

Assessing the impact of an evaluation:

The 1995–96 multi-donor Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda

Background

The 1995–96 Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, entitled *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience*, was published on 12 March 1996. This unprecedented, system-wide, internationally undertaken evaluation, initiated in late 1994 by the development wing of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Danida), took 14 months to complete (barely 2 more than originally planned) and cost a budgeted US\$ 1.4 million. The overall objective of this huge undertaking – over the period involving some 50 researchers – was to draw lessons from the gruesome Rwanda experience relevant for future complex emergencies as well as for current operations in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region. Applicable lessons to be learnt by actor-organizations and stakeholders of the international community deal with early warning and conflict management, the preparation and provision of emergency assistance, and the transition from relief to rehabilitation and development, all in response to the urgent need for improved effectiveness at all stages and levels in a threatening or unfolding complex disaster.

A summary of the content, findings and recommendations of the four main studies of the five volume, 600-page evaluation report was presented in the inaugural, single-feature issue of this newsletter, in May 1996 (no. 1/96, still available at request). A follow-up group had then been formed, the *Joint Evaluation Follow-up Monitoring and Facilitation Network* (JEFF), composed of representatives of the Evaluation's multi-headed Steering Committee (37 organizations and governments), the Management Group and the Evaluation teams.

The self-assumed task and sole purpose of this group, initiated and coordinated from Sida's Evaluation unit – Sida being one of the five lead agencies for the evaluation along with Danida (overall coordinator), Norwegian Norad, ODA/UK and USAID – was systematically to monitor the follow-up, learning and change process at various levels of the international community, and, in doing so, pro-actively help to ensure that recommendations were given proper consideration; and independently to report back, within a year after the publication of the evaluation report, to a reconvened Steering Committee. The ultimately compiled report of JEFF was presented by the group to the Steering

Committee in February this year in Copenhagen. At the specific request of the meeting, the report has now been updated to incorporate the results of additional Evaluation-related work in central international fora, and is now to be given wide circulation.

Methodology used and outline of report

The report, *The Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda: A Review of Follow-up and Impact Fifteen Months After Publication*, dated 12 June 1997, has been compiled by a Working Group within the JEFF network, with inputs and comments from other members. The report is based on information and reports submitted by members of JEFF and the Steering Committee, and on studies and other documentation relating to follow-up on the Joint Evaluation, to developments in the region, and to agency and inter-agency discussions.

The report contains a review of key events, from the publication of the report in March 1996 through mid-1997, having important implications for the recommendations of the Joint Evaluation, and providing a test of the extent to which the "lessons of 1994" have been absorbed by the international community.

A subsequent section presents the key points in follow-up actions taken by a number of reporting members of the Steering Committee. Key inter-agency fora within the UN system for consideration of the Joint Evaluation have been the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the ECOSOC Review Process. Reviews have been carried out, and changes have been introduced, in policies and practices in a number of areas. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), through its Task Force on Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation initiated in late 1995, has commissioned several studies that stem directly from

The Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda: A Review of Follow-up and Impact Fifteen Months After Publication, 12 June 1997

John Borton, John Eriksson, Claes Bennedich

Copies can be ordered free of charge from Sida (see bottom of page 4) or from ODI, London, Helen Awan

Fax (44) 171 393 1699, E-mail: h.awan@odi.org.uk

the Joint Evaluation and has drawn extensively from it in its work to develop recommended donor policies in relation to complex emergencies. The World Bank made substantial use of the Joint Evaluation in preparing a framework paper, issued in April 1997, on ways in which the Bank can be more responsive during and following complex emergencies.

Several national governments – notably Canada and Sweden – and their bilateral donor organizations have made extensive use of the Joint Evaluation, in reviewing and adapting not only their own policies, strategies and activities in the Great Lakes region, but also in acting to encourage modifications in policies and procedures of multilateral bodies and fora. Influenced by the Joint Evaluation has also been the important initiative by two NGO umbrella organizations – InterAction and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) – of establishing a joint project to develop technical standards for humanitarian agencies.

Findings

In a chapter of the report, “Analysis of Impact”, an attempt is made to quantify the impact of the Joint Evaluation fifteen months after its release. The basis for this exercise has been the Synthesis report, which contains 64 individual recommendations each addressed to different parts of the international community, including the Security Council, heads of UN agencies, donor organizations and NGOs. The recommendations were grouped in a matrix and each recommendation was accorded a “response status” category, indicating the degree and status of response, using a four-grade system.

