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PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
THIRTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

PRIVATE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES  
AND THE  
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20053

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National 4-H Council  
Chevy Chase, Maryland  
May 7-8, 1986

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## Executive Summary

Each year since 1972, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) of the Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) has sponsored a conference to bring together members of the OFDA staff, representatives of U.S. voluntary agencies active in providing disaster relief around the world, and members of the international disaster relief community. The purpose of these conferences is twofold: to provide a forum for the exchange of experiences and ideas on disaster-related issues and to advance the goal of cooperation and coordination within the disaster assistance community.

The 1986 conference marked the thirteenth year of interchange and cooperative efforts. Over sixty persons representing U.S. Government agencies, international organizations, the private sector, and twenty-seven voluntary agencies participated. The theme of this year's conference, held May 7-8, 1986, was "Disaster Assistance: Crisis and Transition."

Throughout the past year, the dire situation in Africa and a series of other catastrophic natural events combined to engage the international donor community in an unremitting response phase. The collaborative efforts undertaken by the relief community yielded significant results in disaster-stricken countries. Reflecting on these various operations, it is apparent that the international disaster relief community as a whole garnered enormous knowledge. The lessons learned from these collective experiences should be documented in an effort to avoid committing the same mistakes as well as to store valuable information for the future.

In evaluating its performance over the past year, OFDA is faced with the fundamental question of whether the agency's recent emergency responses were merely temporary expedient measures. This is a crucial issue for an office within an agency which strives to foster development and self-reliance. An intelligently conceived relief effort should help promote development efforts, not just patch up the situation. Maintaining a disaster response capability and supporting preparedness are OFDA's two main goals. OFDA advocates the idea that disaster planning and mitigation activities can be important segments of development programs. Preparedness and mitigation can serve to break the cycle of response by fostering development and, concomitantly, self-sufficiency. OFDA currently aims to use its limited funds toward these ends.

Violent acts of nature or man are not in themselves disasters; when a country is unable to cope with the consequences of these events, then the classification "disaster" applies. The people most affected by these disasters are the poor and disenfranchised, living in marginal and therefore vulnerable areas. Incorporating this part of the population in the political mainstream is one of the challenges to economic development. In lending development assistance, donors should consider preparedness and mitigation programs which can help accomplish this goal by making governments focus on disaster-related issues inextricably tied to overall economic development.

Conference participants dwelt on the issue of appropriate response to disasters. The utility of joint OFDA-PVO assessments received considerable attention; these would serve to reinforce assessment reliability and improve coordination among the international disaster relief community. To further this spirit of cooperation, participants encouraged exchange of information so that everyone is reading from the same sheet of music. OFDA indicated an interest in detailed information on PVO programs, while PVOs requested information on OFDA's priority countries as well as more detailed early warning data. Finally, it was reiterated that the international community should look at using technical assistance as leverage for promoting development, while OFDA will endeavor to use its funds as seed money for projects which ultimately should extend beyond the relief stage.

Thirteenth Annual OFDA/PVO Conference

Theme: Disaster Assistance: Crisis and Transition

May 7-8, 1986

National 4-H Council  
7100 Connecticut Avenue  
Chevy Chase, Maryland

AGENDA

Wednesday, May 7, 1986

- 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. Arrival/Registration
- 6:00 - 7:00 p.m. Reception
- 7:00 - 7:30 p.m. Speaker - M. Peter McPherson, Administrator,  
Agency for International Development
- 7:30 - 8:30 p.m. Dinner
- 8:45 p.m. Renewal of Acquaintances

Thursday, May 8, 1986

- 7:45 - 8:45 a.m. Breakfast
- 9:00 - 9:15 a.m. Welcome of Participants and Opening Remarks -  
Julia V. Taft, Director, OFDA
- 9:15 - 10:00 a.m. Early Warning Systems for Appropriate Response  
Discussion Leader: Paul Krumpke, OFDA Technical Advisor
- 10:00 - 10:30 a.m. Damage and Needs Assessments  
Discussion Leaders: Oliver Davidson, OFDA Operations  
Division  
William Garvelink, State/Refugee  
Programs
- 10:30 - 10:55 a.m. Coffee Break
- 11:00 - 11:30 a.m. Donor Coordination and Information Sharing  
Discussion Leader: Julia V. Taft, OFDA Director
- 11:30 - 11:45 a.m. On-Ground Coordination  
Discussion Leader: Julia V. Taft, OFDA Director
- 11:45 - 12:15 p.m. Providing Emergency Shelter: Can We Reduce  
Vulnerability?  
Discussion Leader: Rob Robinson, INTERTECT
- 12:15 - 1:30 p.m. Lunch

