual, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care*. While the UN Charter is an international treaty with the power of law, UN Resolutions are recommendations to governments and do not carry the weight of enforcement.

It takes an organization like the UN and its specialized agencies to cope with the world's desperate problems. The United States is the leading contributor of humanitarian assistance to the UN family of agencies.

"I have worked for almost twenty years on UN affairs, from within the U.S. Department of State, and from within the United Nations, as Deputy Director-General of the International Labor Organization. Throughout these years, I have witnessed the growth of the UN and its humanitarian relief agencies that have their roots in the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The UN Charter and the Declaration of Human rights,

through the goals they articulate, set the parameters for humanitarian assistance in today's world. The goals are simply stated but, as experience has shown, enormously difficult to achieve."

—John W. McDonald

While the United States played a decisive and essential role in pushing for the establishment of UN relief agencies, the U.S. government intentionally kept the United Nations *out* of the humanitarian assistance field for twenty-five years. How could this happen when the United States has such a great history of helping other nations in their time of need?

In truth, America did continue to help other countries. But the help was given bilaterally, not multilaterally, through the United Nations. The reasons were political.

After World War II, America was the only country in the world with the physical resources available to help other countries. Our country helped rebuild western Europe through the Marshall Plan, and helped rebuild Japan through direct material and financial assistance.

We were also the only nation in the world with the massive airlift capability to respond swiftly to disaster relief requests for tents, blankets, medicine, and food. America did respond quickly and

efficiently to requests from other countries when they asked for emergency relief assistance. Over the years, the U.S. gained a great deal of political good will from countries that were helped for our speed and generosity in their time of need.

Our system worked for about twenty years, until other countries like the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union observed the bi-lateral good will we were generating by our actions. They, too, wanted to be involved in relief efforts.

And they did get involved. The result was administrative chaos at the disaster site. No one on the spot had any recognized authority to coordinate the emergency assistance requested or being received. Duplication and overlap became excessive. No one examined the requests made by the country which required aid. Often identical requests were made to several donor countries. Confusion was rampant.

UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF OFFICE

"By early 1971, while assigned to the U.S. State Department's Bureau of International Organization Affairs, I thought I had enough examples of waste, inefficiency, and mismanagement, to convince the Pentagon and the State Department that it was time to reverse our policy

and involve the UN directly and ask them to coordinate disaster relief worldwide. The U.S. State Department and the Pentagon finally agreed to a draft resolution that was personally introduced by then-Ambassador George Bush at the July 1971 meeting of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) meeting in Geneva."

—John W. McDonald

The resolution proposed the creation of a new post at the Under-Secretary General level called the Disaster Relief Coordinator. He would report directly to the Secretary General and would be responsible for mobilizing, directing, and coordinating all disaster assistance *requested* by member states, for either man-made or natural disasters.

It was a powerful resolution because it impacted all disaster relief provided by UN agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations like the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the American Red Cross.

The resolution was adopted by ECOSOC, sent to the 1971 UN General Assembly, where it was also adopted, and came into effect shortly thereafter. The United Nations Disaster Relief Office, or UNDRO, emerged in the world as the focal point for all requests for disaster assistance from member

states. UNDRO established a round-the-clock Operations Center, analyzed requests received, decided which governments, agencies, or institutions could respond most quickly and most effectively, asked them for help, and sent personnel to the disaster site to work with the requesting government. UNDRO personnel then coordinated the relief supplies as they arrived on site.

One of the great unsung success stories in the history of the United Nations occurred when East Pakistan collapsed and the new nation of Bangladesh was formed. It began in March 1971, when Secretary General U Thant started a relief operation to help feed many of the citizens of East Pakistan and refugees that had fled to India. War broke out in late 1971 as this part of the country demanded independence from Pakistan. On December 16, 1971, a week after Pakistan forces surrendered to the Joint Bangladesh-Indian Command, the UN created the UN Relief Operations in Dacca in the new capital of Bangladesh and began the largest relief operation of its kind in UN history.

By the end of March 1973, when the main phase of UNDRO ended, some 10 million refugees had been moved back from India

into what is now Bangladesh. Further war and the outbreak of pestilence had been prevented, the collapse of law and order and the massacre of minorities had been brought under control, a new democratic government had been installed, and over \$1.3 billion in food aid and assistance had been disbursed. The Foreign Minister of Bangladesh told Secretary General Kurt Waldheim in February 1973 that the events of the preceding two years had provided a:

"rare example of international cooperation that has enlarged the scope of constructive United Nations action."

In 1989 the UN General Assembly launched the *International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction*, urging member states to develop measures to prevent or mitigate natural disasters through training and transferring technology to disaster prone countries over the following ten years.

In December 1991, twenty years after the creation of UNDR0 and after the end of the Cold War, the UN General Assembly adopted a new resolution, designed to further strengthen coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The resolution laid out guiding principles including

drawing a distinction between emergency, rehabilitation, and development assistance. It discussed the need for strengthening programs for disaster prevention, stressed the importance of preparedness and early warning, urged development of a stand-by capacity and early response mechanisms, established an Inter-Agency Standing Committee for Coordination, and created a new Under-Secretary General post in New York to manage these programs and guide the transition process from relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction. UNDR0 reports to the person in this new post. The resolution was adopted by consensus and highlights the importance that national governments and the United Nations place on humanitarian assistance issues in today's world.

THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND

The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, or UNICEF, was established by a General Assembly Resolution in December 1946. It was designed as a voluntarily-funded organization, to provide emergency food, clothing, health care, and shelter for children who

were victims of World War II. It was so successful in its mission that Western powers thought they could abolish the organization in 1950. Third World nations, however, wanted the organization to continue and help those children in the same way. UNICEF's role was extended for three years. In 1953, the word "emergency" was dropped from the provisions, and the mandate extended indefinitely.

Working primarily at the village level, UNICEF focuses on maternal and child health services, water supply and sanitation, child nutrition, social welfare services, education, and emergency aid. UNICEF relief workers have provided important assistance throughout Central America and to such countries as Cambodia, Lebanon, Sudan, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, Afghanistan, and Iraq.

The United States is the largest contributor to UNICEF, funding 20 percent of the agency's budget in a typical recent year. Proceeds from UNICEF greeting card sales and contributions from non-governmental organizations, or NGOs are other funding sources.

The very active U.S. National Commission for UNICEF is a non-profit organization set up to raise money for UNICEF programs. This non-governmental

organization is the largest and most effective fund raiser for UNICEF.