The resulting overview offers cause for some satisfaction but also for disappointment and concern. Given a fairly generous definition of the categories, almost two-thirds of the recommendations are found to have had at least some positive outcome, i.e., induced some form of resolution or action. At the same time, out of seven recommendations categorized as having been ignored (i.e., not explicitly/formally raised and considered by the addressees), six belong to the groups “Foster Policy Coherence in the UN Security Council, Secretariat and General Assembly” and “Effective Prevention and Early Suppression of Genocide” and are addressed to these central bodies and entities. The report discusses possible reasons for this remarkable non-response.

Main areas of progress from the Joint Evaluation in terms of recommendations resulting in resolutions or actions, have, according to the report, been in the areas of strengthening the human rights machinery. Other progress areas have been the development of information systems in the Great Lakes region to facilitate the provision of early warning; efforts in the NGO community to improve performance through the development of standards and self-regulation mechanisms; and the commitment shown by donors, UN agencies and NGOs to improve accountability within the humanitarian aid system. Steps taken to improve coordination within the UN system have been modest and fall well short of the more ambitious proposals made in the Joint Evaluation.

The JEFF report concludes that 15 months after publication, the Joint Evaluation has had substantial impact. It has contributed to debates and policy formu-

lation in relation to the international community’s response to complex emergencies in general and in the Great Lakes region in particular. However, given the lack of discussion by the UN Security Council and the Secretariat of the recommendations in the two key areas of policy coherence and genocide suppression; given that “humanitarian assistance cannot substitute for political action”; and given the continuing inability of the international community to address the continuing tragedy in the region – not least in Burundi – the overall assessment is that decisive constraints remain within the international community’s system for preventing and responding to complex emergencies.

Recommendations

In the light of its analysis of the follow-up, JEFF presents three recommendations, discussed and adopted by the multi-donor Steering Committee earlier this year. During the past months, representatives of the Joint Evaluation and JEFF have worked to facilitate response especially to recommendations 1 and 3.

- 1 That the Secretary-General and the Security Council review and respond to the specific lessons from Rwanda as expressed in the Joint Evaluation’s recommendations designed to: (i) foster policy coherence in the UN Security Council, Secretariat and General Assembly; and (ii) provide effective prevention and early suppression of genocide.
- 2 That all organizations represented on the former Steering Committee review the adequacy of their current efforts in the Great Lakes region with regard to ensuring the prospects for future stability. This recommendation is borne out of a concern over the lack of progress in formulating a supportable and sustainable development strategy for the region.
- 3 A standing, independent capacity be established to monitor, analyse and report on progress within the international community in addressing the phenomenon of complex emergencies. The capacity would fill a significant gap in the international system.

Lessons learned

In several areas the Joint Evaluation has been, and still is, part of a process rather than a one-time event in itself. The Evaluation has often fed into rather than started new processes, and in doing so helped to sharpen or modify perceptions and arguments. Clearly, however, the Evaluation has also directly provided a number of issue and case studies, arguments and recommendations that have induced new initiatives and change.

To what extent have the specific lessons highlighted by the Joint Evaluation been learned at this point in time? The JEFF group has in its report attempted to answer that question. In addition, whatever the eventual impact of the Joint Evaluation, the mechanism of JEFF, in several ways as unique as the Joint Evaluation itself, has been a lesson learned. Monitoring follow-up on evaluations for later reporting on their impact is not common. JEFF has hopefully demonstrated the value of lending capacity to mechanisms designed for this purpose. JEFF’s experience also offers important lessons for the design of any future similar capacity. ■

Developmental relief?

– the issue of linking relief with development

The issue

Developmental relief, or linking relief with development, has for more than a decade been subject to debate within the international donor community that deals with disaster relief. The debate has its origins in the realization that humanitarian assistance provided in emergencies not seldom has had unintended negative effects. Disaster relief, in its conventional form, risks negatively to affect the long-term development process, by creating various forms of dependencies and by focusing on the symptoms of the disaster rather than its causes. There is also an awareness that relief efforts can fuel ongoing civil wars by providing material resources that can be used in the conflict.