- 1:30 - 2:00 p.m. Water, Health, and Sanitation: Cost-Effective Intervention  
Discussion Leader: Phil Roark, Water and Sanitation for Health Project (WASH)
- 2:00 - 2:40 p.m. Logistics and Infrastructure  
Discussion Leader: Timothy Knight, OFDA Africa and Europe Division
- 2:40 - 3:00 p.m. Innovative Financing of Relief Assistance  
Discussion Leader: Carole Siegel, OFDA Fiscal Officer
- 3:00 - 3:20 p.m. Coffee Break
- 3:20 - 4:00 p.m. Training  
Discussion Leader: Denise Decker, OFDA Training Officer
- 4:00 - 4:30 p.m. Follow-Up and Conclusion  
Discussion Leader: Julia V. Taft, OFDA Director
- 4:30 p.m. Adjourn

The Honorable M. Peter McPherson, Administrator, A.I.D.

Mr. McPherson opened the conference on May 7 with an overview of the extraordinary events of the previous year. The cataclysmic drought in Africa, the earthquake in Mexico, and the volcanic eruption in Colombia all combined to make 1985 one of A.I.D.'s - and particularly, OFDA's - busiest years. Mr. McPherson said that the PVO community and the U.S. government responded in ways in which we can all be proud. In large part because of that response, the situation in Africa has improved greatly and instruments are now in place to monitor the continuing threat from Ruiz Volcano.

It is necessary to ask, however, how our response impacts countries. Is the response merely a charitable stopgap measure or is it promoting self-reliance? The Administrator pointed out that a well-planned relief effort can - and should - help promote development efforts. Furthermore, disaster planning and mitigation activities could be important segments of development programs.

A.I.D. can encourage disaster preparedness in several ways: by providing institution building, training, technical assistance (such as early warning systems), and appropriate technology (from high-tech satellites to on-ground truthing). Two examples illustrate progress in this field: first, the early warning system in Bangladesh helped reduce casualties when a cyclone hit the country in May 1985. Second, because no maps of western Sudan were available, satellite pictures were used in the relief effort instead.

In conclusion, Mr. McPherson said that OFDA has two goals: to be ready to respond in an emergency, and to support preparedness activities. This latter goal is particularly important so we can break the cycle of constantly responding to disasters, even in Africa; instead, we must promote preparedness and mitigation.

In the discussion period which followed, several questions were raised. First, Mr. McPherson was asked how he would currently characterize the relationship between A.I.D. and the PVO community. He replied that he thought that the relationship was basically solid, but that he would like to see projects move into development rather than remain strictly charitable. Last year, for example, the PVOs made a quantum leap into Africa and their work should continue.

Another questioner voiced concern that monitoring of conditions and preparedness would go by the wayside now that the crisis appeared to be over. Mr. McPherson said that A.I.D. had already been moving increasingly in the direction of preparedness and that policy dialogues and country strategies should include disaster preparedness.

In conclusion, it was agreed that all participants in relief efforts in 1985 should be involved in the discussion of lessons learned and that such lessons should be written down; this should forestall the relief community from constantly "re-inventing the wheel." Finally, it was reiterated that some OFDA-funded projects should go beyond mere relief and instead flow into development.

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## Opening Remarks and Welcome

### Julia V. Taft: OFDA Director

In welcoming the conference participants, Mrs. Taft emphasized that 1985 was unprecedented in terms of the stress and strain on the donor community consequent to the massive response to disasters worldwide. For example, OFDA expended six times its normal appropriations level of \$25,000,000, primarily on African relief and recovery. Mrs. Taft further stated that as a result of the past year's inordinate activity, A.I.D. is engaged in a comprehensive lessons learned exercise to improve future relief operations.

The Africa drought/famine crisis has prompted OFDA, the Drought Coordination Staff, and the Africa Bureau to undertake an after-action review of the Agency's performance. Moreover, the Mexico earthquake and the Colombia volcanic eruption furthered OFDA's experience with rapid-onset disasters. A two-day lessons learned workshop provided a forum for OFDA and other federal agencies to discuss these disaster operations and compile recommendations for future organization and collaboration in major disasters.

Mrs. Taft explained that by focusing on its own system, OFDA endeavors to determine how an immediate response can be parlayed into long-term development. The Office is examining how OFDA's limited funds can serve as seed money that will stretch into development and not be dissipated in the early stages of a disaster. Action taken immediately after a disaster is not the total response, observed Mrs. Taft, the "response" must start long before and carry on long after the triggering event.

Disaster situations must be examined from the vantage point of the long-term adverse impact on the stricken country and attention must be paid to the appropriateness of the response. To illustrate her point, Mrs. Taft said that in reviewing the literature on the Ruiz Volcano eruption, she discovered that Colombia received approximately 50,000 tents and tens of thousands of blankets from a variety of sources. The donor community must ask whether some of these commodities could have been purchased locally.