In 1983 UNICEF decided to try to reduce by half the number of childhood deaths from immunizable diseases and diarrhea by the year 2000. Working with the World Health Organization, they also sought to raise the percentage of the Third World population immunized against six major childhood diseases from 10 percent to 80 percent. UNICEF met their goal in less than ten years. In 1990 UNICEF organized and launched the first World Summit for Children. A number of heads of state attended and approved a long list of priorities to help children across the world.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

The World Health Organization, or WHO, was created as a UN specialized agency on April 7, 1948 when 26 members of the UN ratified the WHO constitution. Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, WHO is the United Nations' coordinating authority for international public health issues, helps build stronger national health services—especially in Third World countries, helps governments eradicate disease, works in the

fields of population, nutrition, and environmental sanitation, and encourages research in health-related fields.

In 1979 WHO announced that, after many years of effort, the dreaded smallpox had been eradicated from the world. Now WHO is looking to completely eliminate polio globally by the year 2000. In addition, WHO is coordinating the global effort to address the AIDS pandemic. Through its efforts, country after country has been made aware of the danger of AIDS and has been shown how to forestall the threatening expansion of the disease through education and the use of condoms.

WHO has provided humanitarian medical assistance in the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, and elsewhere. In 1992 WHO welcomed twelve new member nations, mainly from the collapsed Soviet Union, and has been assisting each of these states with their health care problems.

There are now 182 WHO member nations. Out of the total \$380 million annual budget, the United States pays \$85 million, or 25 percent of the total. The U.S. also has the highest number of professional staff of any country serving in the WHO Secretariat.

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, or UNRWA, was established to help Palestinian refugees displaced during the 1948-1949 Arab-Israeli conflict. The General Assembly passed the resolution creating UNRWA in December 1949.

Unfortunately, many of the refugees became pawns of the Middle East political situation. Unable to integrate into the economies of other nations, they were essentially forced to stay in refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank, and Gaza.

Over 2.5 million refugees are registered with UNRWA, which provides housing, education, health care, relief services, and has its own schools, clinics, and health centers. The United States, who took the lead in urging the creation of UNRWA, has been the largest financial contributor over the years. The U.S. government contributes about \$76 million a year, or about 23 percent of UNRWA'S total budget.

"UNRWA's total program is directed toward humanitarian assistance. I have visited several UNRWA camps in years past, and have always been

saddened by the fact that the political situation did not seem to allow many members of the camps who wanted to, to live elsewhere."

—John W. McDonald

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

UNHCR, created by General Assembly Resolution in 1951 and located in Geneva, Switzerland, is charged with providing international protection to refugees and facilitating their voluntary repatriation to their homeland or helping them to assimilate within other communities outside their country.

As originally conceived, the UNHCR mandate was to help political refugees, persons who feared for their lives if they returned home, whether for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or membership in a political or social organization.

One of the major humanitarian agencies in world history, UNHCR's mandate has gradually expanded over the years because there was no other agency equipped to cope with the flood of refugees caused by war, ethnic conflict, famine, and pestilence. Since its founding in 1951, UNHCR has been funded entirely by voluntary contributions. In 1991 the United

States contributed \$198 million, or about 23 percent of the \$880 million budget for that year.

UNHCR has done a magnificent job under extraordinary circumstances. It has a number of programs in Africa, including the Ivory Coast, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ethiopia, Malawi, and the Sudan. Three major efforts in the last several years have dealt with 5 million Afghan refugees (3 million of which are in Pakistan and 2 million in Iran), 2 million persons displaced by the Gulf War, and hundreds of thousands displaced by conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

The magnitude of the numbers begin to blur after a while. The thing to remember is that wherever in the world there are people who consider themselves to be political or economic refugees, the UNHCR will try to help them.

WORLD FOOD PROGRAM

The World Food Program, or WFP, based in Rome, Italy, is a separate United Nations organization, sponsored by both the UN and the Food and Agriculture Organization. Formed in 1963 it specializes in using food aid for social and economic development projects

and for emergency humanitarian relief. WFP has been the most essential agency in the world when it comes to supplying emergency food assistance where natural or man-made disasters have created malnourishment or actual starvation.

The WFP deals in big numbers. Since all of its contributions are voluntary, as opposed to assessed contributions, it holds pledging conferences every two years. For the 1991-1992 biennial event, the WFP set its goal at \$1.5 billion for its regular program, and the U.S. pledged \$215 million. The WFP also has a Protracted Refugee Operation to which the U.S. pledged an additional \$125 million.

The U.S. contribution consists primarily of food grains which are used for emergency food assistance for the WFP protracted refugee and displaced persons projects, and for food-for-work projects. This latter category is innovative in the field of development programs. For example, a Third World country that wants to clear fields for planting, build schools or hospitals, or expand its rural road network, will pay its workers half in cash and half in food, with the food coming from the WFP. It is estimated in 1991 that 22 million

people received WFP food through development projects and an additional 20 million people received food through WFP's humanitarian emergency food program.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Article 55 of the UN Charter says, “*the United Nations shall promote higher standards of living, full employment, and conditions of economic and social progress and development.*” The UN Development Program, or UNDP, came into being by UN resolution in 1966, combining two development programs that had been created in the 1940s and 1950s. UNDP is also totally funded by voluntary contributions from member states of the UN.

UNDP responds to requests from the developing world for short-term technical assistance in a wide variety of fields, all related to development. These thousands of small-scale projects are focused primarily on health, education, agriculture, industrial development, power, transport, and training. In 1992, countries pledged over a billion dollars in voluntary contributions to the UNDP, with the US contributing \$107 million or a little over 10 percent of UNDP's budget.

The UNDP is primarily a funding organization, with some 90 percent of its funded projects carried out by other agencies in the UN system. UNDP has a worldwide network of field offices located in 112 countries. Resident Representatives act as in-country coordinators for the UN's technical assistance programs. In most countries the representative has been designated by the UN Secretary General and acts as his Resident Coordinator. This person then serves as the local representative for the Secretary General, and is treated as a resident Ambassador for the United Nations.

Conclusion

For over a hundred years American citizens have directly and indirectly brought relief to suffering people around the globe. Their understanding of, and compassion for the needs of those in distress has saved hundreds of thousands of lives on every single continent. While the proverbial generosity of Americans is based on this country's idealism, their technical assistance and know-how is the result of organized planning and cooperation with leading humanitarian agencies around the world.

Historically, U.S. support for the American Red Cross and the United Nations has been vital to the success of these organizations. Given the present state of the world, continued American interest and active participation in the efforts of these two distinct systems are as crucial as ever. It is only when all people, in all countries, pull together their resources, that the goals of the Red Cross, the UN Charter, and the Declaration of Human Rights have a chance of being achieved.

