

The local church and its engagement with disasters

Drawn from twelve case studies from around the world



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Introduction

Churches are called to reach out to the community, 'proclaiming and demonstrating the gospel', as stated in the Micah Declaration. This is true at all times but particularly so when communities are in crisis. There is a need to demonstrate the love of Christ in practical ways and to offer spiritual support to those traumatised by a disaster event. Churches are present in those hurting communities – with local knowledge, buildings, people and the motivation to respond – but often lack the necessary skills and resources to meet all the needs arising in an emergency.

NGOs also seek to mitigate human suffering and often possess the skills and resources to respond to disasters. Many are mandated specifically to respond to disaster situations. But they may lack local knowledge, personnel relationships, longevity of presence and premises – the very things that churches can provide.

Partnership between Christian NGOs and local churches in the aftermath of a disaster is an obvious solution, bringing together their respective strengths and capacities. However, experience suggests that relationships between NGOs and local churches are sometimes difficult. At best, there can be problems in communication and expectations. At worst, there may be long-term damage to the life and witness of the church.

The purpose of this paper is to help the church to see a little more clearly the strengths and abilities it possesses in the face of disasters, and to help NGOs work more sensitively and productively with the church in disaster contexts.

Niche areas for local churches are described, showing the positive role that churches can play in a crisis, as deduced from 12 case studies from three continents. These deal with pre- and post-disaster interventions and with those involving conflict, not just natural disasters. It is written recognising that church leaders carry many responsibilities, and need to balance any engagement in disasters with the other areas of the life of the church.

The second section is written to help Christian NGO practitioners to develop relationships with local churches in an appropriate and productive way. A set of principles is put forward, as a first step in developing clear guidance for staff working with local church congregations and their leaders. These principles may also be useful to staff of the relief and development arm of church denominations, or diocesan development departments.

It is our hope and prayer that awareness of these niches and principles may lead to more effective partnerships between Christian NGOs and local Churches, both before and after a disaster event. The niche areas may help churches to discover new areas of ministry and make new contributions to integral mission.

Methodology

Tearfund produced a paper in 2007 which analysed the role of the local church in disaster response. Material was drawn from interviews with 35 of its staff. Eight distinctive roles or niche areas were identified. They were based on an assessment of the local church's strengths and weaknesses as viewed by these practitioners.

During 2007 and 2008, Tearfund conducted research on 12 cases where an NGO and one or more local churches had worked in partnership to prepare for, or respond to, a disaster. There were examples of conflict resolution as well as rapid-onset (eg tsunami) and slow-onset (eg drought) natural disasters. Andrew Bulmer, former head of Tearfund's Asia Region, led this research. This study (2008) had two main objectives:

- To validate the eight niche areas with additional stories of how local churches have responded to disasters in different locations around the world. Tearfund staff suggested the projects. Some projects were visited in person while, in other cases, the information was gathered by interviews with Tearfund staff, personnel of national NGOs and church leaders. Project documents, proposals, monitoring reports and evaluations were also reviewed. The 12 selected projects were based in: Latin America (2), Africa (5) and Asia (5).
- To suggest some principles to guide Christian agencies as they seek to best support and empower the local church in its response, based on lessons from the case studies.

Outcomes

- Eight **niche areas** for churches working in disaster response.
- Eight **principles of engagement** for NGOs wanting to work with local churches.
- A listing of six **supporting activities** which an NGO can provide in working with the local church.
- Twelve **case studies**, each demonstrating the niche areas and principles in action. (These case studies are compiled into a separate volume.)

Glossary of abbreviations used

NNGO – National Non-Governmental Organisation

INGO – International Non-Governmental Organisation

CNGO – Coalition of Non-Governmental Organisations

R and D – Relief and Development

IDPs – Internally Displaced People

NGHA – Non-Governmental Humanitarian Agencies

DCC, NEICORD, EFFICOR, AMEXTRA – Commonly used shortened versions of NGO names

1 Niche areas for the local church¹

Churches are found in many areas where there are natural or man-made disasters. In this context, 'church' is taken to mean local congregations meeting in a disaster area and the district and national denominational structures to which many of them belong. Some disasters strike suddenly; when this happens, the context in which a local church functions changes dramatically. It has strengths and resources which can be used to great effect to respond to the increased levels of suffering around it.

