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Room for Improvement: The Management and Support of Relief and Development Workers

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Room for Improvement:
The Management and Support of Relief and Development Workers

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Rebecca Macnair

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Preface

The 1990s have brought new challenges to the international aid community. The end of the Cold War did not signal the beginnings of a more peaceful global environment, but it did open a Pandora's box of options for intervention in unstable situations. The amount of money allocated to relief budgets has risen steadily in the past five years; the military has become an important new actor on the humanitarian stage; the number and size of NGOs engaged in relief and development activities continues to grow rapidly. At least for those involved in relief, the aid business is booming.

The rapid expansion of the "relief industry" has brought with it new pressures - political and financial, to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of aid. It has also brought demands for improved accountability to beneficiaries and to donors. People want to be sure that aid is doing more good than harm in the Rwandas and Yugoslavias of this world.

Responding to the challenge of regulation, in 1994 the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief was launched. Those involved in drafting the Code were aware that a key to improving standards and maintaining humanitarian principles was to promote a new culture of professionalism within the relief community. While the origins of the Code lie in relief, many of the questions and issues it defines are generic to development interventions as well.

The Code of Conduct lays out grand concepts and principles, but what about the people on the frontline, who are actually doing the work? It is self-evident that to do a good job you need good people. But just who are we talking about? What skills, abilities and training are needed? Where do these 'good' people come from, and how are they to be managed, supported and sustained?

It is clear, but not often stated, that the demands of the job require an unusual combination of human abilities. Yet the issue of human resources somehow never quite makes it on to the policy agenda: staffing is left to personnel officers who are under ever greater pressure to find the perfect development/relief/aid worker for a person specification which no normal person could hope to match.

The findings and recommendations of the study reported in this paper place human resource management centre-stage in the debate about the quality and effectiveness of aid programmes. Commissioned by four agencies centrally involved in expatriate recruitment and the Overseas Development Administration, it shows that

weaknesses remain endemic in the recruitment and management of expatriate staff.

A professional approach, drawing on the best current practice is critical. The report's two key recommendations are for a code of good practice in the recruitment and management of staff and the creation of a professional body for relief and development. This would complement and strengthen the Code of Conduct referred to above. Further work on the implementation of the recommendations is expected to be carried out by an Inter-Agency Coordinator, who will be managed by an expanded steering group of agencies. Importantly, these proposals were supported in principle by representatives of 28 agencies who attended a workshop early in August 1995 to debate the then draft recommendations.

This report may well raise more questions than answers. Why expatriates? is the obvious first question. It was felt by the steering group that the study represents a first step towards creating a professional approach to recruitment and management, and that we need to get our own house in order. There is a need to challenge the assumptions which have informed recruitment and management of aid projects in previous decades. Promoting debate internationally to inform future strategies of staff selection and training, and to define mechanisms for regulating professional standards of personnel and employers is essential. Feedback on this paper and the issues it raises is therefore particularly welcome.

Jo Macrae
Relief and Rehabilitation Network

Executive Summary

The report describes the findings and recommendations resulting from an investigation into the support and management provided to workers in relief and development. Methods included a survey of 200 returned workers and discussions with employing agencies.

The two main recommendations of the report are:

- to reach general agreement for a code of practice for human resources, endorsed by the agencies;

- to set up a professional body or association, the responsibilities of which would include implementation of the code of practice.

It was proposed that the above would be initiated and coordinated by an Inter-Agency Coordinator.

The weaknesses exposed by the research into the management of relief and development programmes are inherent in existing organisational structures. These weaknesses can result in poor performance by staff, so diminishing the quality of programmes.

The recruitment of competent field staff is of crucial importance in determining the capacity of an agency to run its programmes effectively. However, the survey responses implied that recruitment processes can be haphazard.

Survey results

The survey found that:

- selection processes are often casual;

- there are considerable unmet needs in terms of pre-departure preparation;

- problems and dissatisfaction with management in-country is a major complaint;

- poor security was identified as a principal stressor for expatriate workers. Other major sources of stress among workers in the field were: organisational issues; workload; communications; witnessing suffering and expatriate colleagues;

- time and space need to be set aside for workers on their return to discuss the emotional impact of an assignment;

- short term contracts can be problematic for field workers.

Poor recruitment procedures, the lack of staff development, and of normal (in UK terms) employer responsibilities for their staff, have resulted in difficulties for both field workers and their employing agencies. It can be argued that these poor practices have also resulted in difficulties for intended beneficiaries of aid programmes.

Conclusions

In recent years there has been a dramatic increase in the scope and workload of humanitarian agencies. The growing importance of humanitarian operations brings with it new pressures for greater accountability to the public, to institutional donors and to the intended beneficiaries, and a corresponding need for improved professional standards. Agencies must also recognise that this increased professionalism cannot be achieved without competent and well-trained staff.

A code of practice for agencies in the management of, and support for their staff, would assist agencies in achieving this greater professionalism, and would complement the Code of Conduct.

Recognition of the need for a professional body can be seen as one of the features of a maturing profession, a rite of passage in the coming of age. Most other professions have already developed their own associations. In order to meet the challenges of the future, it is now time that agencies and individuals involved in relief and development evolve mechanisms to promote professionalism and good management practice.

Room for Improvement: The Management and Support of Relief and Development Workers

1. Introduction

Anxiety has been expressed about the quality of support provided for workers engaged in relief and development. The conditions for humanitarian workers have changed in the past five years. The wars in Somalia, Former Yugoslavia, Liberia and Angola have seen a huge increase in risk to the personal safety of the workers. Spending on relief over the same period has also increased dramatically, with no evidence of a future reversal of the trend. Greater international responsibility is being given to NGOs and other humanitarian organisations such as the Red Cross and the UN agencies to provide aid in these conflict situations.

A number of authorities working in the field have voiced concern about the professional standards of organisations and their need for accountability to beneficiaries as well as to donors. In 1994 the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies published a Code of Conduct for humanitarian organisations and invited NGOs and others to become signatories to the document (IFRC, 1994).

As a result of the changing conditions, it has been suggested that the skills and qualities needed by workers in the field have also become more complex. It has been argued that other skills are needed in addition to the basic technical skills. These include a much greater degree of political awareness, negotiation and facilitation skills and a broad understanding of the social, cultural and political context of their work (Slim, 1995).

This need for greater professionalism applies not only to individual workers but also to those agencies and organisations for whom they work. This implies a need for agencies to improve the quality of the management of their work and of their staff. It is no longer enough to have enthusiasm and goodwill.

The appointment of a consultant to examine the support and welfare needs was a result of a recognition of these factors. The terms of reference (Annex 2) included:

i. to look in detail at the systems and procedures of one agency, the British Red Cross.
ii. to recommend standards of good practice in the area of support and welfare for all agencies.
iii. to write terms of reference for an Inter-Agency Coordinator.

The research has focused on the processes and procedures used by agencies in dealing with their field workers. It has included recruitment issues, briefing and training, management issues and debriefing and psychological support. The research involved interviewing staff of many of the main agencies working in aid and development and returned and serving workers of the Red Cross. An extensive questionnaire was sent to more than five hundred returned field workers.

The report is divided into seven sections. Section 2 describes the methodology used and Section 3 gives a brief profile of the respondents to the questionnaire. Section 4 describes the questionnaire results and Section 5 gives the perspectives of the agencies. The main discussion of the findings of the research is contained in Section 6. In this section key issues are highlighted and discussion points raised.

The draft report was completed following the workshop for agencies held on 3 August. Section 7 includes the recommendations and conclusions reached by the participants following discussions at the workshop.

The project is supported by ODA, and supervised by four organisations, the British Red Cross, Save the Children Fund (UK), International Health Exchange and RedR (Registered Engineers for Disaster Relief).

2. Methodology

2.1 Introduction

The career of the worker, from first recruitment to their return home at the end of their assignment, has formed the basis of the research. Most workers are employed on short contracts for one specific job, and thus have quite clearly defined parameters in terms of beginning, middle and end. During their careers they may of course undertake a number of different contracts.

A number of different methodologies have been used in this study, both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative data came from discussion with interested parties such as agencies working in relief and development, and experts in their field, particularly psychologists, and interviews with returned workers, mainly from the Red Cross.

From these discussions, a structured questionnaire was developed and distributed to a large number of returned workers.

In addition, the author was able to look in detail at the procedures of one sending agency, the British Red Cross, which gave detailed insights into the problems for the agency in supporting their expatriate staff.

The main findings of the research were then discussed at a workshop on 3rd August 1995 (see list of participants in Annex 7). As the research into the support needs of expatriate workers was commissioned by a small group, of which only two participants represented operational agencies, it was considered important to get the support of the rest of the agency community and their ratification of the main recommendations. The findings of the draft report (sections 1 to 6) were presented to representatives of those agencies working in relief and development which employed expatriate workers in the field.

Presentations were made on the key issues and workshop discussions held to consider recommendations and ways forward. The workshop's views and opinions were taken into account in section 7 on conclusions and recommendations.