A conceptual study of this issue, attempting to describe the state of knowledge and prevailing perceptions based on a review of past and current literature relevant to the subject, was commissioned by Sida's Evaluation unit last year. *Developmental Relief? – An Issues Paper and an Annotated Bibliography on Linking Relief with Development* (Sida Studies in Evaluation 96/3) is a review and analysis of an increasingly complex debate.

The report begins by presenting some relevant points of departure. The international donor community has provided considerable resources to ameliorate the sufferings of the victims of major natural disasters, such as the droughts in the Horn of Africa and in Southern Africa, and of the victims of man-made disasters such as the civil wars in Cambodia, Afghanistan, the former Yugoslavia and the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. Overall, the joint efforts of aid organizations have been a considerable success. Massive resources have been mobilized, an apparatus to deal with refugees exists, and the international donor community has developed methods to provide very large amounts of food and other resources in often highly complex and volatile situations. Disaster relief is also a form of aid which is rarely questioned. It is an expanding form of aid, partly as a result of growing needs (not least due to the escalating number of man-made disasters in the aftermath of the Cold War), partly as a result of the reasons given above.

Unintended negative effects

The international donor community, the report goes on to say, has built a multifaceted system to respond to disasters based on large-scale humanitarian interventions. This in itself is creating problems. The unintended negative effects of the international relief efforts are potentially of many kinds: refugee camps risk becoming permanent habitats for decades and are difficult to terminate even when the factors that caused people to flee have ceased. In Afghanistan there were at one point almost 10 million refugees kept in camps by the political factions that turned the war against the Soviet Union into a civil war. In some cases refugee

camps unintentionally become safe havens for those that triggered the disaster, as in the cases of Cambodia and Rwanda. Food aid in drought emergencies risks having a negative impact on the local food supply system, by creating expectations among the victims that the next drought will result in new supplies of food aid. This reduces their motivation to develop means for coping with the problem, for example by shifting to more drought-resistant crops. Food aid might also disrupt the local food production system by creating disincentives for the local communities to produce food as the market mechanism is disrupted. Assistance in man-made disasters such as civil wars may be used through various means by the fighting factions as a resource in the conflict, as in the case of Somalia.

The search for linkages – and new approaches

All of these factors have, the report notes, triggered a search for developmental relief – a term which denotes (a) avoidance of the negative effects mentioned above, and (b) integrating developmental aspects in the relief efforts. The first may be accomplished, for example, by providing food at market prices rather than free of charge in order not to distort future local supplies. The second might be accomplished, for example, by assisting local communities already in acute emergency to develop coping mechanisms, and to help themselves as much as possible rather than build dependencies on external resource flows.

Another reason for the search for methods in developmental relief is a changed perception of development and disasters. In the past, disasters were often seen as unfortunate and unexpected interruptions on an otherwise consistent development trajectory. Disaster relief was viewed as temporary assistance to help the suffering community or country to overcome the immediate emergency so that the development process could be resumed after an intermediary stage of rehabilitation and reconstruction. However, the disasters of the last decades have tended to become permanent features, and many societies are in a more or less chronic stage of disaster. Afghanistan is one example, the Horn of Africa another, and there are other areas of Africa that may also qualify. Hence, the perception of what is called the Relief – Reconstruction – Development Continuum,

This report is published in the series *Sida Studies in Evaluation*, a series parallel to *Sida Evaluations* and concerned with conceptual and methodological issues in the evaluation of aid and development cooperation.

Developmental Relief? – An Issues Paper and an Annotated Bibliography on Linking Relief with Development

Claes Lindahl

Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit

Sida Studies in Evaluation 96/3

that was the foundation of aid in the past, needs to be modified, both by introducing the developmental aspects in the relief stage, and by considering potential disaster vulnerability in the development efforts. Developmental relief has to do with a process of backward and forward linkages in that new perception and approach, rather than with a continuum.

The debate concerning *developmental relief*, or as it is more commonly known, *linking relief to development*, has led to a number of concrete steps in the donor community. Many bilateral and multilateral aid organizations have developed – or are in the process of developing – policies on the linkage aspects. A number of “best practices” have been worked out by these organizations, such as impact assessment of development in disaster relief efforts; focusing on community development and on building coping capacity at the local level; and enhancing participation by victims in relief efforts and decision making.