Amicus humani generis, The Friend of mankind—A selected sampling of the many humanitarian relief groups that are influential worldwide are listed in the next chapter which readers can call on to assist in support of their international good works.

chapter 6

AMERICANS GET INVOLVED— WAYS TO HELP

*Catherine Tomsheck and
Helen Kerschner*

At the dawn of the 21st century we inhabit a world of extremes. Many nations have prospered. Millions of people now lead healthier, longer lives than their grandparents. And yet, many millions more are poor and defenseless.

Wars, drought, and natural disasters are the leading cause of mass exodus—people fleeing for their lives. Today there are some 35 million refugees in sixty countries. In 1994 alone the world endured disasters all over the globe—in the United States, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Haiti, and more recently in Japan. The need for humanitarian assistance is *not* decreasing.

Americans are at the forefront in championing humanitarian causes. And Americans keep on

helping victims *after* a crisis as people work to rebuild their lives.

Unequivocally, the most reliable and caring source of help in the world is the private citizen. Regardless of the source—private individuals, corporate generosity, or philanthropic foundations—private contributions are the life blood for private, non-profit aid groups—indeed the very bedrock of their existence.

The importance of private non-profit international relief organizations is incontestable. Churches, foundations, international aid agencies, and private voluntary associations give comfort to people all over the world—people devastated by natural and man-made disasters. Private contributions are rooted in a genuine, heartfelt care for humanity. Charitable gifts of money, time, materials, equipment and supplies make it possible for relief agencies to respond promptly in a non-political manner.

This chapter profiles a wide range of humanitarian assistance groups and opportunities for giving.

Informal and Institutional Ways of Helping

Private giving makes up the greater part of charitable contributions. Most private individuals give through religious groups or have a long-standing commitment to a secular, private non-profit agency. Generally people give because they are asked, and fund-raising for private contributions has become a science.

Religious groups have natural constituencies, making fund raising fruitful. Many people are familiar with overseas programs and trust that the money given at their church or synagogue will be well spent. Secular groups must define their mission and establish credibility with the public. Once a relationship of trust has been established, personal charitable contributions will follow—even though individual gifts of money average less than \$20.

In an age of global news and instant communications, television's CNN brings conflicts and natural disasters into American homes. The images of suffering, starving, homeless, and oppressed people compel Americans to reach out and provide assistance. Even with belt-tightening and budget cutting in these times, 73 percent

of American adults questioned in 1993 on the subject of foreign aid vocalized their support for humanitarian assistance.

Global Partnerships

Corporate charitable giving to humanitarian causes is not well documented. For a few U.S. companies, in some countries, there is strong support for such efforts, but there is no consistent pattern.

For many years, U.S. corporations operating overseas hid their charitable work lest word got around, so they would not be inundated with requests for money. In recent decades, private aid groups and American businesses have designed a variety of public-private partnerships that seem to benefit all concerned.

For example—the international relief and development agency, CARE, has several unique and quite effective corporate partnerships. CARE's largest corporate partner is a coffee company which, in a very visible way, demonstrates a corporate commitment to humanitarian assistance. This coffee company does more than keep relief workers awake and warm.

In September 1991 Starbucks, a gourmet coffee company based in Seattle, Washington, made a commitment to fund CARE programs in Kenya, Guatemala, and Indonesia. Starbucks is a leading importer of Central American, East African, and Indonesian coffees. Corporate heads and employees of Starbucks were moved by the conditions they found in many of the coffee producing countries, and felt compelled to improve the lives of the people who grew the coffee they bought.

Starbucks coffee buyer, Dave Olsen explains the company's commitment:

"In origin countries, the needs are so great that our appreciation of their good coffee makes it clear that these wonderful places are a big part of the Starbucks global community. The Starbucks family, including our patrons, has wanted to express our commitment to help these people, and the CARE partnership is a perfect vehicle."

The Starbucks-CARE partnership is introduced through in-store promotional materials and a special "CARE Package" of select coffees from Indonesia, Kenya, and Guatemala.

STARBUCKS-CARE PARTNERSHIP
Over the course of three years, Starbucks donated over \$100,000 annually to fund.

- A health care training program and start-up of thirty-two village pharmacies in Indonesia
- A water purification project in Guatemala
- An education program offered in over 14,000 primary schools throughout Kenya

In 1994 Starbucks decided to return to Ethiopia, a country renowned for its coffee. In Ethiopia, Starbucks supports a CARE community irrigation and cultivation project to generate income for people and allow them to return to what comes naturally—growing coffee. In countries where basic human needs are rarely met, Starbucks and CARE provide hope for a better future.

People Power

Private, non-profit aid groups have long set the pace of humanitarian assistance. Today quick and effective disaster response is standard. While organizations and agencies vary in size, mission, and capability, all share a strong commitment to improving the lives of people in crises.

Immediately after a disaster, international relief agencies frequently are the only link between American citizens and people in desperate need.

AMERICA'S HUMANITARIANISM
For example— through private aid groups Americans:

- Distributed food and medicine to women and children in refugee camps of Rwanda
- Led search and rescue missions following earthquakes in Columbia
- Offered immediate air transport for medical emergencies in Somalia
- Provided shelter for flood victims in Bangladesh

The absolute number of private aid groups involved in people-to-people assistance is difficult to say. USAID listed 390 private agencies working overseas in its 1994 report to Congress.

InterAction, a consortium of U.S. private aid groups working overseas, counts 143 members. Whatever the case, each and every one of them bring hope to the most hopeless conditions.

Speaking on how to become involved in global issues, Brian Atwood, director of the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID, portrayed the segment of society which mounts weekend relief missions:

"People from nearby countries drive down to the war zone—it's only a couple of hours away—and drop off food, blankets, and medicine. By Monday, the donors are back at their jobs."

To be sure, this is an extreme example of individual giving.

Nonetheless, it is possible to do much more than stand on the sidelines as a bystander.

Examples of international disaster relief and aid organizations through which Americans have the opportunity to make meaningful contributions abound. There are literally hundreds of such associations.

Virtually every church—and a great many health care organizations—has an affiliated group that provides an avenue for helping those in need. A selected sampling of some of the organizations which are popular with American volunteers is provided here to demonstrate the ways America reaches out to the farthest corners of the globe.

Of the organizations profiled here, some are affiliated with religious groups, though most are non-denominational. Some offer short-term volunteer opportunities—most require long-term commitments. Some provide disaster assistance—most emphasize sustainable development efforts.