2.2 Agencies

A number of different aid and development agencies participated in the project, with different perspectives on support issues and information on agency practice coming from a range of staff members. A semi-structured interview schedule was drawn up, consisting of a list of topics of potential areas of concern. This was often provided in advance to allow the agency to suggest the most appropriate interlocutors. Notes were made at the time of interview, but were necessarily selective, both at the time of interview and when typing up notes.

The agencies differed in three main criteria; volunteer workers on small allowances versus relatively well paid staff; size of programme; and whether the agency manages the programmes or merely seconds workers to other employers. This latter has obvious implications for the agency's ability to support workers in the field.

2.3 Serving and returned Red Cross workers

A letter was sent to all serving Red Cross workers, with both the International Committee (ICRC) and with the Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), inviting comments on their support needs, and the difficulties they encounter during their missions. The same interview schedule/topic list as used with the agencies was enclosed. Approximately 100 letters were sent, though only eight replies were received. The reasons for the poor response is speculative, but may include the fact that delegates work long hours, and have great demands on their time. It is also likely that a request for information and ideas based on a relatively unstructured list of topics is more difficult to answer than a questionnaire with defined parameters. The time taken by the letter to reach the workers may also have been a factor.

About thirty workers with the Red Cross were interviewed on their return from

mission when they were in headquarters for a general debriefing. These interviews were conducted in private, and the delegates were assured of confidentiality. Extensive notes were taken at the time of interview, and relevant quotations were extracted and sorted. Again, the same schedule/topic list as for the agencies was used as a checklist and aide memoire for the delegate interviews.

2.4 Questionnaire

The material from the interviews with agencies and delegates was used to develop a structured questionnaire (Annex 1). The questionnaire, with covering letter and addressed return envelope was distributed to the expatriate staff of a number of agencies and members of two registers (IHE and RedR). Those participating are shown in Annex 3.

The main criteria for selection into the study was that the respondent should have returned from an assignment between 1st March 1994 and 28th February 1995. The respondent was asked in the covering letter to give details of their last completed assignment.

Agencies and registers were asked to provide a full list of all workers who fitted the criteria. No distinction was made between workers who had been involved in relief and those involved in development. Names were then checked against lists from other participating agencies, to avoid duplication. For practical reasons, those resident overseas were generally excluded, though not those on an assignment. Agencies with computerised databases generally distributed the questionnaires themselves.

The total number of questionnaires distributed was 533, and the analysis in this report is based on the first 200 valid replies. A further 15 replies were received during this time, but were excluded as they referred to the wrong period of return from assignment. The number of questionnaires included in the analysis was determined by setting a cut-off date for receipt of the forms. Annex 3 shows the response rate for each distributing agency. This response rate for agencies is not

always the same as the numbers for each agency in the analysis, since workers may have completed a later assignment for a different agency from the one that provided the name. The analysis is based on an overall response rate of 39%.

The differing response rates from the distributing agencies may in part be due to distribution taking place over a period of several weeks.

Validity of sample

There are considerable practical difficulties in getting a representative sample of aid workers, in very great part because no one knows how to define an aid worker. For the purposes of this paper however, an aid worker is one who has completed at least one assignment in relief or development.

It is recognised by the author that the respondents to this questionnaire are not necessarily representative of all British and Irish aid workers. The participation of Red Cross, SCF and OXFAM as well as ODA may have provided more older and experienced workers than a survey which included either more volunteers, or a larger number of small agencies, which often take less experienced staff. None of the Irish sending agencies participated in the survey of returned workers (although a number provided much helpful information), so most of the respondents were UK based.

Questionnaire design

In view of the poor response to the original letter to Red Cross Workers, the questionnaire was designed to encourage a maximum return rate, through the use of precoded responses. In addition the respondent was encouraged to expand on their answer when appropriate.

The decision to ask respondents for their names was to ensure that no duplicates were received. In the event, the majority of respondents did identify themselves, though a few preferred to remain anonymous. The results of the questionnaire

are found in sections 3 and 4.

Questionnaire analysis

The questionnaire was analysed using Epi Info, a public domain software package written and distributed by the Centres for Disease Control (CDC) Atlanta, Georgia and the Global Programme on AIDS, WHO. All precoded responses were computer analysed, and additional comments extracted separately. Quotes have been used to illustrate points in the text.

Percentages have been given throughout the text rather than raw data. Missing data and ambiguous responses have been excluded from the calculation of these percentages.

3. Profile of Respondents

This section aims to describe the main characteristics of the respondents, and discuss any constraints and limitations of the collected data.

3.1 Demographic characteristics

The characteristics of the sample of 200 are given briefly in Table 1. Of the respondents, 61% were male, and 53% of respondents described themselves as single. There was a median age of 38 years for the whole sample. Unsurprisingly, 55% of those over 38 years had partners, while only 38% of the younger age group had partners. There was a significant difference between the status of men and women, with 61% of men describing themselves as being married or cohabiting against only 23% of women. This did not seem to be accounted for by any significant age difference.

There was a multiplicity of different professional backgrounds. In summary 44%

had a health background, and 23% an engineering background, with the remaining 33% coming from very disparate professions. This may reflect the source of the sample, with the two non-operational organisations, IHE and RedR, contributing 22% of the respondents.

For comparison purposes, the professions of the final sample were compared with those of the 106 Red Cross workers to whom questionnaires were sent. This was the first list obtained, and hence no-one was rejected because of duplication. Of these Red Cross workers, 35% were health workers, compared with 44% in the sample, and only 8% were engineers, compared with 23% in the sample.

Just under a quarter of respondents (23%) had returned from their first overseas assignment. The median number of assignments undertaken was three, with a range of one to seventeen.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics

		Number	**%**
Age	25-34	70	35
	35-44	84	42
	45-54	35	18
	55+	9	5
Sex	Male	122	61
	Female	78	39
Marital Status	Single	106	53
	Other	94	47
Experience	First assignment	46	23
	Other		77
		155	

Type of Work	Emergency relief	114	57
	Other	86	43
Profession	Health	88	44
	Engineer	53	27
	Other	57	29
Agency	Red Cross	56	28
	SCF	34	17
	MSF	26	13
	OXFAM	24	12
	MERLIN	10	5
	Tear Fund	10	5
	ODA	10	5
	UN	8	4
	Other	21	11

3.2 Agency and type of work

Twenty six agencies were represented in the 200 responses, (including three separate Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)). A number of workers had 2-3 assignments over the relevant period, and did not necessarily reply for the expected agency. Annex 3 gives the distribution of agencies represented.

The majority of workers (57%) were employed in emergency relief, an unsurprising finding in view of the crisis in Rwanda, and the ongoing conflict in former Yugoslavia during the period of interest.

Table 2 gives a summary of the jobs held in the field. Only 36% had jobs in the classical health fields, despite 44% having a health background. A further 18% did some form of engineering, largely water and sanitation, compared with 23% with an engineering background. Overall, 24% of respondents had a clearly managerial role, although a further 6% also described themselves as `leader of a team', implying a degree of management responsibility.

Table 2
Job in Field

	Total Number = 200	**%**
Country Director	5	3
Deputy Director	5	3
Relief Coordinator	5	3
Medical/Health Coordinator	11	6
Other Coordinator	18	9
Doctor	18	9
Nurse	23	12
Other Health	18	9
Water/Sanitation Engineer	23	12
Other Engineer	13	7
Logistician	12	6
Other	49	25

In all, 46 countries or regions were mentioned, but 48% of respondents were involved in the Rwanda operation, either in Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi or Zaire. A further 12% had worked in former Yugoslavia. The countries and regions represented are shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Country of Posting

Country	Number	%
Rwanda/Burundi/Zaire	79	40
Tanzania	16	8
Somalia	5	3
Other East Africa	18	9
Other Africa	21	11
Former Yugoslavia	24	12
Other Eastern Europe	8	4
Asia	18	9
Middle East	8	4
Other	2	1

More than half of the respondents (65%) had been on relatively short assignments of less than 6 months, and only 20% had worked for longer than one year. The length of the assignments are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Length of Service

	Total Number = 196	%
0-4 weeks	32	16
5-8 weeks	22	11
9-13 weeks	31	16
13-26 weeks	43	22
27-39 weeks	17	8
40-52 weeks	11	7

More than 1 year	24	12
More than 2 years	8	4
More than 3 years	8	4

The Rwanda crisis will undoubtedly have affected the results, in that most agencies were overwhelmed by the sheer size of the emergency, and the unexpected speed at which it unfolded. The NGOs' systems were greatly challenged by the need to respond appropriately and in time. However, not all those who had worked in the area were there during the early phases of the emergency.

4. Questionnaire Results

This section presents data from the questionnaire sent to returned field workers. Quantitative results are presented, and quotes from the workers are included to give a flavour of workers' feelings about their experience. It is recognised that individual comments are not necessarily representative of the whole group, but are intended to highlight the kind of problems that may arise. On the whole, comments tended to focus on the negative, rather than the positive aspects of their postings, and this should also be borne in mind when reading this section.