Those strengths and resources, identified from the case studies, are listed and explained below, with cross-references in the boxes to the relevant case studies in Appendix C.

The local church can be:

1.1 A facilitator of community action

The local church is a group that is able to organise itself and has the potential to organise the wider community. In many communities, especially in rural sub-Saharan Africa, the church has the ability to call the community together to discuss disaster-related issues and to stimulate preparatory or responsive action. The local church, through its relationships in the community, its credibility and respected status and its experience of bringing people together, can play a very strong role in community facilitation and organisation. This ability of the church can be relevant not only to rapid-onset disasters, but also to the creeping, slow-moving disasters of drought and related famine.

- **The churches in Puno, Peru**, along with the community, set about building miles of channels to drain away excess water and prevent the erosion of their land. CASE STUDY 2
- **The Anglican Church in Ruaha, Tanzania** organised their community to carry out a Community Managed Targeting and Distribution (CMTD) programme of relief materials so that the poorest received assistance. CASE STUDY 6
- **The Baptist churches in Assam, India**, which lie along the banks of the Brahmaputra River, became the base from which the community began a preparedness and mitigation programme. CASE STUDY 10
- **The Baptist and Presbyterian churches in Manipur, NE India** and their pastors were ultimately the only people with sufficient authority to be able to mobilise the wider community for peace. CASE STUDY 11

1.2 A connector with the wider world

The local church often has natural links with the wider world. It may be in touch with a district co-ordinating body, such as a diocesan office, through which it may have access to and contact with NGOs and INGOs. It will also be recognised by, and often have contact with, local government – although this may not always be the case. It can act as an introduction agency and gate-keeper between the NGOs, INGOs and the local community. The church can also pass information through its networks and structures to the national level and the wider church.

¹ These classifications are taken from *The role of the local church in disaster risk reduction*, Tulo Raistrick (2006)

- **The churches in Marsabit, Kenya** were able to spread information relating to the drought situation to the local authorities. CASE STUDY 3
- **The Anglican Church in Ruaha, Tanzania**, through its diocesan connections, accessed food aid that other institutions in the community could not. CASE STUDY 6
- **The Bombay Group of Churches, India** were able to rally support from a network of friends within the country, as well as internationally, in support of their response to assist the victims of the earthquake. CASE STUDY 8
- **The Catholic Church in Tamil Nadu, India** called for and chaired meetings of the NGO community as well as an inter-faith gathering of religious leaders in the wake of the tsunami. It also accessed resources through the global network of Catholic agencies. CASE STUDY 9

1.3 An advocate on behalf of the poor and marginalised

An important role that the church can play in disaster response is that of advocate on behalf of the poor and marginalised. In many communities, church leaders carry a degree of respect and influence, giving weight to their advocacy. An additional strength comes from the church's wider networks, enabling it to carry out advocacy at a number of levels. Also, the local church may be in a position to ensure that the most vulnerable in the community are indeed being reached – for example, by commenting on the content of a beneficiary list in comparison with the criteria for receiving aid.

- **The churches in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe** successfully lobbied the United Nations envoy who came to learn more about the situation where people had lost their homes in the government's clean up of the city's slums. CASE STUDY 5
- **The Catholic Church in Tamil Nadu, India** brought thousands of protesters onto the streets, precipitating the resignation of the Collector of the district, because of the government's poor response to the tsunami. CASE STUDY 9
- **The church in Marsabit, Kenya** successfully argued that some entries in a beneficiaries' list did not meet the criteria, and that other deserving names had been omitted. CASE STUDY 3

1.4 A community peacemaker

The church, in many communities, naturally sees its role as one of reconciliation and peacemaking. In complex emergencies it can have a role in preventing future outbreaks of violence by helping people to address issues of resentment, forgiveness, exclusion and alienation. It can enable the appropriate resolution of disputes at a local level, before they escalate onto a regional level, by setting up and running disputes commissions.

In natural disasters the same principles can apply, with the church playing a role in challenging favouritism and competition over scarce resources. Justice, impartiality and forgiveness are important principles in such contexts and the church is in a position to offer these.