Decisions about volunteering for global humanitarian projects are usually based on financial requirements, length of commitment, physical, mental, and emotional requirements, and the degree and type of experience or expertise which is needed.

The examples here are intended to give an idea of the global depth of human needs and variety of the worldwide responses from the private non-profit sector.



A Directory for Global Action

AFRICARE

440 R Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001
Tel. 202 462-3614

Organization Description In 1970 a small group of determined individuals who had experienced first hand the harsh realities of life in the poorest countries of Africa founded Africare. Africare brings together Africans and African Americans in humanitarian endeavors throughout the continent.

For a quarter century, Africare has been a voice and conscience for the African American community. Africare's concern always has been to provide people with up-to-date technologies to improve their own lives. Africare uses proven tactics such as field-based planning.

Designing programs that include local people is the first step for any project. Africare consults with representatives from national and local governments—along with villagers. While participatory

techniques are now common in all assistance programs, Africare was a pioneer.

Africare is not involved in the day-to-day operations of its assistance programs. Rather, it assists Africans to develop partnerships with national and international governments. By creating a venue for collaboration, Africare serves as a conduit for long-term development and sustained improvement in the lives of those most desperately in need.

AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

1501 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Tel. 215 241-7000

Organization Description Founded by Quakers in 1917, the American Friends Service Committee, or AFSC, demonstrates leadership and a frequently imitated expertise in disaster relief. In 1994 AFSC reported a total budget of over \$36 million from private sources. Throughout its history, AFSC's work has focused primarily on disaster relief. However, AFSC does operate a variety of long-term development programs in areas of population, health, agriculture, education, and income generation.

Since the end of World War I, Quakers have used AFSC as their principal vehicle for the delivery of relief assistance. Immediately after World War I, AFSC provided food

and medical aid throughout Germany and Russia. An AFSC delegation went to Berlin in the early 1940s to petition Hitler on behalf of persecuted Jews. When diplomacy failed AFSC assisted Jewish refugees by providing safe passage to the United States.

During World War II, AFSC expressed concern with diplomatic and relief efforts, and its volunteers drove ambulances and relief supply trucks in China. The Quaker commitment to peace, brotherhood, and human understanding motivates AFSC volunteers and donors to overcome many social ills.

AFSC programs have assisted Palestinian refugees in Gaza and Jordan, rural Mexican youth, and war-ravaged Vietnamese children. They provided medical supplies in Cambodia and have assisted with refugee resettlement throughout the continent of Africa.

While humanitarian relief assistance is the cornerstone of AFSC's work, its donors and volunteers support long-term development programs and international dialogue. With its strong belief in nonviolence, AFSC brings a network of experience to its work in conflict resolution.

AFSC programs have contributed to peaceful resolutions and reconciliation. AFSC has carried out seminars and conferences with thousands of diplomats from Europe, Asia, and Africa. Through its efforts, representatives from countries known to be antagonistic have been

able to meet in an informal setting, discuss neutral issues, and create an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Perhaps the most distinguished tribute to AFSC's work came just after World War II. In 1947, the Nobel Committee awarded AFSC and the Friends Service Council of London the Nobel Prize for Peace. This prestigious award was bestowed in honor of AFSC's unfailing commitment to peace. AFSC stands as a symbol of prominence among private humanitarian assistance agencies.

AMERICAN RED CROSS

American Red Cross International Services

431 18th Street NW
Washington, DC 20006
Tel. 202 737-8300

Organization Description The American Red Cross is a community-based voluntary organization chartered by the U.S. Congress to undertake relief activities to mitigate the suffering caused by disasters. Through 2,800 Red Cross chapters located throughout all 50 states, nearly 1.2 million trained Red Cross volunteers and 23,000 paid staff (a ratio of over 50 volunteers for each paid staff) help people in their communities and around the world prevent, prepare for, and cope with emergencies. In addition, more than 4 million Americans generously give over 6 million units of blood each year to help others.

Through Red Cross national headquarters, each local chapter is linked to the International Red Cross Movement, dedicated to protecting human life through the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, and universality.

Location of Development

Efforts Under the umbrella of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the American Red Cross has worked with over 150 national societies and has helped people in Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. It has sent medical teams to aid armed conflict refugees; assisted earthquake and hurricane victims with money, supplies, and expertise; and raised millions of dollars to help prevent and relieve human suffering.

Volunteer Opportunities Adults of all ages can train to become disaster volunteers, volunteer instructors or leadership volunteers in their local Red Cross chapters; donate blood; contribute financially. For more information, contact your local American Red Cross chapter.

AMERICAN REFUGEE COMMITTEE

2344 Nicollet Avenue, Suite 350
Minneapolis, MN 55404-3305

Tel. 612 872-7060

Toll-free 800 329-4447

Fax. 612 872-4309

E.mail

kraus024@maroon.tc.umn.edu

Organization Description The American Refugee Committee, or ARC, was founded in 1979. It is a non-profit, non-governmental organization providing primary health care, self-help training, and related services to refugees and displaced men, women, and children in 11 countries in Africa, Europe, and Southeast Asia. ARC has been recognized by the U.S. State Department and the United Nations for its effective, efficient delivery of humanitarian aid to persons in crisis.

At least 90 cents of every dollar spent by the American Refugee Committee goes for refugee assistance programs. The 1996 ARC budget was projected at \$12 million.

Location of Development Efforts

ARC staff and volunteer specialists are currently helping more than 1 million refugees, most of them women and children, in Bosnia, Croatia, Zaire, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Malawi, Mozambique, Somalia, Thailand, and Cambodia.

Volunteer Opportunities ARC places volunteers who give their time and energy to assist refugees as medical trainers, health care providers, tutors-mentors, and career-education advisors (a one-year commitment is required). They also engage volunteers at their Minneapolis headquarters to assist with computers and organizational duties.

BRETHREN VOLUNTEER SERVICE

1451 Dundee Avenue
Elgin, IL 60120
Tel 847 742-5100
Toll-free 800 323-8039
Fax. 847 742-6103

Organization Description

Founded in 1948, the aid group of Brethren Volunteer Service, or BVS, places volunteers in over 200 projects in the U.S. and around the world, serving basic human needs and protecting the environment. The central focus is peace and justice work. *Project categories include:* children, senior citizens, community development and services, farm workers, disabled persons, homelessness, prisoners, refugees, peace, domestic violence, housing, health care, education, and environment.

Location of Development Efforts

BVS projects are located in China, Croatia, England, El Salvador, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Peru, Poland, Serbia, Switzerland, the Virgin Islands, and Yugoslavia. There are also U.S. projects in 38 states.