Mrs. Taft concluded her remarks by explaining that technical assistance to governments in need can serve as leverage for promoting overall development. A natural event becomes a "disaster" when the host country is unable to cope with the situation; by and large the victims of these disasters are the poor and disenfranchised, those people outside the system, usually living in marginal areas and therefore vulnerable. The problem of incorporating these people into the mainstream is the challenge of development. Preparedness and mitigation programs can help accomplish this goal by making governments focus on disaster-related issues which are undeniably linked to the larger concern of economic development.

Mrs. Taft invited the PVO representatives to use this conference as an opportunity to share their perceptions of disaster response in the long-term context and also consider the notion of joint planning for appropriate response. She indicated OFDA's hope to engage the participants in an academic, albeit practical, discussion on disasters and development.

## Early Warning Systems for Appropriate Response

Discussion Leader: Paul Krumpe, OFDA Technical Advisor

Paul Krumpe described the purpose of early warning as providing valid information and increased lead time to decision makers and the public on the likelihood of disaster. Armed with early warning information, managers can move to effectively avoid or lessen the impact of natural events through planning and evacuation procedures. The ultimate goal of early warning is to save lives. Early warning systems can be applied to both slow-onset disasters, such as drought, and events with immediate impact, including cyclonic storms, earthquakes, and volcanoes.

Two major elements comprise early warning systems, explained Mr. Krumpe. First, vulnerability and hazards analyses produce useful alert tools such as risk maps and probability of occurrence assessments. The second, and perhaps more important, component of early warning systems is the transmission of information to potential victims.

While the technology to sound the alarm and give ample lead time exists, successful implementation of these systems can snag on the cultural, economic, and political realities in the Third World. For early warning to be beneficial, political will to put this information to effective use and a predisposition by the affected population to respond to warnings must be present.

Mr. Krumpe spoke of the Disaster Alert System established in Bangladesh. The weather bureau was virtually non-existent at the start of this endeavor in 1978, but working closely with the government of Bangladesh, OFDA has helped build a system which today is a six-million dollar state-of-the-art early warning showpiece. If it can be done in Bangladesh, it can be done anywhere, was Mr. Krumpe's enthusiastic summation.

Citing additional examples, Mr. Krumpe mentioned the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Environmental Satellite Data Information Service (NESDIS) global agroclimatic warning system which generates real time data on potential threats. When received by Sahelian countries, this information enhances host government monitoring capabilities and aids responsible officials in crafting more effective responses to impending disasters. A prototype tsunami warning system recently inaugurated in Valparaiso, Chile will alert Chileans and their neighbors to near-shore tsunamis generated in the Peru-Chile trench.

The precept that natural events do not have to be disastrous underlies warning system design. Based on the office's commitment to their utility, OFDA has contributed to the development of early warning systems and hopes that a wider range of users will avail themselves of the information emanating from these sources.

In support of Mr. Krumpe's presentation, Mrs. Taft again referenced the recent Colombia experience saying that although the USG has given the government of Colombia considerable technical assistance in mounting a monitoring system for the Ruiz Volcano, such an effort cannot be successful without the political will to move forward.

Mrs. Taft opened the discussion by asking participants to talk of the technologies available to them. Martin Perret, American National Red Cross (ANRC), described the Red Cross radio system in the Sahel and in Sudan. This communications system allows Red Cross workers to communicate among themselves in the field; messages are also transmitted to the capital and eventually to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva. While still in the embryonic stage, the radio network appears to be working well but a need to train local people to use it is evident.

Some African governments, prey to neo-colonialist attitudes, are reluctant to allow unrestricted radio communications systems in their countries, rejoined C. Payne Lucas of Africare. Mr. Lucas pointed out that Africa regularly contends with drought and famine and questioned early warning possibilities in this context. He inquired about methods of training Sahelians to analyze the available data. Additionally, he expressed concern for the veracity of figures coming from host Ministries and wondered how reliable data can be accessed.

In response to Mr. Lucas's queries, Mr. Krumpe distinguished sudden impact disasters from creeping disasters to illustrate the point that in slow onset disasters such as drought, decision-makers have three to six months' lead time to address the problem. NOAA/NESDIS regularly produces weather and crop impact assessments which report anomalies; U.S. Missions receive these reports four times a month and may make them available to interested parties. Mr. Krumpe went on to talk of the Famine Early Warning System (FEWS), an OFDA-funded A.I.D. endeavor which takes a voluminous amount of information -- geographical, nutritional, cultural, environmental -- and subjects it to a systematic analysis that yields country-specific reports on existing and potential nutrition emergency situations. The principal data collection method employed by FEWS is carried out by itinerant experts equipped with portable computers. Assigned to a selected country, these specialists gather information from a variety of sources in the field. Noting the preliminary nature of the three reports currently available on Chad, Mauritania, and Sudan, Mr. Krumpe explained that they are being distributed within the agency for review and evaluation.