The developmental relief debate has also, the report goes on to say, taken another turn by focusing on more basic issues, by looking at the root causes of emergencies. This has raised profound questions concerning what has been labelled the *modernization paradigm* underlying much of the aid to developing countries from industrialized nations. While economic development and poverty alleviation is assumed to reduce the risk for both natural and man-made disasters, there is at the

same time the question of whether Western-style development cannot in fact, under certain circumstances, promote conflict, for example by widening gaps between rich and poor, by increasing competition for limited natural and other resources, and by creating expectations that cannot be fulfilled. At the extreme end are those critics of Western-style development who believe that the current mode of development is bound to lead to a global disaster as and when the limits of the Earth's resources are reached.

The challenge

The developmental relief debate has opened up a profound discussion on a number of fronts concerning the relationships between aid and development; between disaster relief and disasters; between development and disasters; and between disaster relief and conventional aid. The linkages between these four concepts, the author points out, are not as simple as sometimes envisaged. While the basis for much of development aid and disaster relief has been the assumption of positive relationships between these concepts, the experience has shown that sometimes the reverse relationship may occur. The challenge for the international donor community is to reduce the negatives and strengthen the positives. Efforts to meet this challenge are still at an early stage, and much work remains to be done. ■

Recent Sida Evaluations:

97/17 PAHAL Project, Rajasthan, India. Participatory Approach to Human and Land Resource Development.

P Bharati, M E S Flint, M K Shah, T F Shaxson
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment

97/18 AMS and Amu Technical Assistance Projects in the Russian Federation 1994-1996. AMS-the Swedish Labour Market Board, Amu - the Swedish State owned vocational training institute.

Susanne Oxenstierna, Gunnar Pihlgren
Department for Central and Eastern Europe

97/19 Mapping for Economic Development. Sida-supported satellite imagery and computerized cadastral support systems in the Philippines.

Karlis Goppers
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation

97/20 AMS and Amu Technical Assistance projects in Poland 1994-1995. AMS - the Swedish Labour Market Board, Amu - the Swedish State-owned vocational training institute.

Susanne Oxenstierna, Irene Lundberg, Henrik Huitfeldt
Department for Central and Eastern Europe

97/21 Unicef's Child Rights Programmes in Latin America.

Benno Glauser, Eva Lithman, Riccardo Lucchini
Department for Latin America

97/22 TANDEM Project with the FOLK DEVELOPMENT COLLEGES in Tanzania, 1990-1996.

Alan Rogers, Alan Chadwick and K Leni Oglesby
Department for Democracy and Social Development

97/23 Development Cooperation between Guinea-Bissau and Sweden. Macroeconomic development, structural reform and project performance.

Stefan Sjölund
Department for Africa



Sida Evaluations Newsletter is published by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit. The views and interpretations expressed in presented reports are those of the authors and should not be attributed to Sida. Comments and subscription enquiries may be addressed to the editor: Mr Claes Bennedich, Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, telephone: (+46) 8 698 5447, fax (+46) 8 698 5610, e-mail: claes.bennedich@sida.se
The Newsletter is also available on Internet; www.sida.se

Evaluation reports referred to in this newsletter may be ordered from:

Biståndsforum
Swedish International Development
Cooperation Agency (Sida)
S-105 25 Stockholm
Phone: (+46) 8 698 5722
Fax: (+46) 8 698 5638