Volunteer Opportunities BVS volunteers must be at least 18 years of age, be in sound physical and mental health, have a high school education or equivalent experience, be willing to examine and study the Christian faith, and be committed to

the goals of the Brethren Volunteer Service. A minimum one-year commitment is required of volunteers accepting placements in the U.S. Overseas assignments require a two-year commitment.

BVS volunteers come from varied backgrounds with different motivations. Some have little formal training, while others have advanced degrees. They are individuals wanting to live out their religious convictions and persons seeking to reach out beyond themselves. BVS regards the life skills and experiences of older Americans as an asset, and encourages them to apply.

CARE

151 Ellis Street
Atlanta, GA 30303-2439
Tel. 404 681-552

Organization Description

Founded in 1945 as a World War II relief agency, CARE's commitment to those in need paints a colorful portrait of how Americans respond. The original founders of CARE were U.S. religious, relief, labor, civic, and service groups with a desire to deliver food and medicine effectively to the people of Europe. The original CARE package was an army surplus ration for U.S. soldiers. A contribution as small as \$12 guaranteed that a named individual or organization would receive a *CARE Package* within 120 days.

In the beginning, this personal gift was delivered only in Europe. But by 1948, individuals in Japan,

Korea and Okinawa also were receiving packages. Eventually, Americans sent over 100 million CARE packages. Today similar humanitarian groups modeled after CARE-USA operate worldwide—including CARE-Canada, CARE-Finland, CARE-Germany, and CARE Australia. Americans can be proud that their concern, ingenuity and contributions of money and time spawned a world-wide network.

CARE-USA's programs were created a half century ago to meet an immediate emergency need. In the intervening years they have endured and expanded. In 1993 alone, CARE delivered more than 800,000 tons of food, medicine, and temporary shelter materials to over 11 million people.

Today CARE works with individuals, organizations, and governments in over forty countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa. Since its founding, more than 35 million Americans have supported CARE programs, proving that individuals can make a difference in the lives of people in need.

A secular organization, CARE frequently establishes relations with community and government organizations that may be wary of agencies affiliated with churches. CARE representatives form partnerships with communities where they provide relief assistance. This allows CARE to continue to assist during crises while it also helps rebuild homes, schools, farms and families.

CARE structures the partnerships to be sure communities participate in decisions affecting how, when, and where the *assistance* will be given. For each project, CARE donates money, expertise, and supplies. CARE volunteers work side-by-side with local residents to ensure the wise use of resources.

CARE's agricultural programs are designed specifically to be the most productive and least destructive to the natural resource base. As a result, CARE has established its prominence in sustainable agriculture and agriforestry.

CARE's humanitarian assistance programs in health and nutrition offer women, men and children access to clean water, preventive health education and immunization against childhood and infectious diseases. By the year 2000, CARE hopes to extend its family planning programs into all its countries of operation. Built on CARE's experience in preventive health care, these programs offer reliable family planning through a network of local community groups.

In countries where almost half of the population is unemployed, CARE helps poor men and women to start small businesses. Its small enterprise programs provide credit, training and technology to entrepreneurs in over twenty countries.

CATHOLIC RELIEF SERVICES

209 West Fayette Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
Tel. 410 625-2220

Organization Description In 1943 a variety of Catholic agencies formed Catholic Relief Services, or CRS, as a war relief service. Over the last thirty or more years, CRS has operated with a budget in excess of \$250 million. Overseas CRS works with counterpart Catholic agencies, serving people of all denominations.

The majority of Catholic Relief Services' programs aid families. CRS emphasizes child health care and nutrition, as well as the care of pregnant women and mothers with young children. Whenever possible, CRS will use its network of food supplies to coordinate local "food for work" projects. These programs use excess U.S. commodities such as corn and grain donated to CRS. The projects have created new roads, schools, bridges, sanitation facilities, clean water sources—and provided meals for school lunch programs.

In addition to its highly successful food-for-work programs, CRS is well-known for cooperative development. CRS fosters business and trade cooperatives to alleviate credit problems for the very poor. Through a credit union for cooperative members, loans are available for entrepreneurial and income-generating activities. Establishing a reliable source of cash obviates the need for local people to

use extortionist and dishonest moneylenders. Set up throughout the world by CRS, farm cooperatives allow small independent farmers to negotiate commodity prices on a national scale.

A giant in the industry, with a global network of affiliates, CRS is able to focus on long-term development and still be heavily involved in emergency relief and development. Catholic Relief Services is always there to provide water, food, and shelter for victims of droughts, famine, and earthquakes. In addition, CRS has an impressive ability to care for often neglected citizens with leprosy, orphan children, the aged, and the mentally and physically handicapped.

CONCERN AMERICA

2024 No. Broadway, Suite 104
Santa Ana, CA 92706
Tel. 714 953-8575
Fax. 714 953-1242

Organization Description CONCERN America is a non-denominational, non-governmental international relief and development organization founded in Ireland in 1968 and chartered in California in 1972. CONCERN's leading aim is to provide training, technical assistance, and material support to people in less developed countries who need help as a result of natural disaster, civil disruption, forced migration, discrimination, or historically-rooted impoverishment. Volunteers are professionals in the

fields of public health, nutrition, sanitation, engineering, economic and agricultural development, and education who share their knowledge and skills with disadvantaged people and train others to carry on and to build what they have started.

Location of Development Efforts
CONCERN America supports programs in Bangladesh, Honduras, El Salvador, Mexico, Guatemala, and Sierra Leone.

Volunteer Opportunities
CONCERN volunteers can help with promotional work in the U.S. or can volunteer for one-year field positions. Qualified volunteers must be at least 21 years old; have a undergraduate or advanced degree in public health, nutrition, agriculture, engineering, or medicine; and be fluent in Spanish (for placement in Latin America). Volunteers with overseas field experience are preferred. CONCERN pays volunteers' room and board, round-trip transportation, and a small monthly stipend.

DENTAL HEALTH INTERNATIONAL
847 South Milledge Avenue
Athens, GA 30605-1331
Tel. 706 546-1715

Organization Description
Chartered in 1973, Dental Health International, or DHI, secures new and used dental equipment supplies to set up dental clinics in Third

World countries. DHI enlists the help and expertise of volunteer dentists to travel to these countries to install the equipment and give dental care. DHI also distributes information on dental hygiene and dental diseases to the public and to dental schools around the world while in the host country. In addition, DHI develops and tests portable dental equipment that can be used in sparsely populated areas of the world. DHI encourages dental students in developing and developed nations to settle in less populated areas where the need for dental care is greatest.

Location of Development Efforts
DSI clinics have been established in Bhutan, Cook Islands, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Cameroon, Lesotho, and other developing countries.