- **Local churches in Marsabit, Kenya** established peacemaking forums to prevent future outbreaks of violence between two pastoral communities over grazing rights and scarce water sources. CASE STUDY 3
- **The Baptist and Presbyterian churches in Manipur, NE India** were led by people who commanded enough respect to overcome the deep-seated anger that had gripped both sides of the conflict. The pastors challenged their communities with Christian values to stop the fighting. CASE STUDY 11

1.5 A provider of relational care and support

One of the local church's greatest strengths is the importance it gives to relationships. This makes it well-placed to provide relational support. This can be through prayer, pastoral care and hospitality, acknowledging and caring for people's inner hurts and grief. The local church can play an important role in helping to make situations more humane, reducing the clinical harshness of many relief responses. Prayer is also a key contribution, both for those who have suffered in the disaster, and in support for aid workers experiencing high levels of stress and trauma.

- **The churches in Tabas, Mexico** whose leaders were trusted and had a deep knowledge of their communities, were able to offer prayerful and emotional support to the victims of the floods. CASE STUDY 1
- **The churches in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe** held city-wide prayer meetings attended by an estimated 2,000 people in support of the thousands of families who had been displaced by the government's slum clearance programme. CASE STUDY 5
- **The Pentecostal Mission in Port Blair, Andaman Islands** listened, prayed and cared for those in the camp where they were also serving food to more than 500 people a day. CASE STUDY 12
- **The Catholic Church in Tamil Nadu, India**, in the wake of the tsunami, was the focus of both short-term responses to the bereaved, as well as longer-term counselling of survivors. CASE STUDY 9

1.6 An influencer and shaper of values

The underlying causes of people's vulnerability, identified through disaster risk assessment, are often connected to the issues of cultural values and beliefs. The local church is well placed to address these issues. It has experience of wrestling with values, behaviour and differing worldviews, and of seeing transformation in these areas.

Biblical preaching is an integral part of that struggle. In many communities, people look to the church to provide a moral lead. In other communities, where the church is more marginalised, its stance can be prophetic, politely challenging widely-held views when safe to do so.

The local church can also play an important role in challenging a fatalistic mind-set which can significantly hinder both disaster preparedness and disaster response work in communities. It is used to having a vision of the future and a hope in God in working towards it. The church is built on optimism, and should not share the fatalism which may pervade the wider community.

- **The churches in Puno, Peru** placed an emphasis on the participation of women in their preparedness and mitigation projects. This was in a society where women were not expected to take such a lead. CASE STUDY 2
- **The Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Makamba, Burundi** shaped values by successfully promoting both a new crop – soya – and persuading people to eat a nutritious porridge. CASE STUDY 4
- **The Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Soroti, Uganda**, through the Church Community Mobilisation Process, made people in the community more aware of their responsibilities to the poor so that when IDPs arrived, they were responsive to the needs of these people. CASE STUDY 7
- **The Baptist churches in Assam, NE India**, through NEICORD, challenged the fatalistic mindset of the communities whose land was flooded every year by the river and the state of dependency arising from repeated relief handouts. CASE STUDY 10
- **The Baptist and Presbyterian churches in Manipur, NE India** started a peace initiative which challenged both communities to forgive the wrongs committed against each other. CASE STUDY 11

1.7 A provider of resources

The local church has assets and resources which it can put at the disposal of disaster response teams. People are a key resource and can be mobilised into a willing body of volunteers, motivated by love and compassion, and trained with skills appropriate to the situation. Buildings are also valuable assets which can shelter displaced people or be used to stock relief materials, while church bells can form part of an early warning system.

As congregations meet regularly, messages can be communicated to a significant number of people. Information can be instructive in emergencies, or more educational when preventative measures are required. The local pastor can enhance the information with a spiritual message, making it more likely to be well-received and used. However, expectations of NGOs and INGOs need to be realistic in this area. The church cannot become a vehicle for communicating large volumes of highly specialist or technical information. Its resources and assets also have inherent constraints and limitations.