June 1997

Sida Evaluations - 1997

- 97/11 Swedish Consultancy Trust Funds with the African Development Bank.**
Karlis Goppers, Sven Öhlund
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation
- 97/12 Programa de Vivienda Social de FUPROVI, Costa Rica.**
Lillemor Andersson-Brolin, Bauricio Silva
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation
- 97/13 Sida's Assistance to the Environment Protection Training and Research Institute, EPTRI, India.**
Bo Lundberg, Bo Carlsson, K P Nyati
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 97/14 Environment & Land Management Sector Activities, ELMS 1991-1995, Southern African Development Community, SADC.**
J Erikson, M Douglas, J Chileshe
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 97/15 Labour Construction Unit, LCU - Lesotho, 1977-1996.**
David Stiedl
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation
- 97/16 Sida's Support to the Start East Programme.**
Cecilia Karlstedt, Sven Hilding, Piotr Gryko
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 97/17 Sida's Cultural Support to Namibia, 1991-1996.**
Dorian Haarhoff
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 97/18 Sida-SAREC's Support to the International Centre for Theoretical Physics.**
Olle Edqvist, John S Nkoma
Department for Research Cooperation, SAREC
- 97/19 Sida Support to Dissemination Division at Instituto Nacional de Biodiversidad, INBio, Costa Rica.**
Bjorn Hansson
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 97/10 Swedens Support to Mayibuye Centre, University of Western Cape, South Africa.**
Inger A Heldal, Jenny Hoffmann
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 97/11 Sida's Support to the Centre for Science and Environment, SCE, India.**
Leif E Christoffersen, Nigel Cross, Rajeshwar Dayal
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 97/12 HESAWA, Health through Sanitation and Water. Sida-supported Programme in Tanzania.**
Jo Smet, Kathleen Shordt, Pauline Ikumi, Patrick Nginya
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 97/13 The Advancement of Librarianship in the Third World (ALP). A Core Programme of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).**
Leo Kenny
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 97/14 Natural Science Research in Zimbabwe. An Evaluation of SAREC support for research capacity building.**
Erik W Thulstrup, Daniel Jagner, Peter N Campbell
Department for Research Cooperation, SAREC
- 97/15 Sida Support to Dinageca in Mozambique.**
Sue Nichols, Clarissa Fourie, Margarita Mejias
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 97/16 Swedish Support to the Education Sector in Sri Lanka.**
Ulf Metzger, Tuija Stenbäck, Kusum Athukorala
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 97/17 PAHAL Project, Rajasthan, India. Participatory Approach to Human and Land Resource Development.**
P Bharati, M E S Flint, M K Shah, T F Shaxson
Department for Natural Resources and the Environment
- 97/18 AMS and Amu Technical Assistance Projects in the Russian Federation 1994-1996. AMS - the Swedish Labour Market Board, Amu - the Swedish State owned vocational training institute.**
Susanne Oxenstierna, Gunnar Pihlgren
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 97/19 Mapping for Economic Development. Sida-supported satellite imagery and computerized cadastral support systems in the Philippines.**
Karlis Goppers
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation
- 97/20 AMS and Amu Technical Assistance projects in Poland 1994-1995. AMS - the Swedish Labour Market Board, Amu - the Swedish State owned vocational training institute.**
Sussanne Oxenstierna, Irene Lundberg, Henrik Huitfeldt
Department for Central and Eastern Europe
- 97/21 Unicef's Child Rights Programmes in Latin America.**
Benno Glauser, Eva Lithman, Riccardo Lucchini
Department for Latin America
- 97/22 TANDEM Project with the FOLK DEVELOPMENT COLLEGES in Tanzania, 1990-1996.**
Alan Rogers, Alan Chadwick and K Leni Oglesby
Department for Democracy and Social Development
- 97/23 Development Cooperation between Guinea-Bissau and Sweden. Macroeconomic development, structural reform and project performance.**
Stefan Sjölund
Department for Africa
- 97/24 Swedish Support to Tanzania's Power Section.**
Elon Dahlström, Melinda Cuellar, Hans Peterson
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation
- 97/25 Swedish Contribution to the Konkan Railway Construction Project in India.**
Karlis Goppers
Department for Infrastructure and Economic Cooperation
- 97/26 Servicio Universitario Mundial (WUS) en América Latina. Programa de becas para refugiados.**
Lennart Peck, Carlos M Vilas
Department for Latin America
- 97/27 The Swedish Committee for Afghanistan. A joint EC - Sida evaluation of the health and education sector programmes.**
Jean Pierre Luxen, Kajsa Pehrsson, Kjell Öström
Department for Cooperation with Non-Governmental Organisations and Humanitarian Assistance
- 97/28 Swedish Support for Gender Equality in Chile.**
Mary Ellsberg, Anki Sundelin
Department for Latin America
- 97/29 Programa de Cooperación Sueca para Apoyo a la Igualdad de Género en Chile.**
Mary Ellsberg, Anki Sundelin
Department for Latin America