Volunteer Opportunities
Dentists are needed to go to future targeted countries to set up equipment and perform dental work. Donations of new and used dental office equipment (not over ten years old) are greatly needed. All work is done on a volunteer basis and all equipment is donated.

Organization Description The Division for Global Mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America directs four basic programs through which persons can serve overseas:

Long-Term Volunteer Programs Voluntary positions are open to those who can commit themselves for several years, or on an open-ended basis. Vocational skills needed include pastors, physicians, construction workers, teachers, administrators and many others.

Single-Term Teaching Positions These voluntary short-term positions are open to those who can commit to a two year or longer term. Round-trip travel, housing, utilities, a modest stipend, and life and medical insurance coverage are provided.

Lutheran World Mission Volunteers, or LWMV LWMV matches skilled, short-term (two months-two years), self-supported volunteers with institutions for service from overseas churches.

Lutheran World Federation The Lutheran World Federation is a large cooperative program of emergency relief and long-term development. The LWF-World Service program operates in over twenty countries.

Location of Development Efforts Cameroon, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Namibia, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, and Tanzania.

Volunteer Opportunities

Besides the volunteer opportunities just mentioned, Lutheran congregations can be involved by "adopting" volunteers. Contact the Lutheran headquarters office for details.

FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY

7729 East Greenway Road
Scottsdale, AZ 85260
Tel. 602 998-3100

Organization Description Food for the Hungry is a non-profit, non-denominational, Christian agency that provides emergency relief and development assistance, does research on appropriate technology, and provides education on world hunger. Its focus is on human needs related to food and nutrition, water resource development, primary health care, and micro-enterprise development.

Food for the Hungry stresses long-term development among the extremely poor—always giving emphasis to community participation and self-reliance. It also provides assistance to refugees and emergency aid in disaster situations.

Location of Development Efforts Food for the Hungry is presently working in twenty of the poorest countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Volunteer Opportunities

About fifty volunteers now serve in Food for the Hungry's International Hunger Corps. The volunteers commit to work overseas for two to three years.

GLOBAL VOLUNTEERS

375 E. Little Canada Road
St. Paul, MN 55117
Tel. 612 482-1074
Toll-free 800 487-1074
Fax. 612 482-0915

Organization Description

Global Volunteers is a nonprofit, non-sectarian, and apolitical organization, founded in 1984 with the goal of helping establish a foundation for peace through mutual international understanding. The Global Volunteer program centers around a one-, two-, or three-week volunteer work experience in host communities in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe, and the Americas.

At the request of local leaders and indigenous host organizations, Global Volunteers sends teams of eight to twelve volunteers to the same community three or four times a year. The volunteers and a Global Volunteers team leader live in host communities, and work side-by-side with locals on human and economic development projects. Volunteers are immersed in the local community, experiencing first-hand the language, culture, and traditions the country offers.

Location of Development Efforts

Current projects are located in Mexico, Tanzania, Jamaica, Poland, Russia, Costa Rica, Greece, Italy, Spain, Vietnam, Indonesia, and the southern U.S.

Volunteer Opportunities

Global Volunteers has no language or professional requirements for participation. Volunteer team members come from all backgrounds and occupations, including retirees, teachers, consultants, mechanics, actors, executives, nurses, carpenters, business managers, homemakers, farmers, physicians.

Global Volunteers is neither subsidized, nor affiliated with any governmental or religious organization and must rely on its volunteers for financial support. Volunteer fees—ranging from \$350 to \$1,995—go toward travel, food and lodging; help defray project costs; and cover administrative expenses. Air fare is additional. All costs, including air fare, are tax-deductible.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY INTERNATIONAL

121 Habitat Street
Americus, GA 31709
Tel. 912 924-6935

Organization Description

Habitat for Humanity, founded in 1976, is a non-profit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry. Habitat works in partnership with people who live in inadequate shelter to help them provide a decent home for themselves and their families. Habitat has built over 35,000 homes worldwide through affiliate Habitat agencies in North America, Australia and South Africa, and sponsored projects in developing countries.

Habitat builds and renovates simple, decent houses, using mostly volunteer labor to keep costs low. It sells the houses to people in need for the actual cost of construction with no profit added. No interest is charged on the mortgage. Each Habitat homeowner family must contribute hundreds of hours of their own labor—sweat equity—into the building of their house the the houses of others. They make monthly house payments of \$100 to \$200, less than what many poor people must pay to rent an inadequate apartment or single dwelling. These payments are recycled into a “Fund for Humanity” that is used to build even more houses. Through Habitat, people relationships and a sense of community are built as well as new houses.

Location of Development Efforts

There are nearly 1,200 active Habitat affiliates located in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. There are also more than 100 building projects coordinated by international affiliates in 46 nations around the world.

Volunteer Opportunities

Habitat has needs for all skills and all levels of skills in building houses in the U.S. and less developed countries. It can use most people in some way. Volunteers can also participate in fund raising events, and spread the word about Habitat. Both short-term and long-term

volunteer opportunities are available in the U.S. and in other countries.

HEALTH VOLUNTEERS OVERSEAS

Washington Station

PO Box 65157

Washington, DC 20035-5157

Tel. 202 296-0928

Fax. 202 296-8018

E.mail HVO@aol.com

Organization Description

Founded in 1986, Health Volunteers Overseas, or HVO, sends medical volunteers to developing countries to participate in training programs designed to assist human resource development using appropriate technology and low-cost, locally available materials whenever possible. HVO's aim, by emphasizing teaching rather than service, is to create an indigenous group of trained health workers who can teach others. This builds an ongoing capability that will benefit the population long after the volunteer and HVO have departed.

Location of Development Efforts

HVO programs are located in developing countries throughout Asia, Africa, South America, and the Caribbean.

Volunteer Opportunities

Individuals can volunteer for programs in anesthesiology, dentistry, internal medicine, oral and maxillofacial surgery, orthopaedics, pediatrics, and physical therapy. HVO is looking for volunteers with

good communication skills, as well as the ability to be innovative and flexible. Assignments generally require a commitment of at least one month. Volunteers pay their own travel expenses and, in some cases, room and board.

MARANTHA VOLUNTEERS INTERNATIONAL

1600 Sacramento Highway
Suite 116
Sacramento, CA 95815
Tel. 916 920-1900
Fax. 916 920-3299

Organization Description
Established in 1968, Marantha Volunteers International was founded as a nonprofit Christian organization that coordinates volunteer labor to help fund and construct urgently needed buildings throughout the world. Emergency relief for natural disasters is also provided occasionally. Projects are intended to meet a wide range of humanitarian needs, primarily through the construction of schools, health clinics, churches and housing, but also through various types of outreach activities.