It was agreed that PVOs would benefit from the FEWS reports but the matter of how long they might remain unclassified was broached. Mr. Lucas cautioned that the nature of some information, e.g., high resolution satellite photos detailing concentrations of rebel populations, could have sensitive political implications.

The donor community, Mrs. Taft recapitulated, needs to base its program activities on the same criteria. While the FEWS project is still in the initial stages, it would be useful to exchange this kind of information with the PVO community when feasible. In addition, it was mentioned that a list of priority countries and a "calendar of events," in terms of the seasonality of disasters, would be useful to the PVOs.

## Damage and Needs Assessments

Discussion Leaders: Oliver Davidson - OFDA Operations Division Director  
William Garvelink - State/Refugee Programs

Ollie Davidson began by noting that the two most important qualities of a good assessment are credibility and confidence. Other points brought up by Mr. Davidson were the need to use local expertise in assessments, to be careful about raising expectations as well as about what to send and how much; when a disaster attracts a lot of political attention, the pressure to provide inappropriate and overwhelming amounts of aid can be very difficult to withstand. An assessor should find out what is available locally and what other organizations are doing. Finally, Mr. Davidson made a cautionary comment about the use of technology, which is that technology can only be as good as the people who interpret it.

Bill Garvelink discussed his experiences in Bolivia during the disasters of 1983. He felt that there had been too little contact among donors and that though the USAID Mission had a lot of pertinent information, it was scattered in various offices. He recommends that the various donors, PVOs, and responsible host government officials meet together before a disaster occurs to exchange phone numbers and to inventory each organization's expertise.

Mrs. Taft then opened the topic up for general discussion. She asked how the PVOs got their information after a disaster, and she also broached the idea of an inter-agency team for assessments.

Beryl Levinger of CARE began by explaining her organization's process. CARE relies on its team in-country to provide information and assessments. However, should the field office request an outside assessor, headquarters would most likely send a management or logistics specialist. Ms. Levinger added that CARE almost always purchases local supplies to distribute rather than bringing in things from the outside.

Richard Carr, WVRO, explained that everything World Vision does now is tied into an ongoing project. He felt that agencies depended more and more on the expertise they already had on the ground.

Moirra Hart of UNICEF enthusiastically supported the idea of joint assessments. She felt that they would reinforce the reliability of assessments and help coordination.

Martin Perret of the American Red Cross described how the Red Cross responds to disasters. There are two branches at headquarters in Geneva: the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (LRCS), which responds to "natural" disasters, and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), mandated to respond to "man-made," or political, disasters. When Geneva receives information of a disaster, LRCS or ICRC will ask the

national society in the affected country what is needed and then send out appeals to other members. Some national societies are very well-organized and trained and for a major disaster will only need a liaison officer. In Geneva, the various donors will have informal meetings, depending on the situation. Information is also passed to the U.N. Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO).

The American Red Cross also gets involved - and likes to be involved - in foreign disasters. These disasters would almost certainly be in Latin America; for disasters in Africa, delegates from national societies in Europe would respond. Mr. Perret added that the Red Cross welcomes cooperation with other donors.

Finally, David Guyer, Save the Children Federation, said that many agencies have come to realize that providing technical assistance at the beginning of the relief phase is not nearly as important as knowing who is in charge of what and how everything works together. And for that kind of knowledge, an agency really needs to have someone stationed in that country.

#### Donor Coordination and Information Sharing

Discussion Leader: Julia V. Taft, OFDA Director

Mrs. Taft opened the discussion by asserting that donor coordination will be much more on the front burner this year when the U.N.'s Office of Emergency Operations in Africa folds. She also wanted to discuss the coordination of relief supplies.

Sheppie Abramowitz from the State Department's Refugee Programs said that their problem this past year had been the "free-lance" donors, i.e., those people who collected supplies and shipped them, or those who collected supplies and insisted that the U.S. Government pay for their airlift, and who refused to send the supplies through an established PVO.

Thomas Neu of InterAction said that he was glad that this issue had been brought up because the PVOs had been deluged with offers of assistance and supplies. C. Payne Lucas (Africare) said that most of the mail Africare received ended up in the "round file" and did not even get a computer response. Ted Okada of World Relief pointed out that the media is a critical factor in stirring up interest and concern; he suggested that the relief community develop a strategy to address the issue of disasters and donations with newspaper editors. Most people in the media do not know how PVOs work and what kind of aid is helpful.

C. Payne Lucas brought up a related problem which is that in the event of a large disaster, private relief agencies are born overnight, acting like "ambulance chasers." Mr. Lucas thinks that these new groups should not collect supplies for a disaster if they are not already in the country -- or the group should give donated supplies to an organization already there. He hopes that this issue is addressed at the upcoming InterAction meeting.