These results will be discussed in a later section.

4.1 Recruitment

Respondents were asked about how they were recruited to their last assignment, and the form of the selection process. From the results of the questionnaire, agencies did not appear to make much use of formal advertising to fill their posts, with only 7% of the respondents having applied in response to an advertisement. This may partly reflect the nature of many of the jobs filled during the period of the survey, when speed of recruitment and departure were important.

Some agencies maintain lists of interested candidates, whilst others have registers of interviewed and prepared candidates, which would include previous employees.

In this survey, 49% of respondents had either been previous employees of the agency concerned, or were members of a register.

Respondents were asked to choose their preferred method of recruitment from a number of different options. Despite an appreciation of the difficulties for agencies in recruiting during emergencies, 67% felt that advertising either externally or to all current employees or those on the agency register (presumably including past employees) was the favoured method of recruiting. Only 10% stated a preference for a 'head hunting' approach. One comment was that there 'was still too much of the old boy net' when it came to getting jobs.

4.2 Selection

The selection process itself appears to have been fairly casual on the whole, with 32% describing the interview as an 'informal chat'. 85% felt, despite this, that they were well matched to the resulting job, although in retrospect fewer than half (44%) were entirely occupied by the job for which they were recruited.

Not all the workers appreciated the informality of the recruitment process. One commented that she failed to understand how the very informal process 'could have properly assessed me or my skills on that basis'. Another complained that despite being interviewed by three senior members of staff, none were able to answer her queries about the job.

One worker who felt she was overqualified for the job she went to do, reported that 'those in country, not part of the selection process, advised that I was overqualified. This, however, did not appear to be a concern... but was to me', and the resulting job was fairly unsatisfying. Another person reported a difficult transition as 'a midwife sent to do a social work job'.

4.3 Information available to candidates at recruitment

Respondents were asked how much information was available to enable them to

decide on the appropriateness of the job for them. Fewer than two thirds were given the responsibilities of the post, or details of the project or programme, and only 31% got a person specification. One worker was recruited through a register, and 'trusted the register to ensure a match (of skills). The agency provided no factual information'.

Most respondents (85%) felt that it was at least fairly important to have a good picture of the job they were going to do, if only 'to judge if they were suitable'.

Another respondent was very critical and felt that 'much more effort needs to be put into this area (provision of information) by the agencies, and an accurate job description, backed up by the latest sectoral sitrep, should be available for candidates. The job description should come from the field where possible'.

There was, however, an appreciation among many respondents that there were genuine difficulties in providing good quality information in a rapidly changing situation such as the Rwanda crisis. One respondent commented that detailed job descriptions 'could be a positive disadvantage, in that resentment could build up if you expect to be doing a specific job, and are then asked to do something else when you arrive because the situation has changed'. Another wrote that 'very little information is part of the joy of the job'.

4.4 Briefing and training

Predeparture briefing and training

Due to the difficulty of distinguishing between predeparture training and briefing, these two forms of preparation were combined in the questionnaire. Respondents were asked to indicate which aspects of preparation had been provided by their sending agency, and which they would have liked, if not provided. The results are shown in Table 5. A few respondents added that some of the training had been provided by a different organisation e.g. RedR from the sending agency.

Table 5
Briefing and Training

Type of briefing or training	**% receiving briefing and training**	**% not receiving briefing and training but would have liked to**
Country information	72	44
Programme information	68	30
Policy guidelines	57	37
Agency systems	51	40
Security information	48	46
Personal equipment list	46	34
Management structures	44	38
Accommodation details	40	36
Cultural information	34	41
Emergency response update	25	25
Logistics, planning, communication	23	32
Stress management/ coping strategies	21	27
Team working	17	22
Financial/budgeting	15	27
Technical updating	15	21
Staff management	9	26
Language training	9	28
First aid	8	19
Four Wheel Driving	5	17

Programme information was supplied to just over two thirds of the respondents, and 72% were briefed on the country situation. Just over half were informed of

agency systems and methods of working, and 57% were given policy guidelines.

Fewer than half of the sample received information on security, despite the fact that only 6% of the total reported no security problems during their posting. Almost half (46%) of those who did not have a security briefing would have liked one.

Comments on predeparture preparation ranged from 'insufficient, superficial', 'so cursory to have been a waste of the agency's money', 'a formal induction package should be mandatory' to those who said that there had been no time for any briefing or other preparation, 'everything was so quick, 24 hours or so to get myself sorted out before flying'.

Health briefing and predeparture medical examination

In the survey, 55% of the respondents had a medical examination prior to departure, and 61% received advice on health and self care in country. A higher proportion of those going on a first assignment (70% v 58%) were given a health briefing in the UK, but those who were not briefed in the UK were unlikely to get more information in-country.

In country briefing

For many of the workers, a further briefing was given in-country. The percentages of respondents reporting having received certain aspects of the briefing are given in Table 6. Only 9% reported having no briefing at all in-country, whilst the remainder received a variety of different inputs. The greatest effort went into introducing the new arrival to existing staff, though in practice this was done for less than three quarters of the respondents. Otherwise the chief inputs were country updates, access to reports and files and a security briefing.

Table 6
Briefing on Arrival in Country

	% reporting
Introduction to staff	73
Country update	65
Security	53
Reports/files	52
Organisational structures	48
Administrative procedures	45
Management systems	31
Office systems	29
Cultural/social awareness	25
Personal health	16
Other	8
None	9

Altogether 72% claimed to find the in-country briefing at least fairly useful. Altogether 53% of respondents felt that they had a good overview of the whole programme by the end of the briefing, and a further 24% understood at least their own part of the programme. However, more than 20% did not feel that they understood the programme well by the end of their in-country briefing.

The emergency relief workers were significantly less well briefed on arrival in-country than workers on other sorts of programme. The areas which were most badly covered in comparison with the other workers were management systems, organisational structures, administrative procedures and office systems, and also cultural and social issues.

Further comments made by the respondents on the questionnaire included 'no security procedures, no training on crossing borders with soldiers...no indication of cultural/social awareness regarding Rwandans', 'no briefing, just dropped in it. Very poor, but subsequently the situation has improved'. One experienced worker

commented that 'I have the experience to know what information I needed, and was happy to ask for it'.

Most (72%) felt that they had access to the agency's policy guidelines, though 10% doubted whether guidelines existed.

Handover from predecessor

Just over half the respondents went into new jobs, and did not have a predecessor. Of those who did have a predecessor, 33% did not have a handover. Of those who did have a handover, most found it useful, and in principle the great majority of workers were in favour of handovers. One person commented that 'I like to know what makes key individuals tick, and the dynamics of the various relationships'. Another stressed that 'it is essential to know why certain decisions were made'. Several respondents stressed the need for handovers to ensure smooth working and continuity with the local staff, particularly if there was a rapid turnover of expatriate staff.

One respondent reported having had a difficult handover, because 'the person was reluctant to handover, and it was like "pulling teeth"'. Another respondent who had worked in a development programme complained that no records were kept of the topics covered during the teaching sessions, and that only oral information was given during the handover.

4.5 Management and support in country

Management structures

Over one third (37%) considered management structures at their workplace to be unsatisfactory, and 15% were unclear about who their line manager was. One person commented that it 'took two months to find out who was my immediate superior'.

Just over half (54%) of the respondents were based in the same place as their line

managers, and greater geographical distances between manager and staff increased the problems for staff.

Whilst 68% of respondents felt that they got at least fairly satisfactory management support only 61% of respondents felt that their line manager had the appropriate skills and experience for their role.

The questions on management and support drew much comment from workers. Most comment was negative, and emphasised that poor management was a cause of distress and inefficiency. One manager was criticised thus: 'I felt that he lacked experience and was very unconfident, and covered up for this by aggressive behaviour'. Another commented that 'some of the managers were clearly inexperienced and overwhelmed by their role, negatively affecting the work. Other managers were appropriately skilled, but often over-stretched for their responsibilities'. One team leader was described as '25 years old with only one year's experience of development and none of emergencies, or team working... there was almost no back up and no presence of the Field Director... which led to too much doing, not planning or thinking'.

Continuity in programme direction was often a problem. Several respondents had three line managers in three months, one person commenting that they `all had different management styles and programme ideas'.

Management difficulties led to poor team working, with one respondent complaining of `poor team cohesion... work was mainly self-directed, with no basic protocols for the work'.

4.6 Stress and its prevention

One section of the questionnaire covered aspects of potential stressors. The questions were necessarily unspecific, but the results varied between respondent groups. The data was analysed by comparing groups of workers, divided by age, sex, experience, type of work and whether they had a management role.

Overall, the six most important factors contributing to stress in terms of the number of respondents mentioning each factor were identified as: organisational issues, security, workload, communications, witnessing suffering and expatriate colleagues. Table 7 shows the most important stress factors for the various groups, (i.e. when more than 40% of the group mentioned the stressor).