- **The churches in Marsabit, Kenya** passed on messages about the drought situation to government offices. CASE STUDY 3
- **The Pentecostal Church in Makamba, Burundi** made 20 hectares of church land available for growing seed so that the pre-mix porridge could be made available on the market. CASE STUDY 4
- **The Bombay Group of Churches working in Gujarat, India** offered 70 volunteers to work with EFICOR over a three-month period, distributing relief in the aftermath of the earthquake. CASE STUDY 8
- **The Pentecostal Mission Church in Port Blair, Andaman Islands** provided volunteers to feed up to 500 displaced people daily in a relief camp for one month, following the tsunami. CASE STUDY 12

1.8 An immediate responder to sudden-onset disasters

The local church is always there when a sudden-onset disaster strikes. So it can help the local community immediately a disaster happens. This is not a role the local church chooses for itself. Instead, it is a role which events impose upon it. In such situations, everyone is moved to immediate action. However, it is notable that the most successful responses that NGOs can have with local churches are based on a relationship of trust that has been built up over time before the event.

It is therefore important to invest in these relationships as a matter of course. They will yield fruit when quick decisions need to be taken under stress. Where churches are located in high-risk areas, working on simple preparedness plans is a good way to forge those relationships.

Some disasters are slow-onset, particularly drought, with people suffering in a chronic way over many months. Again, the church may be able to help, through sharing its resources among members, or perhaps through catalysing initiatives such as grain banks before drought arrives.

- **The churches in Tabasa, Mexico** were affected by floods. There was an immediate response to work with, care for and pray with other members of the church, as well as with neighbours in the community who had suffered similar losses. CASE STUDY 1
- **The Churches Together in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe** gave shelter on church land to displaced slum-dwellers and used their own vehicles to transport people to hospital. CASE STUDY 5
- **The Pentecostal Assemblies of God Church in Soroti, Uganda** took IDPs into their homes when they arrived in the community. CASE STUDY 7
- **The Catholic churches in Tamil Nadu, India** responded immediately to the devastation after the tsunami, rescuing people, tending the injured, consoling relatives of victims and burying the dead. CASE STUDY 9

2 Principles of engagement with the local church

2.1 We will seek to empower the local church to fulfil its biblical mandate to respond with compassion to those who are suffering

We are committed to work in genuine partnership, serving one another and the community. We are committed to building the capacity of local churches. We will not use local churches simply to fulfill our targets and objectives. We will avoid using our resources to intimidate or tempt the local church into hasty action by virtue of the urgency of the need. We will not burden the local churches with responsibilities that they are not able to carry.

2.2 We will build on the strengths of the local church

The church has a local presence and often a respected position in the community, with established relationships with those inside and outside the church. It has knowledge of the community, including its complex social and political networks. It is a source of consolation, prayer and celebration. The church can mobilise volunteers and make other resources available for disaster response. It can shape the values of the community and will remain after the NGO presence has ended. We will be committed to developing these strengths, complementing them with the distinctive characteristics of the NGO.

2.3 We will make time to understand the local church and its context

Each pastor and local congregation is different, with a distinct set of capacities and resources to offer. Each denomination is different in the way leadership functions and decisions are made. We will encourage the church to be open about its expectations, hopes and fears in working with us. We will recognise the risks facing church members where Christians are a minority in the community, and avoid increasing those risks. We will be mindful of the constraints facing the local church. Its administrative and financial capacities are geared to church activities and not to disaster management. The church is made up of volunteers who themselves may have been affected by the disaster. It may have other agendas and priorities. We will seek to identify and build upon a shared set of biblical values.

2.4 We will support efforts to build the unity of churches in their response to disaster

While retaining our right to choose our working partners, we will be sensitive to existing relationships between local churches/denominations and ensure that our actions promote harmony, rather than increasing tensions. We will endeavour not to discriminate against any church or create a perception of partisanship in the area of operation.

2.5 We will build relationships with churches and be transparent about our objectives

Where possible, we will gather knowledge of local churches and denominational structures in disaster-prone areas before disaster strikes. This knowledge will then be used to identify partner churches and implement a speedy response under disaster conditions. We will be transparent about our priorities, objectives and agenda. We will strive for relationships based on trust, openness and accountability. We will be realistic about the scale of potential partnerships. We will be mindful that this is a partnership of different parts of the body of Christ in serving the vulnerable. We will seek God's guidance in our planning and root our discussions and decisions in prayer.