Thomas Neu suggested that a broadly based educational program could teach the public to respond more appropriately to disasters. Dr. Robert Busche of Lutheran World Relief seconded the idea of a public information campaign. He suggested that such a campaign mention the negative aspects of inappropriate aid. The PVOs and OFDA should document such "horror stories" and use them if possible. Ollie Davidson (OFDA) said that the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has put together three films which address this issue and would certainly be willing to share them. He then mentioned that a conference three years ago raised this issue: he stressed the importance of the relief community developing a strategy soon.

Fred Kirschstein of Foster Parents Plan raised a cautionary note. He said that we must be careful not to turn off the charitable impulse of the public and that we should remember that most PVOs started out as "ambulance chasers." Instead, he thinks that PVOs should be more hooked into the community. Foster Parents Plan, for example, suggests that callers offering help contact their local churches.

Donald Turner (Southern Baptist Convention) said that we need to keep people motivated. We really do not know why people choose to contribute and by dwelling on the negative and telling people what not to donate, we may turn people off to donating at all. Sometimes PVOs need to accept inappropriate aid in order to get needed donations.

Fred Cole (OFDA) mentioned that some organizations, including Church World Service and the Salvation Army, are organized to handle contributions-in-kind. Dwight Vogt (Food for the Hungry) said that his organization accepts in-kind contributions, but that it does not send anything overseas unless a country director requests it. Otherwise, items are given to the Arizona Food Bank. Mr. Vogt said that Food for the Hungry finds this system works well.

Beryl Levinger (CARE) wanted the conference participants to know of a good idea the Vermont Service Corps has instituted. The Corps keeps a roster of people who volunteer to help in disasters and then screens and trains them. The PVOs then have a group of pre-selected volunteers, a "Kelly Girls for Relief," as it were. Ms. Levinger thinks that this idea could be strengthened and extended to other states.

C. Payne Lucas concluded this session by mentioning the success of the Band Aid/Live Aid fund-raising concerts. He suggested that perhaps concerts and videos might be the most effective fund-raising and educational methods of the future.

#### On-Ground Coordination

Discussion Leader: Julia V. Taft, OFDA Director

This segment started with a discussion of airport coordination and logistics problems and experiences. Martin Perret reported that after the 1972 earthquake in Nicaragua, airport operations deteriorated to the point that the Red Cross virtually raced Nicaraguan government officials to

reach incoming planes and claim the arriving goods. After the Guatemalan earthquake of 1976, Mr. Perret continued, a Red Cross shipment of green tents was commandeered on the grounds that only the Guatemalan military was legislated to use green-colored tents.

Discussion turned to the issue of inappropriate relief supplies and their potential for disrupting, if not hindering, relief efforts. Although usually well-intentioned, spontaneous donations can often have a deleterious effect on all aspects of a post-disaster mobilization. The Colombians are still sorting through the high volume of pharmaceuticals which flooded the country after the eruption of the Ruiz Volcano. Dr. Eugene Grubbs, Interchurch Medical Assistance, expressed surprise at the negative experiences. His organization has never had problems with commercial donors, who usually do not send anything without consulting Interchurch Medical first.

Sheppie Abramowitz, State Department Refugee Programs, said that people frequently consign goods to the U.S. Embassy in a free-handed fashion. There is a point, she warned, at which the Embassy will refuse to take on the responsibility and necessary paperwork for ushering things through Customs. Ms. Abramowitz recommended using sources other than the U.S. government for moving goods through local Customs. She recollected one relief effort in Southeast Asia in which a representative of an international organization was stationed at the airport, facilitating Customs clearance of incoming shipments for the donor community.

#### Providing Emergency Shelter: Can We Reduce Vulnerability?

Discussion Leader: Rob Robinson; INTERTECT

Rob Robinson of INTERTECT, a company which specializes in providing technical services to private and governmental relief agencies in the event of disasters, began by saying that every disaster requires a different approach. INTERTECT almost always plans for long-term solutions; any emergency program it gets involved in is viewed as a first step. INTERTECT also prefers slow-moving projects because these can better focus on people's coping mechanisms.

A common problem at the beginning of an emergency is the arrival of materials before needs are known. The wrong kind of emergency shelter may be provided (tents rather than plastic sheeting, for example) or a donor might provide materials people do not know how to use.

Richard Carr (WVRO) cautioned against generalizing about housing needs. Rob Robinson agreed that there were definitely times when emergency shelter is appropriate, but emphasized that there should be a needs assessment before rushing into a housing program.

Julia Taft (OFDA) pointed out, however, that the problem for OFDA is that its legislation precludes it from long-term development. She asked if some sort of transitional program, such as a loan project, could be developed. Don Rogers of Catholic Relief Services suggested that after PVOs do assessments, they can submit to OFDA the portion to which it can respond. OFDA should realize, however, that since PVOs are in for long-term projects, perhaps OFDA could help them find the appropriate U.S. agency for the longer-term funding.