Table 7
Stress Factors for Different Groups of Workers

Managers		**Non Managers**	
Workload	47%	Organisation	46%
Organisation	42%	Security	44%
Communication	40%	Suffering	40%

Age less than 36 years		**Age greater than 35 years**	
Organisation	53%	Security	40%
Workload	47%		
Security	44%		
Communications	42%		
Expatriate colleagues	40%		
Transport	40%		
First Assignment		**Several Assignments**	
Communications	54%	Organisation	45%
Organisation	43%	Security	44%
		Workload	40%
Relief Work		**Other**	
Security	45%	Organisation	45%
Organisation	45%		
Workload	42%		
Suffering	41%		
Men		**Women**	
Security	43%	Organisation	54%
Workload	41%	Expatriate colleagues	44%
		Lack of privacy	41%
		Security	40%
		Communications	40%

Women were much more affected by organisational issues and their expatriate colleagues than men. They also found the lack of privacy difficult. Security and workload were more important to workers in relief than in other sorts of programme, as was, perhaps unsurprisingly, witnessing suffering. Managers found

their workload more stressful than the non-managers. The older workers identified fewer stressors.

One question asked was about the most difficult event or events encountered during the assignment. Some of the respondents had to deal with very difficult incidents; one person witnessed a rape; another sat through aerial bombing, and was 'threatened with guns and looted'. Several reported seeing local colleagues killed, or witnessing other deaths. Another person based in Rwanda found 'the whole issue of genocide difficult to deal with - the events of April and May (1994) cast an aura that was difficult to deal with emotionally'.

Many of the comments dealt with the more mundane aspects of working in aid and development programmes overseas; interpersonal problems were common, as were disputes between managers and the people they managed. 'If team members do not get on this causes major problems that spill over easily into the work we do'. This person went on to say 'prevention is better than cure. Briefing on this issue (team work) is important'.

One person stressed the need for field directors to be 'trained and capable of being supportive, and to have their own support systems'. One field director commented on the problems of loneliness of the job.

Several people spoke of the problems in dealing with their expatriate colleagues' difficulties. One respondent reported that 'one team member suffered mental problems due to fatigue, and had eventually to be removed'. Concern for local colleagues was also a reported stress factor, with one person during the Rwanda crisis finding the need to support 'local colleagues and families going through enormous emotional stress'.

Coping strategies

The main strategies used to reduce stress were talking about problems and socialising, and the great majority (86%) had someone to discuss problems with. Alcohol was a potential problem, with 24% admitted to drinking more than usual,

but only 2% admitted to using drugs of any kind.

Overall, there was a tendency to work very long hours. Half the respondents claimed to regularly work more than 60 hours a week, and 27% worked more than 70 hours a week. This was generally seen as satisfactory, comments being that 'there was little else to do', and 'that was what you had gone to do'. The group who worked the shortest hours (less than 40 hours per week) were least satisfied, with only half of them being satisfied with their hours, compared with 81% among those working longer hours.

Regular rest is recommended as important to avoid 'burn-out', but only 21% of respondents reported that there was an enforced policy of regular leave or time off. This was despite the majority (78%) claiming that a policy on leave and rest was in place. One respondent commented that 'HQ made me feel guilty for taking time off', and another recommended 'having and supporting a time off policy' to reduce stress. This was echoed by someone who looked back on the experience saying that 'in hindsight, more breaks and less work would have been more efficient, as we were all burnt out'.

4.7 Security

Respondents were asked about security problems during their postings. Only 6% of all respondents reported no problems, and 47% were either working directly in a war zone or in an area were there were conflict-related security problems. Reported security problems are shown in Annex 4.

Anxiety about their personal safety for some or most of the time was reported by 29% of the sample, while 35% said that they had knowingly taken risks at some point, although the latter was often qualified by comments relating to it being an acceptable degree of risk. Most worryingly, 14% had felt pressed to do something unsafe.

The main comments concerning safety related primarily to three areas. First, there were the difficulties of dealing with armed military, often drunk or under the

influence of drugs, or very young. Second, were problems associated with driving, often in the dark. Third, a number of respondents mentioned the dangers of evacuation, involving either refugees or other expatriate staff. One nurse working in former Yugoslavia found herself attending to victims of sniper fire, hence exposing herself to the same danger.

Some felt that their agency could have done more to improve security. One person complained that 'initially, unreliable transport and communications led to concerns for security'.

Security was identified as one of the principal stressors for expatriate workers. It appeared from the replies that security guidelines and planning for contingencies were not as good as they should have been. Only 52% said that security guidelines were adequate and enforced, and 12% reported no security guidelines at all. A further 16% were in situations where evacuation plans should have been in place. Several people commented on their need for interpersonal skills, and negotiating ability in insecure situations, one person stating that 'many times, one was only as safe as the ability to defuse a situation'. Another stressed the dangers posed by inexperienced workers, who sometimes failed to understand and observe security rules.

During the Rwanda crisis, security guidelines for many agencies advised no night time driving, yet many co-ordination meetings appeared to have been timed for the hours of darkness.

One person resigned early from a job (in former Yugoslavia), as he had asked for an undertaking that he would not be posted to an actual war zone, but on arrival in country, had found that his request had not been respected.

4.8 Performance review

Respondents were asked about review and evaluation of their work. Altogether 47% did not have a performance review either during or at the end of their assignment. Of those who did have one, 78% found it at least fairly useful.

Comments tended to reflect a desire for feedback, and disappointment when it did not take place. A number of people reported asking for a review, sometimes on several occasions, without necessarily ever receiving one.

Positive comments included 'I got good insight into how others viewed my performance', 'review was excellent, and helped to put some issues into perspective'. On the other hand, the negative perspective included such comments as 'no feedback at all after my report..the most unsatisfactory aspect of my assignment', 'I did not feel that my line manager was open, and did not have time to prepare'.

4.9 Accommodation and transport

Accommodation

Only 19% of respondents had separate accommodation, with the largest group (47%) living in shared houses and flats. Others lived in a variety of accommodation, including tents and hotels. The tents were almost entirely used by those who had worked in the Rwanda crisis. The majority (77%) were reasonably satisfied with the arrangements, though 26% felt that they had insufficient privacy. One person felt that agencies 'should accept and take seriously the principle of single people needing privacy'. Another complained of the 'strain of constant visitors and guests from HQ and other agencies'. Conversely, others commented on the 'unnecessarily high standard of living'. Tented accommodation was seen as a problem if the assignment was of some length, and one worker said 'we were housed in tents as a temporary measure... a decision to move to a house could have been made earlier'. Another worker complained of the tent being 'very cold, wet and noisy', and felt that the agency could have provided better quality tents.

Transport

The lack of or unequal access to transport for off duty purposes can cause tensions among team members. Over half of respondents (60%) reported that all expatriate staff had equal access to transport, although a further 9% were not allowed to use

the organisation's vehicle at all for private occasions. Overall, 23% were dissatisfied with the transport arrangements. The main complaints were lack of access, an example of a comment being 'there should be at least one vehicle for social and off duty time', and resentment of inequality, workers commenting that 'management seemed to have greater vehicle access than the "lower ranks"..they should have had more consideration', and 'certain members of team had vehicles, but field workers often had difficulty in obtaining a vehicle'.

4.10 Debriefing

The debriefing process normally starts with the hand-over to a replacement in country. For a number of respondents (38%), there was no replacement, which was found to be very unsatisfactory by the majority (78%) (Annex 5). Those who were replaced, whether by another expatriate or by a national of the country, were largely satisfied with the process of debriefing.

Formal debriefing in-country, prior to departure, only took place for 30% of the respondents. The great majority (71%) however, did receive a debriefing on return to the UK, and a third were debriefed in another country (Annex 6). A number of respondents had several debriefings. Place or places of debriefing did not appear to make much difference to levels of satisfaction with the process. Very few (9%) were not debriefed, and the majority (75%) of those not debriefed were unsatisfied.

Almost all the respondents thought that debriefing was very or fairly important. The main beneficiaries of the process were seen to be, in order of importance, the agency, the programme, future workers in the programme and the returned workers themselves. It was not felt that individual staff members in the agency headquarters should be the main beneficiary of debriefing information.

Personal or psychological debriefing

Most respondents (75%) reported that they had had the opportunity to discuss the emotional impact of their posting, although not all took advantage of the offer. Of those who did, 77% found it at least fairly helpful. In all, 87% thought that this

facility should be offered to all returning aid workers, rather than either a selected group, or only for those requesting it. Only one respondent thought that this form of personal debriefing was never necessary.

It was not often stated where or by whom this opportunity was provided, although some mentioned finding staff health personnel helpful. One person was able to talk to his parish priest.

4.11 Medical examination

Medical examination was offered to 62% of those returning from a posting, although only 45% took up the offer. There was little difference found between those returning to a country in Europe and those returning from Africa or Asia.