Location of Development Efforts
Marantha runs approximately 60 projects each year in Mexico, Brazil, Honduras, Africa, Dominican Republic, Dominica, India, Belize, Panama, El Salvador, Europe, and the United States.

Volunteer Opportunities While there is always a need for skilled contractors, masons, plumbers, electricians and carpenters on each project site, the most essential skills are a sincere desire to contribute to others and a willingness to help wherever needed. Nearly 2,500 volunteers from all walks of life annually choose a project based on where they want to go and the time they have available—from one week to one month.

Volunteers pay their own expenses for travel and food, as well as a small daily fee for accident insurance. Most volunteers are Seventh-day Adventists, but this is not a requirement.

PROJECT MERCY, INC.

7011 Ardmore Avenue
Fort Wayne, IN 46809
Tel. 219 747-2559

Organization Description
Project Mercy was founded in 1977. It provides financial and material assistance to refugees in Africa with a focus on education for refugee children, support of refugee churches, and advocacy for refugee issues. Assistance is also given for vocational training and income-generating programs. Shipments of clothing sewn by volunteers in the U.S. and other relief items are made.

Location of Development Efforts
Project Mercy works in Africa among Ethiopian refugees in Sudan

and Djibout, Mozambican refugees in Malawi, and Liberian refugees in *Cote d'Ivoire* and Guinea.

Volunteer Opportunities Using African-style garment patterns provided to Project Mercy by McCalls, volunteers are needed to sew cotton or cotton-blend garments for refugee children and adults. In addition, school kits for children are assembled (pencils, pens, paper, erasers, etc. placed in a school bag or pencil case) for sending to the refugee schools.

UNITED NATIONS VOLUNTEERS

Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
or

UN VOLUNTEERS

c/o U.S. Peace Corps
1990 K Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20526
Tel. 202 606-3370
Toll-free 800 424-8580, *Ext.*
2243
Fax. 202 606 3024 or 606-3298

Organization Description The United Nations Volunteers, or UNV, was created in 1970 under the United Nations Development Program. It is a unique multilateral volunteer organization which has become one of the United Nations' foremost suppliers of specialist professionals who work with national and international personnel in developing countries.

Location of Development Efforts Since UNV's founding, over 6,600 UN volunteers, specializing in a wide variety of technical, economic and social fields, have offered practical responses to the development needs of over one hundred developing countries in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Central and Latin America, the Caribbean and the Arab States.

Volunteer Opportunities The vital resource of the UNV is its volunteer specialists: qualified and motivated men and women of all ages and nationalities working in a wide variety of professional fields, including administration, agriculture, communication, skilled trades, construction, social sciences, education, engineering, transport, health, natural sciences and community development. Women and retired professionals are especially welcomed on the UNV roster.

Most UNV assignments last 24 months. Some shorter-term assignments are available which involve emergency-rehabilitation measures, feasibility studies, intensive training of local personnel, and small business expertise. The program provides travel to and from the country of assignment; a settling-in grant; a monthly living allowance; modest housing and utilities; local transport; health and life insurance; language courses, as appropriate; and a resettlement

allowance on completion of the assignment.

To apply to the UNV program in the United States, contact the U.S. Peace Corps, 1990 K Street, N.W., Suite 8500, Washington, D.C. 20526.

U.S. NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR WORLD FOOD DAY

1001 22nd Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20437
Tel. 202 653-2404
Fax. 202 643-5760

Organization Description The U.S. National Committee for World Food Day, founded in 1981, coordinates activities for World Food Day on October 16. The date is the founding date of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. The purpose of World Food Day is to increase awareness, understanding, and informed year-round action to alleviate hunger and help insure food security for all. Last year, with some 450 national, non-governmental sponsoring organizations enrolled, the Committee expanded its Annual World Food Day Teleconference to worldwide coverage. The three-hour program is available at scores of viewer sites and features a call-in hour during which viewers may pose questions to expert panelists. The Committee also provides information and study packets.

Location of Development Efforts All member nations of FAO have World Food Day committees, including the U.S. The U.S. National Committee for World Food Day works throughout the United States. It also provides information worldwide.

Volunteer Opportunities

Volunteers can plan and participate in World Food Day in their local communities or join with other sponsors.

U.S. PEACE CORPS

1990 K Street, N.W., Suite 8500
Washington, D.C. 20526
Tel. 202 606-3010
Toll-free 800 424-8580

Organization Description The U.S. Peace Corps was created in 1961 to promote world peace and friendship. To date, some 140,000 Peace Corps volunteers have helped people in over 100 countries worldwide to learn new ways to fight hunger, disease, poverty and lack of opportunity. The goals of the Peace Corps are: (1) to help the people of interested countries and areas in meeting their need for trained men and women; (2) to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served; and (3) to help promote a better understanding of other people on the part of Americans.

Location of Development Efforts

Almost 7,000 volunteers are currently serving in 94 countries around the world. Since 1990, 34 new countries have been added—more than in the previous two decades combined.

Volunteer Opportunities Most Peace Corps assignments are for two years and begin after successful completion of training. In scarce skill areas, shorter lengths of service—from three to 15 months—is possible. Peace Corps volunteers are currently working on projects in education (40 percent), environment (16 percent), health (15 percent), economic development (14 percent), agriculture (11 percent), and other (4 percent).

The volunteer corps today is comprised of older and more skilled Americans than served in the early days of the Corps. Currently approximately 10 percent of volunteers are 50 years old and older. Older Americans represent an enormous resource to the Peace Corps. Host country governments want more older volunteers because of their experience, maturity and demonstrated ability. New efforts are underway to increase the number of senior volunteers by addressing their special concerns.

VOLUNTEER MISSIONARY MOVEMENT

5980 West Loomis Road
Greendale, WI 53129
Tel. 414 423-8660
Fax. 414 423-8964

Organization Description The Volunteer Missionary Movement (VMM), founded in England in 1969, is an ecumenical movement rooted in the Catholic tradition, formed by women and men of many nationalities. VMM was started and is run by lay people. Two-year placements are made in a wide range of medical, educational, and technical fields.

Location of Development Efforts VMM sponsors programs in Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Central America, and the United States.