2.6 We will be accountable to the churches with whom we work and to the beneficiaries we serve

We will seek to provide a high standard of relief response, which is consistent with internationally-recognised humanitarian standards. Beneficiary selection procedures should be impartial, based upon need, not upon religious affiliation or ethnic background. We will maximise beneficiary participation in the design and implementation of projects. We will be transparent in all things, including accountability for the financial resources of which we are stewards. We will endeavour to match the type of intervention with the need facing those in distress and the capacity of the local church to deliver.

2.7 We will consider the long-term implications of the planned interventions upon the church

We will be open with the local churches about the likely duration of our engagement with them and talk about our exit from the beginning. We are committed to transferring skills to the local church, in a way that will increase its capacity to respond to future emergencies. We will carry out a planned and agreed withdrawal, leaving a more empowered church and community in place.

2.8 We will co-ordinate with other providers of assistance

In order to avoid burdening the church with multiple donors and partners in times of crisis, we will seek to co-ordinate our efforts with those of other donor agencies. This should ultimately lead to wider coverage and reduction of duplication, competition or neglect. We will seek also to make linkages with government plans and resources, where the church is viewed favourably by the government.

3 Support activities for NGOs

3.1 Promoting an integral mission worldview

Those Christian NGOs who mainly partner with evangelical churches have a role to play in encouraging them to think beyond their spiritual mandate and to engage with the community to address physical and material needs, in particular those associated with disasters.

- The PAG Diocese in Soroti sensitised the local church to the needs of the community through its Church and Community Mobilisation Process (CCMP). CASE STUDY 7
- NEICORD did likewise in Assam with the Baptist churches. CASE STUDY 10

3.2 Providing complementary sector expertise

NGOs are created to address specific problems. They possess expertise in various fields, be it medical, logistical, shelter or water supply. In times of crisis, these skills can complement and enhance the niche activities of the local church.

- A medical team was part of the DCC that flew to Port Blair in the wake of the tsunami. They held clinics in the compound alongside members of the Pentecostal Mission, which was running a feeding camp for 500 internally displaced people. CASE STUDY 12
- In Manipur NEICORD brought in people skilled in peacemaking and reconciliation techniques to assist the pastors of the communities in conflict. CASE STUDY 11

3.3 Offering training inputs

Equipping either pastors or members of the local church with skills that can be easily learnt is one of the key niche activities of an NGO. Volunteers need to be adequately equipped in this way, as this makes best use of what the local church has to offer, as well as building its capacity for the future.

- In Makamba, Tearfund trained church workers to run a community-based nutrition programme. CASE STUDY 4
- The Secretariat for the Churches in Bulawayo organised advocacy training for pastors before the UN representative visited the city. CASE STUDY 5

3.4 Accessing and managing larger resources

NGOs do have connections with external donors that may not be available to the local church. NGOs also have skills in managing and accounting for external grants. An NGO can therefore enable churches to carry out front-line activities while it manages the resources and accountability to donors.

- The Anglican Diocese in Ruaha managed all the funds. The local church managed the distribution of food. CASE STUDY 6
- Likewise, AMEXTRA in Tabasa accessed and managed DFID funds, enabling the churches to serve victims of the flooding. CASE STUDY 1

3.5 Promoting good practice

Churches are motivated by compassion, but may not have knowledge or understanding of international standards of good practice in relief operations. NGOs can help the church to become more aware of these standards and to move closer towards reaching them.

- The Salvation Army in Tamil Nadu worked with the basic christian communities to ensure that relief goods were distributed to the most needy people in the community, amid pressure that all should receive assistance. CASE STUDY 9
- It was important for EFICOR to de-link humanitarian aid and the spiritual concern that the volunteers had for the victims of the earthquake in Gujarat, so as to avoid accusations of proselytism when people are highly vulnerable. EFICOR now has a manual for orientating church volunteers in these and other aspects of relief work. CASE STUDY 8

3.6 Creating links for local churches beyond their established contacts

Some evangelical churches tend to operate within known circles and are uneasy about reaching out to work with other denominations, faiths or civic bodies. For an effective response to a disaster, co-operation with a wider group of people is essential.