4.12 Terms and conditions

Most respondents (78%) reported clear and unambiguous terms and conditions of service. The majority (74%) felt that the financial benefits were 'about right', although 5% felt that they were over-generous and 21% felt that they were 'too little' or 'very poor'. One worker reported having been paid enough 'to pay bills, but not enough to have a break on return (from Zaire), and had to go back to work too soon'.

Most respondents were satisfied with the insurance arrangements, although 14% thought they were inadequate, and a further 3% said that there was no insurance cover. One person felt that 'permanent disability or death should be covered for more than £30,000', and another expressed anxiety that cover was inadequate for those with families.

Few agencies appear to provide access to an agency-supported pension scheme, and only 13% of the respondents reported that they contributed to such a scheme. A further 36% would like to contribute, provided that it was transferable between employers.

4.13 Returning home

Respondents were asked whether they had any problems with adjustment on return from an assignment. In all, 75% of the sample said that they had some difficulty readjusting on their return. The main difficulties were feelings of disorientation, reported by 33%, followed by problems with getting a job (24%). Other problems were reported, with both depression and lack of understanding from friends and family being mentioned (17%), and financial problems (15%). However, only 14% said that at the time of the survey they still had difficulty in readjusting.

Comments on readjustment included the difficulties of returning to 'less exciting work and normal life', a 'sense of loss, leaving friends and colleagues with whom I had become close', and one person reported feeling 'a loss of self esteem, and confidence at work, and poor reaction to criticism...much more short tempered'. Another worker mentioned the need to share experiences, but having no one there to talk to. One person wrote that 'I would have appreciated the opportunity to make contact with others in a similar posting'.

Career prospects and development.

Respondents were asked about their perception of career development and promotion opportunities in aid work. Nearly half (48%) were fairly pessimistic, and saw prospects as poor.

Half (50%) of the respondents would have liked to have a long-term contract with one agency, and most of the remainder would prefer short term posts with the same agency. Few (4%) wanted to change agency with each new job, although in practice the majority (61%) of those who had worked in the field before had worked for at least one other agency.

Many of the respondents were disappointed by the support from their recent employer on their return. One person commented that there is 'very little in-service training or ongoing support... short term contracts in aid work do not predispose one to continuing in this field of work'. Another said 'it is incredibly unsettling to

continually be thinking of what job you will be able to do next...agencies should realise that to gain skilled staff on a continuous basis they need to look at the future of their staffs' careers and in turn their programmes'. Others were more philosophical in recognising the difficulties inherent in a career in emergency work.

A number of workers had been seconded by their employers for a period of time, and their main job was based in the UK. This was particularly common among engineers.

4.14 Summary of experience

Respondents were asked to summarise their experience, in personal and professional terms. Personal satisfaction rated higher than professional satisfaction, with 64% of respondents being personally 'very satisfied' against only 52% finding it professionally a very satisfying experience. Those finding it a negative experience were 11% from a personal perspective and 14% in a professional capacity.

5. Agency Perspectives and Constraints

This section aims to identify the constraints faced by the agencies, elicited during informal discussions with a limited sample of interlocutors. A number of staff were interviewed during some agency visits, but at other agencies only one. The most usual person was a personnel officer, though there were also interviews with managers, staff health officers and trainers.

For ease of comparison, this section follows essentially the same format as the previous one.

5.1 Recruitment and selection of candidates

Permanent or short term contracts

The majority of agencies employ their field staff on short term contracts. Very few have staff employed on permanent contracts if they are principally workers in the field. Even those that do have some field staff on permanent contracts also recruit short term workers as well. This is partly for practical reasons, both in the context of emergencies and development work. In the early stages of an emergency, it is rarely possible for agencies to predict the demand for staff, and by their very nature, emergencies usually demand a fast response from international organisations. Even after the onset phase, there may be changing circumstances that are reflected in a changing programme, with a corresponding change in the need for particular skills.

Agencies that do employ some field staff on permanent or medium-term contracts have identified problems, particularly for those working in emergencies. They are employed in order that they can be rapidly deployed in emergencies, and to provide cover while short-term contract staff are identified. This policy has its advantages, in that staff are familiar with the agency's working practices and policies. Nevertheless, these posts can be very demanding, resulting in long periods overseas in difficult circumstances, with the nature of the job allowing little choice in the post or location. There may also be periods when the workers' services are not needed, which has financial implications for the agency. This policy has been considered by other agencies, but rejected by at least one partly because of the cost implications.

Recruitment methods

Agencies use a variety of methods to identify candidates for posts, whether for long- or short-term contracts, emergency relief or development programmes.

Many agencies, particularly the larger and better known, receive large numbers of speculative applications. One agency reported receiving over five hundred such enquiries each month. Many of these speculative applications are clearly unsuitable, but the agencies find that there are generally enough relevant applicants to be able to avoid the need for advertising, except for very specific skills or

unusual posts.

These applications are processed in a number of different ways. A number of agencies recognised that their methods were unsystematic.

Register of potential employees

Many agencies maintain some form of register of people identified as suitable for an overseas assignment. Some will have been former employees, others new to the organisation. Some organisations prefer to interview all register members in advance, though others merely keep applications until a need for staff arises.

A number of agencies have identified a conflict of interest between a duty to give some priority in employment to staff who have worked for them before, and issues of equal opportunities. In addition, there is the need to have an enlarging pool of potential employees.

Few of the agencies appear to be able to maintain their registers on fully computerised databases.

Skills required

Most agencies screen potential workers for suitability before interview, generally using an application form or CV. One agency, which recruits workers without overseas experience, stated that they often do an informal telephone interview before agreeing to send an application form.

Essential professional skills are often accepted to be present, with the agency concentrating on personal skills.

Flexibility, communication skills, the ability to be a team player, sociability and self-reliance are key areas mentioned as essential personal attributes. Some agencies make clear distinctions between development and relief workers, with a fairly common view that the two skills do not mix. One person interviewed who was

responsible for debriefing returning workers, stressed the need to pick up pre-existing vulnerability, such as depression or anxiety, eating disorders or relationship problems.

The use of medical reports prepared by the candidates' own GP did not appear to be common. One large volunteer sending agency does insist on a report, and reports that many of the rejections on medical grounds are based on psychological factors. This same agency also probes into social and emotional relationships for signs of potential fragility.

It was not clear whether all agencies made formal and documented analyses of the workers' personal and professional skills during interview or at other times of contact.

There seems to be a fairly widespread view that some current aspects of selection procedures may be inadequate. Suggested additions to the selection procedure were assessment exercises and a form of psychometric testing.

Job descriptions

Opinions of agency representatives varied on the need for job descriptions, and on the detail that should be included. Current practice includes the provision of a precise job description, a detailed description of the country, locality of the posting with available services, management structures and other information. Other agencies provide anything between this and a line of text consisting of job title and country of assignment. The first approach was more common with development jobs, when speed is less of an issue.

Nevertheless, in relief and emergencies, some agencies still feel that despite the urgency of the situation, it is important to provide a job description. One personnel officer, whose agency tended to provide a standardised job description, with the addition of the project description, felt that greater detail might make field staff do

a ‘proper analysis and identification of tasks’.

Other agency representatives felt that it was over-prescriptive to be too specific, since staff could then cause problems by refusing to do extra or alternative tasks to those defined on their job description. One agency said that field staff were expected to be generalists, and that they have to accept any changes in work and workstation required.

5.2 Briefing, induction and training

There was again considerable difference of practice and opinion between the agencies as to the needs of those workers being prepared for emergency programmes, and those who would be working in development, even when the same agency was involved. Development workers were often provided with extensive training programmes, including language training and in-country introduction programmes covering cultural and political issues. Some programmes last for several weeks or months.

In emergency situations briefing and other preparation of workers tend to be more erratic, varying between agencies, and often within an agency, depending on the perception of programme needs. The majority provide no more than one or two days briefing, because there is ‘no time’ to do more.

One agency provides a one-week preparation and familiarisation course for members of its emergency register, although not for every worker. Another agency, which does not provide any training, felt that it was too expensive to do so for register members, since they might not be required, and that there is insufficient time when an emergency arises.

Training for management responsibilities was recognised by several agencies and other interested observers as a real need. In particular, the need for ‘soft’ training, described as team building skills, and the fostering of working relationships were identified. One agency would like to provide workshops on dealing with difficult team members.

Management training for field workers is now being addressed by a number of agencies, though it was not clear how many have actually implemented programmes.

5.3 Management

Almost every agency identified management in the field as a major problem. A number of reasons were given, and a common theme emerged. Most said that it was difficult to recruit managers, partly due to increasing demand and more inter-agency competition for them, the implication being that there was a small finite pool of suitable people to perform this function. One person felt that 'we need to look at the sort of people doing this emergency work, who are doers rather than facilitators and enablers of others'.

One person commented on the 'anti-management culture' pervasive throughout the organisation, and felt that a weakness was that most programme staff and field directors were more interested in policy than in personnel issues. This perception of management problems throughout their organisation was shared by several interlocutors.