Volunteer Opportunities Today VMM has over 800 members—men and women of many nationalities, of all ages, married and single, Catholic and Protestant, lay and ordained. Placements are available for accountants, business and clerical personnel, health care professionals, parish-pastoral ministers, religious educators, teachers, and in the building trades and agriculture-animal husbandry. Room and board, a stipend, transportation from the mission site, and health insurance are provided. Volunteers live in community with other

volunteers. Other ways to participate in VMM include “adopting” a missionary (as an individual or through a parish-school-group) to help pay expenses; providing funds for general operating expenses, training, and missionary preparation; or referring possible candidates to VMM.

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Abbreviations

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|--------|--|--------|--|
| AAIA | American Association for International Aging | UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund |
| AFSC | American Friends Service Committee | UNDP | United Nations Development Program |
| ARC | American Red Cross | UNDRO | United Nations Disaster Relief Office |
| ARC | American Refugee Committee | UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| BVS | Bretheren Volunteer Service | UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency |
| CRS | Catholic Relief Services | USAID | U.S. Agency for International Development |
| DHI | Dental Health International | VMM | Voluntary Missionary Movement |
| ECOSOC | [United Nations] Economic and Social Council | WFP | World Food Program |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization | WHO | World Health Organization |
| HVO | Health Volunteers Overseas | | |
| IGO | International governmental organization | | |
| LWMV | Lutheran World Mission Volunteers | | |
| NGO | Non-governmental organization | | |
| PVO | Private voluntary organization | | |
| UN | The United Nations | | |

List of Contributors

The contributors to this book are listed below in alphabetical order accompanied by a brief biographical sketch. Each of the authors has written and spoken extensively on their scholarly specialty.

MARVIN A. KAISER (Chapter 2) is currently Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and Professor of Sociology at Portland State University, Portland, Oregon. He also serves as Executive Director for the Society for Values in Higher Education. Dr. Kaiser has served as staff fellow and consultant to the United Nations Office at Vienna, Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. He has also worked as a staff fellow and consultant to the U.S. Agency for International Development and as staff fellow to the U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Aging. Dr. Kaiser holds a bachelor's in philosophy from Cardinal Glennon College, St. Louis, Missouri, a master's in sociology from Kansas State University, and a M.S.W. from the University of Kansas. He received his Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1979.

HELEN KERSCHNER (Preface, Chapter 1, Chapter 3, Chapter 6) is Director of the University of New Mexico Center on Aging, University of New Mexico, and President of the American Association for International Aging, an affiliate of the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. She has extensive experience in health, aging, and international development. She began her

career as a Peace Corps volunteer in Nigeria, West Africa. She has been on the faculty of the University of Southern California and a Manager of International Programs with Westinghouse Electric Corporation. She has consulted with many non-profit organizations, corporations, and government entities throughout the U.S. and abroad. She holds a bachelor's in political science from North Texas State University, and a master's and doctorate in health and public administration from the University of Southern California.

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T*he Time and Place for Humanitarian Assistance* is an outgrowth of a national project which targets retired Americans for education about international issues, including aging, and America's response to those issues. The project was initiated in 1988 with partial funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID. In its early years, it addressed educational interests and needs by conducting focus groups, by organizing educational seminars, and by preparing informational materials for national distribution.

Over the years, both the audience and the program activities have grown. Today, while the target audience continues to emphasize retired Americans, in many instances youth and mid-life adults are also included. Educational activities continue to include focus groups, educational seminars, and informational materials, but today they also comprise education-service programs with an "*Acting Locally, Thinking Globally*" theme and a

variety of educational brochures and booklets.

The Time and Place for Humanitarian Assistance is part of a series of booklets written especially for the program's target audience, but which is appropriate for any age group. It is a response to the interests of Americans in the subject and their desire for more information about why foreign assistance is needed, when it is appropriate, who is impacted, and where it takes place. It also addresses the limitations of short-term disaster and emergency relief assistance and the importance of long-term development, both economic and humanitarian.

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About AAIA

The American Association for International Aging, AAIA, which has its home office in Washington, D.C., is a private, voluntary non-profit organization, which was established in 1983 as a private sector response to the challenges set forth in the International Plan of Action on Aging, IPAA, developed at the 1982 United Nations World Assembly on Aging. In keeping with the International Plan of Action, AAIA actively participates in efforts which promote the exchange across national boundaries of information on innovations for the aging, particularly related to productive aging.

AAIA is the only U.S.-based non-profit organization which has as its mission providing information about global aging and developing resources for the aging both at home and abroad. AAIA is registered as an approved Private Voluntary Organization, PVO, with the U.S. Agency for International Development, USAID. Today, many of the activities and initiatives which are undertaken by the Association are collaborative efforts with the University of New Mexico Center on Aging. AAIA is an affiliate of the University of New Mexico, and the Director of the Center is the Executive Director of AAIA.

During the past ten years, AAIA has prepared information and country fact sheets on aging; supported and organized senior enterprises; participated in country-wide efforts to encourage the development of policies and programs in

productive aging; supported a variety of demonstration programs which promote the productivity of older adults; implemented a national education program which targets retired Americans for education about global issues and foreign assistance; and undertaken contract efforts with corporations, foundations, non-profit organizations, and government agencies, and the 1995 White House Conference on Aging to better understand opinions of America's older population on issues ranging from health care, to computer learning, to curriculum design, to retirement planning, to consumer product marketing.

AAIA works with a variety of organizations in the United States. It is the only internationally-oriented member of the Leadership Council of Aging Organizations in the U.S. AAIA also works with national aging organizations such as the National Council on the Aging, the National Retired Teachers Association, the American Association of Retired Persons, the Shepherd Centers of America, the Older Adult Services and Information Systems, and the American Society on Aging.

AAIA also works with a wide range of international development organizations, including Partners of the Americas, Sister Cities, Society for International Development, the National Association of Social Workers, Heiffer International, and InterAction.

AAIA has extensive experience in international exchange and demonstration, older adult education, and qualitative research in the U.S. and abroad. Championing the theme, "*Acting Locally, Thinking Globally*," AAIA's goals

are: (1) to educate the American public, corporate, and government sectors about global aging issues and the need for action, and (2) to develop and implement mechanisms that promote productive aging and exchange. In both areas, AAIA undertakes and supports efforts that provide opportunities for older persons to contribute to and benefit from social and economic participation in their communities and that identify and meet their needs.

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□ *65 Ways To Be Involved: A Retired American's Guide to International Involvement (Second Edition)* JOHN E. HANSAN AND HELEN KERSCHNER, eds., 1996—This updated directory provides contact information and a brief description of 65 organizations which provide volunteer, education, and alternative tourism opportunities to retired Americans. It also profiles many retirees who participate in these activities. 400 pages/\$10.00/paperback

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*PRESIDENT JOHN
FITZGERALD KENNEDY,
1961*

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