Rob Robinson then suggested thinking of many of these housing projects as preparedness or mitigation activities. Tim Knight (OFDA) said that OFDA offers flexibility as well as tents and plastic sheeting, and that OFDA's money should be used as a prod for development.

Edward Reed of the American Friends Service Committee said that an important element of a good housing project is ensuring community involvement. Beryl Levinger (CARE) then pointed out that the lines between disaster relief on the one hand, and rehabilitation and development on the other, are blurred. She added that the hallmarks of a good disaster response -- community participation, rational planning, and evaluation -- are the same as for a successful development project.

#### Water, Health, and Sanitation: Cost-Effective Intervention

Discussion Leader: Phil Roark, Water and Sanitation for Health Project

Using the recent African experience as a frame of reference, Mr. Roark introduced the topic of water resources as a long-term development issue. Over the past year, assistance in the form of water supply and sanitation projects presented decision-makers with the dilemma of either providing immediate emergency assistance to the needy or taking a more measured look at the problem as a long-term development issue. Mr. Roark personally subscribes to the latter approach. Wells can be dug in a short time but their life span in developing countries is usually limited to a few years. The reasons for this -- problems associated with the installation, maintenance, and operation of the physical structure, the question of payment for access to water, the role of women -- are key development matters. It makes little sense to provide the infrastructure for a water system, noted Mr. Roark, when the resources to maintain sustained water services do not exist. Thus, careful consideration of all these problems slows the entire project down and this can be frustrating in an emergency.

Drought, Mr. Roark pointed out, usually presents indicators which, if monitored, can give advance notice of an impending food shortage. Preparations can be made to mobilize and pre-position equipment. PVOs in the field are in the best place to spot these indicators and are also knowledgeable about available resources. The donor community needs to look at water supply and sanitation as development issues, as opposed to merely providing for immediate needs.

How does OFDA meet the PVOs' needs, asked Mr. Roark; this precipitated a discussion of the need for unity among the PVOs, OFDA, and other A.I.D. offices. C. Payne Lucas (Africare) acknowledged the importance of OFDA money and admonished OFDA for refusing some African projects in which the emergency phase overlapped with recovery. Tim Knight, OFDA Assistant Director for Africa, stressed that although the Office's mandate is narrow, OFDA has greater flexibility than other entities within A.I.D. In addition, he encouraged PVOs to work through the USAID Missions because OFDA can do nothing without Mission approval. However, once approval is gained in the field, Mr. Lucas emphasized, OFDA should maintain a strong supportive posture in Washington. A permanent disaster exists in the Sahel, Mr. Lucas continued, and the situation requires a different, more integrated and flexible strategy than that used in Mexico, for example. Mr. Lucas called for cohesion among the PVOs, OFDA, and the A.I.D. Africa Bureau and, furthermore, he made an appeal to get rid of the adversarial climate within the agency.

Affirming the link between relief and recovery, Mrs. Taft observed that OFDA learned a lot this past year. Mr. Knight pursued this, saying that the Africa Supplemental forced OFDA to consider projects dealing with relief, rehabilitation, and recovery. On the other hand, some of the proposals coming in to OFDA lacked detail and/or tried to address two or three of these elements simultaneously. The result was that lines often got blurred.

#### Logistics and Infrastructure

Discussion Leader: Timothy Knight, OFDA Africa Division Director

Tim Knight, Director of the Africa and Europe Division at OFDA, started the discussion by noting that OFDA bought over 200 trucks in fiscal year 85, spent 53% of the Africa supplemental funds on logistics, paid for the construction of the ferry at Gao in Mali, and was involved in other logistical projects. OFDA cannot afford to just walk away from these projects; other problems include how OFDA can save its assets and how it watches over its investment.

Richard Carr (World Vision) suggested that we either look at whatever is appropriate to further the recovery effort in Africa or we move the assets to another region. He also suggested that a PVO logistical cooperative be formed. This latter idea would require a lot of money and the U.S. Government might have to consider co-financing such an operation, for example, with the EEC. But, he pointed out, if PVOs on the ground develop a disaster response capability, the U.S. Government might not have to get involved so frequently. Tim Knight commented that OFDA funding should be seed money, not one-shot money.

Beryl Levinger (CARE) brought out that it was important to look at exactly what the assets of the donor community in Africa are. It is facile to mention just the number of trucks. Instead, we should remember

that there are other, very important, assets, including a community infrastructure -- wherever there has been a project there are now trained people who could become monitors or provide ongoing surveillance -- and marketing and consumer cooperatives.

David Guyer (SCF) said that Save the Children Federation has country plans for each country it is involved in. He feels that conferences such as these are very useful and that the donor community should continue to grapple with the issues discussed this day. Tim Knight added that everybody's work must begin to complement each other's, particularly in the African context. The various actors need to exchange information while the subject is still fresh in everyone's mind; OFDA, for example, could use a list of where each of the PVOs is involved and in what sectors each PVO has expertise.