Among the perceived results of poor management is an ambiguity surrounding staff roles, and poor technical support in the field. Inappropriate micro-management by visiting managers was mentioned, as was'macho' and aggressive management, which was recognised as having negative effects on the team.

Performance evaluation

There seemed little consistency on performance evaluations, though a number of agencies were aware of shortcomings in this area and are addressing the problem. One agency carries out regular evaluations, with an exit interview at the end of contract. Another agency is planning a programme of training in appraisals for country directors, and has also just introduced appraisals for senior field staff, with the intention of including all other staff gradually. Another agency said that there was 'informal evaluation of workers... more feedback than a system'.

Security issues

Most agencies say that they take security seriously. One person commented that 'the threshold for security is dropping, and (the agency) now goes to places it wouldn't have five years ago. This is an issue that needs addressing'.

Several people interviewed identified workers who flouted security guidelines as a problem, and one agency felt that security guidelines should be 'non negotiable', and that those workers who break the rules should be sent home.

The same agency felt that it would be helpful in difficult areas for workers to know their evacuation status, so that it was less of a shock if evacuation was then required.

5.4 Stress, stress reduction and management

Stress is crudely divisible into acute and chronic for the purposes of this paper. Acute stress might be defined as a sudden incident that may be life threatening, such as being kidnapped or held captive, being attacked or raped. Chronic stress comes more from living conditions, difficult relationships, crossing checkpoints, dealing with weapons. One experienced psychologist found on a general posting to a conflict zone that the lack of information on the agency's mandate, her location and the job and tasks expected of her greatly raised her own anxiety levels in the period before arrival.

A number of interlocutors discussed the need to check on previous psychiatric treatment or vulnerabilities such as recent bereavements or separations. There was general agreement that these could have a significant effect on workers' ability to cope under stressful situations.

Stress management

Few agencies provide much to prepare their outgoing staff for the stresses that they will face in the field. One agency includes a session on stress in their preparatory

one-week course. There are also open courses run by IHE and RedR.

The need for regular rest is recognised by most agencies as important, and some agencies have required rules on rest being written into contracts, especially in difficult postings. However, the enforcement of rest periods is also recognised as being imperfect, depending very much on local management, and there can be a real reluctance on the part of the workers to take time off. Managers themselves can be efficient in organising rest for their staff, while ignoring their own needs.

Alcohol is the most commonly used agent for relaxing and for effecting mood change in Western society. Parties are seen as an effective method of reducing stress, and are often encouraged by managers. But alcohol abuse also appears to be a hazard for some workers. Several interlocutors identified excessive drinking as a major problem. One agency is now sufficiently concerned that it has arranged for permanent staff with an identified alcohol problem to attend a detoxification centre as part of the medical insurance scheme. Those who accept treatment will remain on the staff, though who refuse are discharged.

Several agencies discussed the need to check for alcohol dependency at medical examinations, and one staff health officer tries to discuss the potential for alcohol abuse while on assignment with all outgoing workers.

5.5 Terms and conditions of service

Financial benefits

There is a wide variety of financial benefits, from volunteers all being paid a subsistence allowance, to agencies with structured and graded salary scales. Many of the volunteer rates are paid to people on their first assignment, and some agencies distinguish between salaried and volunteer workers, insisting on a period of volunteering first.

Insurance cover

Most agencies provide some form of insurance cover, though it was not always clear what was covered by this insurance. Few agencies knew whether workers' own life insurance policies were invalidated during a period of working in a conflict zone.

Grievance and disciplinary procedures

Some agencies had formal grievance and disciplinary procedures in place, but others felt that they were unhelpful. One agency felt that it was better for the worker 'to go home if not happy', and another has a disciplinary procedure that was thought to 'protect both parties in a dispute', and added that a grievance procedure would 'be open to abuse by workers in the field'.

5.6 Debriefing

Most agencies have recognised that debriefing is an area where there is a need to set in place and formalise procedures for returning workers. Much current practice is of relatively recent origin, and not all agencies ensure that all staff are routinely seen on return from their assignments. Formal debriefings on departure from the country of posting are not yet the norm. For some agencies the staff debriefing process is optional, whilst other agencies exclude the emergency and short-term contract workers from debriefing.

One large volunteer agency runs debriefing weekends, plus optional one-to-one debriefing for early returners. Others provide structured programmes for each individual. Agencies have different methods of processing information gathered through debriefing, but it frequently appears that there is no structure for information to be fed into the organisation as a whole.

Emotional or psychological debriefing and support

An increasing number of agencies are introducing some form of emotional debriefing, to give the worker space to talk about the emotional impact of the posting. One strategy, used by several agencies, is to allocate a defined period,

usually about one hour, for this form of discussion with an outsider to the organisation, or with a member of the staff health department. Agencies report that it is generally well accepted by workers, who are able to talk in confidence, and identify whether further intervention is necessary.

Agencies generally considered counselling to be a useful service for defusing stress, and most provide for a limited number of sessions when requested. Most agencies with such a policy in place report very little demand for actual counselling.

Many agencies recognise the potentially stigmatising effect of a request for counselling, with its implications of weakness in the person concerned. As a result, any request for counselling is normally dealt with in strictest confidence, to the extent that at least one agency removes names from invoices, in order to guarantee anonymity.

Other agencies have used group debriefings, particularly when a group of workers have returned from especially difficult circumstances. Some organisations found it a helpful process, but it was thought that under some circumstances it could lead to difficulties in hierarchical organisations, particularly when permanent staff were involved in the group. It was felt that other forms of help might be necessary for those not able to share their feelings in a group.

There were differences of opinion on the optimum way of providing emotional debriefing and counselling. Some agencies felt that it should be standard practice for all returners to attend a debriefing, so that the process became normalised. Others felt that is was better for the worker to request the facility, on the grounds that someone reluctant was unlikely to benefit. Most agencies who provide this kind of service inform outgoing workers of the availability before they leave the country. One counsellor involved in debriefing took the view that it was not possible to predict what would be particularly difficult for an individual, and the offer of debriefing should therefore not be selective.

5.7 Career issues

Agencies recognise that job security is an important issue for their field staff, and that the current method of separate contracts for each post confers no such security. The difficulties of getting back into a mainstream UK career if too long a period had been spent on overseas assignments were also recognised.

One person spoke of the 'casualisation' of relief work and the 'throw away' worker, with lack of any long-term employer responsibilities. The same person identified short term contracts to be a particular problem, compared with contracts of a year or more. The short-term worker might spend longer periods unemployed, and would be less likely to gain tax free status. He felt that this needs to be addressed by the agencies in their salary scales.

One person questioned whether it is appropriate to have a career structure in relief or development, as she felt that 'workers should not be able to get rich from aid'.

6. Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This section aims to discuss key issues identified by respondents to the questionnaire, by the agencies and other interested parties interviewed during the period of the research. Key issues are highlighted, and questions posed for discussion.

6.2 Recruitment and Selection

Key issues

- **!** Poor use of advertising to both internal and external candidates
- **!** Lack of rigour in interviewing
- **!** Lack of commitment to performance review

- Poor use of modern technology
- Lack of transparency in the recruitment process

The recruitment of competent field staff is of fundamental importance to the capacity of the agency to support its workers, and to run its programmes. Most agencies delegate support and management of their staff to the field, and given the obvious difficulties with distance and communications, it would be unrealistic to do anything else. This means that the agencies need to recruit field staff with experience and skills in management, as well as those with good technical skills.

The questionnaire responses indicated that recruitment processes can be fairly haphazard. It is possible as a result that they may sometimes fail to recruit the most suitable candidates. It is interesting how little use is made of advertising, in contrast with the reliance upon the re-employment of former staff and speculative applications. Interviewing, according to the respondents to the questionnaire, frequently appears to lack rigour, if indeed it takes place at all.

Few agencies screen the medical history of candidates for signs of vulnerability, despite evidence that there are known factors that can affect a persons' ability to cope with stress.

There is considerable debate within agencies about the best way to recruit staff for overseas posts. There is a body of opinion which holds that it is always better to recruit from a known pool, as 'you know what you are getting', and the person will have demonstrated that they can cope in difficult circumstances. Many of the experienced respondents for the emergency jobs were recruited over the phone and asked to go at short notice. The assumption was that they had at least one assignment 'under their belt', and would therefore be competent for the task. Clearly, previous overseas experience is often very valuable, but it should not be assumed that the skills and attitudes acquired thus are always appropriate.

It seems unlikely that many agencies would rely on similar procedures when recruiting HQ staff. Yet field staff tend by the nature of their work to be less supervised and supported than the majority of UK based staff.