- In Marsabit, Tearfund not only encouraged pastors from different denominations to work together, but also enabled them to nominate representatives to join the government-sponsored District Peace Committees. CASE STUDY 3
- In Puno, Shalom opened up opportunities for learning and exchange for the mountain communities by getting churches to meet one another, which had not been done before. CASE STUDY 2

Appendix A **Integral mission**

Integral mission has been defined by the Micah Network as: 'The proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life. And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world we betray the word of God which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the word of God we have nothing to bring to the world. Justice and justification by faith, worship and political action, the spiritual and the material, personal change and structural change belong together. As in the life of Jesus, being, doing and saying are at the heart of our integral task.'

Appendix B **The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief (1994)**

1 The humanitarian imperative comes first

The right to receive humanitarian assistance, and to offer it, is a fundamental humanitarian principle that should be enjoyed by all citizens of all countries. As members of the international community, we recognise our obligation to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed. Hence the need for unimpeded access to affected populations is of fundamental importance in exercising that responsibility. The prime motivation of our response to disaster is to alleviate human suffering among those least able to withstand the stress caused by disaster. When we give humanitarian aid it is not a partisan or political act and should not be viewed as such.

2 Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone

Wherever possible we will base the provision of relief aid upon a thorough assessment of the needs of the disaster victims and the local capacities already in place to meet those needs. Across our work we will reflect considerations of proportionality. Human suffering must be alleviated whenever it is found. Life is as precious in one part of a country as another. Thus, our provision of aid will reflect the degree of suffering it seeks to alleviate. In implementing this approach, we recognise the crucial role played by women in disaster-prone communities and will ensure that this role is supported, not diminished, by our aid programmes. The implementation of such a universal, impartial and independent policy can only be effective if both we and our partners have access to the necessary resources to provide for equitable relief, and have equal access to all disaster victims.

3 Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint

Humanitarian aid will be given according to the need of individuals, families and communities. Notwithstanding the right of NGHAs to espouse particular political or religious opinions, we affirm that assistance will not be dependent on the adherence of the recipients to those opinions. We will not tie the promise, delivery or distribution of assistance to the embracing or acceptance of a particular political or religious creed.

4 We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy

NGHAs act independently of governments. We therefore formulate our own policies and implementation strategies and do not seek to implement the policy of any government, except in so far as it coincides with our own independent policy. We will never knowingly – or through negligence – allow ourselves, or our employees, to be used to gather information of a political, military or economically sensitive nature for governments or other bodies that may serve purposes other than those which are strictly humanitarian, nor will we act as instruments of foreign policy of donor governments. We will use the assistance we receive to respond to needs, and this assistance should not be driven by the need to dispose of donor commodity surpluses, nor by the political interest of any particular donor. We value and promote the voluntary giving of labour and finances by concerned individuals to support our work and recognise the independence of action promoted by such voluntary motivation. In order to protect our independence we will seek to avoid dependence upon a single funding source.

5 We shall respect culture and custom

We will endeavour to respect the culture, structures and customs of the communities and countries we are working in.

6 We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities

All people and communities – even in a disaster – possess capacities as well as vulnerabilities. Where possible, we will strengthen these capacities by employing local staff, purchasing local materials and trading with local companies. Where possible, we will work through local NGHAs as partners in planning and implementation and co-operate with local government structures where appropriate. We will place a high priority on the proper coordination of our emergency responses. This is best done within the countries concerned by those most directly involved in the relief operations, and should include representatives of the relevant UN bodies.

7 Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid

Disaster response assistance should never be imposed upon the beneficiaries. Effective relief and lasting rehabilitation can best be achieved where the intended beneficiaries are involved in the design, management and implementation of the assistance programme. We will strive to achieve full community participation in our relief and rehabilitation programmes.

8 Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs

All relief actions affect the prospects for long-term development, either in a positive or a negative fashion. Recognising this, we will strive to implement relief programmes that actively reduce the beneficiaries' vulnerability to future disasters and help create sustainable lifestyles. We will pay particular attention to environmental concerns in the design and management of relief programmes. We will also endeavour to minimise the negative impact of humanitarian assistance, seeking to avoid long-term beneficiary dependence upon external aid.