One critical problem Lutheran World Relief (LWR) had faced, recounted Robert Busche, was the inordinate amount of time it took A.I.D. to approve its cross-border (Ethiopia) feeding program. Lutheran World Relief officials spent one year being sent from office to office in A.I.D.; no office had the authority to approve such a program nor did anyone seem to know who did. Furthermore, Dr. Busche continued, when early warning systems indicated serious food shortages in Africa as early as 1982 and 1983, LWR, CRS, CARE, and other PVOs requested food and assistance from A.I.D., yet the U.S. Government did not begin to respond adequately until the situation had deteriorated into a major disaster. Dr. Busche concluded by suggesting that A.I.D. conduct a real, careful evaluation of what happened over the last four years; he added that A.I.D. should do some soul-searching and figure out how to run such a relief operation better.

Tim Knight countered by noting that each participant in the relief operation has its own unique perspective and, therefore, soul-searching should be done by all. Mr. Knight mentioned how surprised he was by how long it took PVOs to develop serious proposals when they had known months in advance that OFDA was going to receive a supplemental appropriation. OFDA had to go to New York, and beat on doors, and practically beg for proposals. Later, some PVOs submitted proposals only a few paragraphs long for million-dollar projects.

Thomas Neu said that InterAction was working on many of the above problems and has set up meetings to discuss lessons learned. He also noted that InterAction was born with the African crisis and does not yet know what its role will be without that focus.

#### Innovative Financing of Relief Assistance

Discussion Leader: Carole Siegel, OFDA Fiscal Officer

Carole Siegel noted that the Africa supplemental funds were obligated by the March 31 deadline imposed by Congress and that OFDA is back to its

basic \$25 million budget, although this amount has been decreased by the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act. In addition to having less money, OFDA is affected by the reduction of other agency funds available for borrowing. OFDA therefore needs to evaluate how it can accomplish its objectives with reduced funds.

OFDA will have to draw on innovative ideas to provide emergency assistance. In order to determine a basis for an emergency program, as well as what additional OFDA assistance would be required, the Office must have better knowledge of what U.S. Government and PVO resources are available in a given country. Ms. Siegel described a creative financing endeavor used to stretch funds for a food shortage in Ghana. Paul Russell, an OFDA contractor, was able to use P.L. 480 food to generate funds for internal transport of emergency food for free distribution. These are the kinds of solutions OFDA will need to rely on more frequently.

This past year saw problems with grants and contracts, particularly in overhead costs and backdating, offered Ms. Siegel. Don Rogers of Catholic Relief Services elaborated on this subject, using the example of specific tonnage being funded at different rates in successive grant amendments. In addition, while some projects were scheduled to begin in October or November, the grants were not processed until February or March. There seemed to be no record actually tracking the grant back to its submission to OFDA. Mr. Rogers suggested that perhaps verbal approval could have been granted to allow the activity to at least get started while the approval process played itself out. Ms. Siegel informed the group that, as a result of a new computerized system, grantees would be hearing from OFDA with more regularity.

### Training

Discussion Leader: Denise Decker, OFDA Training Officer

Denise Decker opened this section by calling attention to the materials on training contained in the folder given to conference participants. These documents include a list of OFDA's training materials and aids, an article from Frontlines (A.I.D.'s monthly newspaper), and a brochure on the disaster management correspondence courses offered by the University of Wisconsin-Extension Program.

In the 1970s, explained Denise Decker, OFDA's training strategy entailed identifying disaster management training programs for host government disaster officials and funding their attendance. A significant shift occurred in the 1980s as the Office abandoned its largely ad hoc approach to training and began taking a hard look at policy questions and OFDA's role as a conduit for disaster-related information. OFDA currently favors localizing training programs to provide an opportunity for in-country team building. While in-country training seems to work best, she continued, OFDA also supports U.S.-based training in some cases.

Ms. Decker emphasized that OFDA plans to concentrate on three particular aspects of its program: evaluating training efforts -- this is an area in which the PVOs could help OFDA -- and focussing the training on disaster management, specifically assessment training, and linking such training to disaster types.

OFDA has provided training to over 600 people in the last three years and has developed a training resource contact list. To encourage discussion, Ms. Decker asked the group what concerns PVOs had, what they thought training priorities should be, and what expertise PVOs already had in training.

Marsha McKay noted that Partners of the Americas was sponsoring several upcoming workshops on hazardous materials management, disaster assessments, and other subjects. Partners views such training as a good mechanism to recruit people in the field and a tool for expanding the Partners organization. Julia Taft pointed out that OFDA funds the Partners preparedness program. Several people expressed an interest in receiving a list of the seminars and workshops Partners was sponsoring.