It was surprising to find how few agencies have consistent performance reviews built into their procedures, particularly in view of the fact that many agencies like to re-employ staff. None of the agencies for whom there were adequate numbers (more than five respondents in this instance) were said by questionnaire respondents to have done evaluations for everyone returning during the relevant period. It is therefore far from clear on what basis they would be evaluated for the next post. It is, of course, possible that informal information regarding performance is kept on file, but if so, agencies did not volunteer this fact. Most workers in this survey would have welcomed an open discussion of their work, and many felt extremely disappointed when this did not happen.

A number of agencies lacked effective systems for maintaining their registers of possible candidates. Very few seemed to have well organised and structured electronic databases. Modern technology seems to have passed them by, leaving personnel officers retrieving suitable candidates from their memories, or from the pile on their desk.

This lack of up-to-date information held on an effective database system can limit the agencies' ability to shortlist candidates for a post, thereby reducing their chances of identifying the best candidate. As importantly, it seems to result in very unequal opportunities for prospective candidates. Many agencies describe themselves as equal opportunities employers, but there is little evidence to support this view in terms of their short-term employees working overseas. It can of course be argued that urgency and need in the field overrides other desirable policies, but by improving organisational systems more transparent recruitment policies may emerge.

Key questions

- **!** How can agencies make better use of the wide range of recruitment techniques?
- **!** How can the pool of potential employees be enlarged?
- **!** How can agencies improve the implementation of equal opportunities policies?
- **!** How can performance review be improved?

6.3 Planning and identification of staffing needs and programme priorities

Key issues

- **!** Lack of clarity in identification of staffing needs
- **!** Inappropriate haste in fielding teams
- **!** Poor documentation of jobs and programmes

The problems of identifying and shortlisting candidates have been highlighted above, but it is not clear how agencies decide on staffing needs, and on individual suitability in the absence of a job and programme description. Most respondents to the questionnaire wanted information before deciding on a job, yet in the survey a disappointingly high proportion of prospective staff were given poor quality or limited information on programme and job.

It was also surprising how many people were prepared in the event to go to potentially difficult and demanding jobs despite having such a limited understanding of the task. Although a minority enjoy the challenge of the unknown, it was clear that the great majority do want to know what sort of job they are accepting.

Perhaps as a result of limited information, a quality much valued by agencies when

recruiting is that of 'flexibility' or an ability to turn their hand to whatever is required. It is appreciated that in the first phase of emergencies conditions can change very rapidly. The rapidly changing circumstances may be partly responsible for the comparatively low numbers doing the job for which they were recruited. However, inadequate assessment of staffing needs may also be a reason for a change in role. In Rwanda in particular, anecdotal evidence suggests that there was a considerable overload of medical and nursing personnel, often inappropriately qualified and equipped.

Part of the problem seems to arise from the speed at which teams are put together to respond to an emergency, and the perception that it is best to have the team in the field as quickly as possible. This would be unarguable, provided that the team were effective on arrival. However, it was reported by a number of interlocutors that the chaos in the early part of the Rwanda crisis was compounded by the number of agencies and personnel who appeared to be ineffectual and merely contributed to the difficulties.

Part of the haste may have been due to the availability and timing of funding, with the early arrivals getting the bulk of the funding as well as the most interesting tasks. Some organisations were to a degree donor-driven, receiving unsolicited donations from the public.

One agency commissioned an extensive evaluation of its response to the influx of refugees to Zaire. Included among its recommendations is the point that the programme would have greatly benefitted if more time had been taken to identify aims and objectives and to write job descriptions (Wiles, 1995).

Agencies and other individuals have identified a number of factors that appear to play a part in 'failure of assignment', defined here as an early resignation from a job. Personal circumstances are important, but one large development agency also identified poorly defined jobs as a cause of dissatisfaction and early return amongst workers. Early return from the job is only part of the story. Many expatriate staff stay to the end of a contract despite feeling that the job has not been a success, but believing that they would jeopardise future employment with that agency if they

resigned early. One agency confirmed this scenario, saying that those with proven track records with the agency might get a second chance following an early return, but less likely if it was their first job.

Key questions

- What is the minimum acceptable level of information on job and project for outgoing personnel?
- How do agencies manage the tension between the need for rapid deployment and the need for adequate preparation of staff?

6.4 Predeparture training

Key issues

- Lack of adequate induction programmes
- Shortage of appropriate training programmes for professional development

The questionnaire replies revealed quite a high degree of unmet need in terms of predeparture preparation. A need for security information was top of the list of requirements, but an improved introduction to the agency, its structures, systems and working methods as well as its policies would have been welcome. This lack of knowledge of the agency's practice must have a significant impact on the new worker's ability to contribute to the programme.

Induction into the employing agency is clearly the duty of the employer, but there are other training needs for staff working in this field, including regular professional updating and development. Several agencies provide training at the beginning of a 'career', but there is little available beyond this first introduction in terms of short courses. The present structures existing in the 'industry', with short-term contracts the norm, results in no responsibility being taken for staff development between contracts. Both IHE and RedR provide some courses, most of which are specialised health or engineering courses, though others are of more

general relevance. However, there is no body providing equivalent short practical courses designed to develop other competencies in the field, such as management and logistics.

It is not clear whether this gap in training and development arises from a perception among agencies that training is not necessary, or whether the constraints are such that they are unable to budget for staff development. The main issue is clearly one of a lack of commitment to staff, and a culture of short-term contracts which does not seem to foster loyalty on either side.

Key questions

- **!** What is the minimum acceptable standard for the induction and preparation of outgoing staff?
- **!** How can current and potential staff be developed to meet the changing needs in the field?

6.5 In-country management problems

Key issues

- **!** Difficulties in recruiting managers for programmes
- **!** Lack of appropriate management training
- **!** Lack of continuity

Problems and dissatisfaction with management in-country was one of the major complaints of respondents to the questionnaire. Most agencies acknowledged difficulty in recruiting good managers for their overseas programmes. One reason may be structural, as management skills tend to be acquired with age and experience; at the same time the acquisition of partners and families and other responsibilities make work in developing countries and conflict zones more difficult.

Training is a critical issue in this context. Only a few agencies provide management

training, and fewer still provide it for all of their workers going to management posts.

Other training needs identified by interlocutors are in interpersonal skills, team building and conflict resolution. These skills are all required by managers, though other members of teams would presumably also benefit. Slim (1995) adds other skills to this list, particularly for relief workers, and includes political judgement and the ability to think about the social and cultural context within which they work.

Slim (1995) argues that to be effective, relief workers also need to be able to think in a developmental way, in order to take account of the social and cultural conditions of the beneficiary society.

A point raised by a number of respondents to the questionnaire was the problem of continuity. The majority of respondents had jobs lasting less than six months, with obvious implications for continuity. Handovers sometimes failed to occur, and new managers or team leaders often appeared to change the direction or style of a programme on their arrival, resulting in frustration for the other members of a team. It was not clear how agencies ideally manage this rapid turnover in staff, and whether there are agency policies dealing with this issue.

Key questions

- **!** Is sufficient attention paid to management skills during selection?
- **!** How can appropriate management training be provided for field staff?
- **!** How can managers be better managed and supported to ensure continuity in the field?

6.6 Stress and stress management

Key issues

- Problems of stress exacerbated by living and working conditions.
- Lack of stress management preparation in predeparture preparation

Staff are undoubtedly put under additional strain by some of the security issues mentioned in the questionnaire, but for many the most difficult aspects are relationships with colleagues and managers, and organisational issues. These are exacerbated by the living and working conditions. Most people would recognise that work and work relationships can be difficult at times, but for most these can be left behind at the end of the day and at weekends. Very few are also expected to share accommodation with their colleagues and managers, as well as spending a large part of their working day with them.

Workers lose touch with many of their normal coping strategies when abroad, particularly their networks of friends and family, but also their normal methods of relaxation. It must be asked whether it is possible to prepare workers in advance for the kinds of stresses that they are likely to face in the field. Some of the more general courses already address, or include, topics such as personnel effectiveness, but perhaps they should also be part of the general induction packages for all new staff.

The issue of excessive alcohol intake as a method of stress reduction in the field should be taken seriously, with the possible long-term implications for staff.

In large emergency operations, senior managers are often responsible not only for the programme and staff management, but for the day-to-day welfare of workers, including housing, feeding and all other practical arrangements. In the later stages of an operation, this can often be delegated to another member of staff, and may more appropriately be done by a local person. In the beginning stages of an emergency, this may not be possible, but the extra demands may be very stressful for the unfortunate manager. Several interlocutors proposed the post of 'quarter master' to deal with the practical aspects of the operation.

Key questions

- What actions can agencies take to reduce stress through
  a. Predeparture training?
  b. Improved management and organisational practices?

6.7 Security

Key issues

- Quality and timeliness of security advice provided for field workers
- Risk-taking behaviour by some managers and staff

The majority of agencies have considered the issue of security, and have made some plans for emergencies. The questionnaire identified worrying gaps in the quality of some security plans, and their timeliness. For example, a number of workers found themselves writing the security guidelines on arrival. Some flexibility is required, but a number of workers were forced to rely on other agencies' guidance, such as the UN, whose policies were sometimes thought to be inadequate.