9 We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources

We often act as an institutional link in the partnership between those who wish to assist and those who need assistance during disasters. We therefore hold ourselves accountable to both constituencies. All our dealings with donors and beneficiaries shall reflect an attitude of openness and transparency. We recognise the need to report on our activities, both from a financial perspective and the perspective of effectiveness. We recognise the obligation to ensure appropriate monitoring of aid distributions and to carry out regular assessments of the impact of disaster assistance. We will also seek to report, in an open fashion, upon the impact of our work, and the factors limiting or enhancing that impact. Our programmes will be based upon high standards of professionalism and expertise in order to minimise the wasting of valuable resources.

10 In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects

Respect for the disaster victim as an equal partner in action should never be lost. In our public information we shall portray an objective image of the disaster situation where the capacities and aspirations of disaster victims are highlighted, and not just their vulnerabilities and fears. While we will co-operate with the media in order to enhance public response, we will not allow external or internal demands for publicity to take precedence over the principle of maximising overall relief assistance. We will avoid competing with other disaster response agencies for media coverage in situations where such coverage may be to the detriment of the service provided to the beneficiaries or to the security of our staff or the beneficiaries.

Appendix C Local church case studies, 1–6

No	Place	Location	Disaster	Niche	Agencies	Complementary and distinctive roles	
						Agency	Local church
1	Latin America	Mexico Tabasa	Floods	2, 5, 8	NNGO/ AMEXTRA	Co-ordinating local churches' relief responses.	Working with the NGO to ensure that relief supplies were delivered fairly.
2	Latin America	Peru Puno	Erosion Mud-slides	1, 2, 6	NNGO/ Shalom	Assisting churches and communities in disaster preparedness and mitigation initiatives.	Working with the NGO to mobilise communities to think and act for the longer-term interest.
3	Africa	Kenya Marsabit	Drought	2, 4	INGO/ Tearfund	Raising awareness and accompanying churches to address macro-level issues facing their people.	Realising their mandate to engage with an inter-tribal peace building process.
4	Africa	Burundi Makamba	Post-conflict	1, 2, 6, 7	INGO/ Tearfund	Pioneering a community based nutrition programme.	Continuing the nutrition programme after the INGO left the country.
5	Africa	Zimbabwe Bulawayo	Slum clearance	2, 3, 5, 7	Secretariat /Network	Supporting a network of churches in response to government injustices.	Offering relief, shelter and follow-up of IDPs and advocating on their behalf.
6	Africa	Tanzania Ruaha	Drought	1, 2, 3, 7	Diocese R&D/ Anglican	Targeting the most vulnerable in a relief distribution programme.	Being the channel through which this targeting was done in their community.

Appendix C Local church case studies, 7–12

No	Place	Location	Disaster	Niche	Agencies	Complementary and distinctive roles	
						Agency	Local church
7	Africa	Uganda Soroti	Conflict	1, 5, 6, 7	Diocese R&D/ Pentecostal	Facilitating a Church and Community Mobilisation Process.	Stimulating the community to offer shelter and support to IDPs.
8	Asia	India Gujarat	Earthquake	2, 7	NNGO/ EFICOR	Co-ordinating volunteers sent by churches in a relief effort.	Recruiting, supporting and sending teams of volunteers to the disaster area.
9	Asia	India Tamil Nadu	Tsunami	1, 2, 3, 5, 8	NNGO/ Salvation Army	Providing specialised medical, relief and counselling services.	Organising the community to receive those services and supporting relatives immediately after the disaster.
10	Asia	India Assam	Flooding	1, 6, 7	NNGO/ NEICORD	Challenging the communities' relief mind-set	Being a base from which this challenge and the DRR perspective were launched.
11	Asia	India Manipur	Conflict	1, 2, 4, 6	NNGO/ NEICORD	Mobilising a peace initiative from outside the locality.	Mobilising the peace process among its own communities that were in conflict.
12	Asia	India Port Blair	Tsunami	5, 7	CNGO/ DCC	Co-ordinating a long-distance relief and rehabilitation intervention.	Being a channel by which this intervention reached the IDPs.



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