William Walsh said that Project Hope sponsors programs in sanitation. An idea which intrigues him is to develop a training module for host country people allowing for "training of the trainers." Besides sanitation and health, materials management could be another training module. Project Hope, for example, frequently has found supplies local people did not know existed in some warehouses.

Moira Hart of UNICEF mentioned that the U.N. Disaster Relief Organization (UNDRO) recently issued a report of a December 1985 meeting on what interest there was in emergency management training. She added that the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin, is currently training 50 people in Nairobi. Another training exercise is scheduled for the fall of 1986 in Costa Rica and she highly recommends it. Ms. Hart added that UNICEF is in the early stages of planning training for mothers and children involved in conflict situations.

Paul Krumpke and Denise Decker reiterated the value of the University of Wisconsin correspondence courses in various aspects of disaster and camp management. They said that many of the courses will be available next year; the cost averages \$50 per course and the student receives a certificate upon completion. Julia Taft said that OFDA would make sure that the PVOs receive relevant information as the courses became available.

Martin Perret then informed the group of some of the Red Cross training initiatives. First, the ANRC is offering a course designed to instruct managers how to put together a cadre of specialists on short notice. Second, in conjunction with the Canadian Red Cross, the ANRC is sponsoring a disaster management course. For the future, the ANRC is developing an earthquake preparedness course that will be open to non-Red Cross people and, for September 1986, the League of Red Cross Societies and UNDRO are considering a course on the Sahel.

David Guyer said that Save the Children now plans to add a disaster relief module to its general training course. He then asked what exactly the role of UNDRO is in the disaster relief field. Julia Taft explained that one of UNDRO's major problems -- which also afflicts OFDA -- is that it has no field or operational staff. The question facing the donor community is what should the role of UNDRO be. Fred Cole (OFDA) gave a little history of UNDRO: in the late 1960s, the need for an international disaster relief body was recognized and UNDRO was then established in 1971. Unfortunately, UNDRO has been plagued with management problems which has led the U.S. and other donors to be suspicious of the U.N. agency. UNDRO has therefore suffered from a lack of credibility, sometimes unfairly, according to Mr. Cole. One of UNDRO's good points is that it can pull together information of what all the donors are doing. Furthermore, it could play an important role in preparedness.

Dr. Eugene Grubbs (Interchurch Medical Assistance) then asked what training OFDA provided in firefighting and airport safety. Ollie Davidson responded that OFDA provides training in both these fields. High-rise fires in major cities are a growing problem in the developing world. But, besides fighting various kinds of fires, OFDA has found that firefighters are often the first-responders in many disasters. Finally, Mr. Davidson pointed out, with the increasing prevalence of industrial and chemical accidents, the disaster relief community should explore the need for training in prevention and response to those types of disasters. Perhaps PVOs could get support for such programs from corporate donors involved in those industries.

#### Follow-Up and Conclusion

Discussion Leader: Julia V. Taft, OFDA Director

Julia Taft began this session by distributing a list of countries by vulnerability to disasters since 1964. She also explained that OFDA writes profiles of selected vulnerable countries and requires some U.S. Missions to prepare disaster relief plans.

Ray Dionne of OFDA's Asia and Pacific Division discussed OFDA's relationship with the host country. He pointed out that OFDA is somewhat constrained because it is supposed to work through the U.S. Mission; OFDA does not contact host country officials directly. He noted that any information PVOs can provide is very useful and asked if PVOs write planning papers for those countries in which they work.

Mrs. Taft requested the PVO representatives indicate the countries on OFDA's vulnerability list in which they have plans. She said that OFDA is currently in the process of identifying its target countries.

Fred Kirschsein (Foster Parents Plan) asked for clarification on the link between a PVO's long-term development plans and OFDA's disaster planning. Mrs. Taft answered with an example: suppose a PVO's housing project were in a seismic zone, OFDA could provide a training module on seismic-resistant housing.

Julia Taft then summarized the day's conference. The main points were:

- PVO field staffs should keep in contact with USAID Missions.
- The area of water and sanitation particularly lends itself to cofinancing schemes between OFDA and other A.I.D. offices or international organizations.
- OFDA and the PVOs need to decide how the logistical assets funded by the Africa Supplemental can best be used to help in the development process.
- OFDA will ensure that PVOs get copies of A.I.D.'s Lessons Learned from last year's Africa crisis; InterAction, in turn, will share the PVO community's Lessons Learned with OFDA.
- OFDA and PVOs should also exchange information on stockpiles to improve donor coordination.
- OFDA will forward information to the PVOs on the University of Wisconsin courses as it becomes available.
- PVOs will forward to OFDA any country strategies they have developed.

Finally, it was agreed that the best kind of disaster assistance is that which can lead to development and increased self-reliance.

Thirteenth Annual OFDA/PVO Conference  
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