Risk-taking behaviour is also a cause of concern. A number of staff did take risks, many quite carefully thought out, and a number also reported feeling pressed into taking risks. Both forms of behaviour must be taken seriously. Some agencies see flouting of security guidelines as a sacking offence, and will repatriate offenders with speed. Most, perhaps all agencies, stress that no workers should do anything they feel could put themselves or their colleagues in danger. It might be argued that risk-taking could be seen as a symptom of burnout, where the worker drives him or herself harder and harder for increasingly less personal satisfaction and effectiveness.

Key question

! How can agencies ensure staff safety?

6.8 Debriefing

Key Issues

- ! Lack of consistent and comprehensive debriefing programmes
- ! Lack of exit interviews for departing staff
- ! Little systematic use of information gained at debriefing

Debriefing has received a great deal of attention recently, and most agencies have worked on improving their practice. There are several surrounding key questions this topic: where, who carries it out and how is it done?

According to the questionnaire, exit interviews do not seem to be the norm, although the majority of workers are debriefed at some point between their departure and arrival home. The need for performance review has been discussed in a previous section, but it would also seem useful to have the worker's views and detailed understanding of the programme and their work before they leave the country. The workers themselves were very much in favour of a structured end-of-service programme, particularly if they thought that it would be helpful for future work. Even without assurance that their information has long-term effects, it seems that the opportunity to talk to employers about the assignment is generally appreciated. It is, perhaps, a form of rite of passage, to be done before moving on to the next stage in their lives.

It is not so clear what agencies want to gain from the debriefing and how they process the information. End-of-service reports are sometimes presented, but not always seen by the relevant HQ staff before an interview. Frequently, the debriefing remains undocumented, and is not used to improve the institutional memory.

Key questions

- How can debriefing be used to improve agency effectiveness?
- How can field workers benefit from debriefing?

6.9 Psychological debriefing and support

Key issues

- Insufficient attention paid to psychological support needs of returning workers
- Stigmatisation of workers seeking psychological support

Much attention is being paid to the importance of psychological support, and the need to recognise and prevent Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD is now an accepted clinical entity, although some psychiatrists find it an unhelpful label (Shackman, 1995).

Very little research has been done on the long-term psychological effects in aid workers of the acute and chronic stresses produced by their work. Most work in this field has looked at emergency workers, such as fire fighters, and ambulance crews, or at the military. One of the few studies of aid workers was done by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who found that about 12% of workers returning from 'difficult' missions showed some form of psychological distress. About 12% of these presented with the sequelae of previous psychiatric disorders, and another 12% (about 1-2% of the total returners) with the symptoms of PTSD. The others presented with the effects of 'cumulative' and 'catastrophic' stress, which tended to resolve fairly quickly and spontaneously (de Haan, 1995). ICRC's mandate is to work in areas of conflict, and their workers might therefore be expected to be exposed to perhaps a higher degree of external stress than some others, although other concerns, including personal factors obviously play an important role as well.

There is a fairly widely accepted method of preventing psychological sequelae of particularly traumatic or life threatening incidents, known as Critical Incident Debriefing (CID). Counselling provision for those who need it now seems to be quite widely available.

Fortunately PTSD is not, however, the experience of most aid workers, who are subject to the more chronic forms of stress discussed above.

One method of dealing with this chronic stress, which seems to be gaining acceptance among the agencies, is to set aside time and space for workers on their return to discuss the emotional impact of the assignment. At this time, it should then be possible to help workers identify whether they do need some counselling or psychiatric help. Some authorities however, point out that PTSD and other psychological symptoms may not manifest themselves immediately, and that follow-up of the workers is recommended at three to six months (Deahl, 1995a). Follow-up under the current methods of employment is likely to be a complex activity, since so many workers take sequential contracts, very often with different employers.

Despite the enthusiasm shown by authorities, agencies and the recipients for psychological debriefing, and the apparent rationale for its implementation, little objective research has been published proving its effectiveness. A recent leading article in the British Medical Journal reviewed the existing literature and found limited evidence to show that psychological debriefing was effective in preventing negative outcomes, despite being found helpful by the recipients. The article stressed the need for further research (Raphael et al, 1995).

Another important issue in terms of psychological support is that of the stigma attached to counselling and other psychiatric intervention. There is evidence that the agencies themselves take this seriously, evinced by the trouble they take to avoid identifying those taking up the option of psychological help. This is in contrast to medical referrals, the content of which would normally remain confidential, but not the actual fact of the referral. By colluding with this need for secrecy, it is possible that they reinforce and perpetuate the stigmatising effect.

Key questions

- **!** What are the minimum levels of psychological support that should be offered to returning field workers?
- **!** What can agencies do to destigmatise the need for counselling and other forms of support?
- **!** Do agencies have a responsibility for the follow up of their returned workers?

6.10 Terms and conditions of service

Key issues

- **!** Lack of information on pre-existing medical conditions
- **!** Lack of adequate grievance and disciplinary procedures
- **!** Inadequate insurance cover
- **!** Lack of pension provision

Medical care

Opinions varied about the need for pre- and post-assignment medical examinations, and it is not clear how often pre-departure medical examinations are able to pick up conditions that would make an overseas posting undesirable. Very little use seems to be made of the workers' own GP to find out whether there are pre-existing conditions or vulnerabilities, such as alcoholism or past psychiatric treatment.

Grievance and disciplinary procedures

There seemed to be some interesting views on the need for procedures to deal with misconduct or a breakdown in relationships between staff and their managers or between colleagues. In UK law, any disciplinary and grievance procedures have to

be provided to all employees within two months of starting work, within certain limitations on size of employing organisation. ACAS Code of Practice recommends that employers have clearly stated disciplinary rules (Kroner, 1995).
There does not appear to be extensive case law in the UK covering employees who work overseas, though it should be appreciated that the host country's law can be applied to UK employees working in that country. There are believed to be cases where this has occurred. Care should be taken to ensure that agencies comply with local regulations.

Insurance cover

There are a number of issues to do with insurance. It appears that most agencies do provide insurance cover for their staff, but it is important that the terms of the insurance are clear and unambiguous. There have been increasing security risks involved, and a number of deaths and injuries have occurred due to conflict rather than disease. Workers should be aware of the implications for their own policies, particularly if they have dependants.

At present, agencies organise their own policies and terms of cover, and any necessary extra cover needed has to be organised by the workers themselves, which can be difficult to arrange if required to depart at short notice. There might be advantages to identifying an insurance policy that could be 'bought into' by any worker employed by an agency working in aid and development.

Pension Policy

The questionnaire clearly indicated a desire from respondents to contribute towards a transferable pension scheme organised by their agency. There are schemes that permit contributions from a number of different organisations, and which also allow employer contributions, unlike most private pension plans. Periods of unemployment and short-term contracts can make private pensions difficult to maintain. Alternatively, in some circumstances it is possible for agencies to continue contributions to a long-term occupational pension, such as the NHS Superannuation scheme during the workers period of service overseas.

Key questions

- **!** Should agencies make more use of existing medical records?
- **!** Should agencies provide standard grievance and disciplinary procedures?
- **!** How can adequate insurance cover be provided?
- **!** How can agencies contribute to long term financial security for their workers?

6.11 Career development and job security

Key issue

- **!** Difficulties in establishing a cadre of committed and professional workers in the context of short-term contracts

Previous sections in this report have touched on the problems of short-term contracts and periods of employment for workers, but it should also be an issue for their employing agencies. The lack of transparency of recruitment procedures, the lack of staff development and the lack of normal (in UK terms) employer responsibilities for their staff have resulted in difficulties for both and, it can be argued, for the intended beneficiaries of their activities.

The lack of job security makes it difficult for staff to stay in the field once they begin to acquire personal and family responsibilities. However, agencies need to develop a cadre of workers who have a clear understanding of the implications of their work as well as the technical ability to carry it out in the most effective and principled fashion. This is not learnt over a short period of time, particularly when the circumstances often prevent good supervision and support in the field.

The Professional Code of Conduct for disaster response agencies (IFRC, 1994), has proposed basic standards to govern the way agencies work in disaster assistance. A number of UK agencies have already ratified the Code, and it is likely that others will do so in the future. Without methods of developing and improving the professional standards of the field workers, it will be difficult to make progress in the future.

Key questions

- Is there an alternative to the short-term contract system?
- How can the professional standards of agencies and their staff be improved?

7. Discussion and Final Recommendations

The purpose of the section is to make recommendations and discuss final conclusions based both on the research findings and the ideas and opinions of the participants attending the workshop. The views expressed here are those of the author, formed throughout the course of this consultancy as a result of these many different inputs.

The two main recommendations are:

- to reach general agreement for a code of practice for human resources, endorsed by the agencies.
- a professional body or association, the responsibilities of which would include implementation of the code of practice.

7.1 Workshop report

The main findings of the report were presented at a workshop on 3 August 1995. The twenty one draft recommendations for best practice (see overleaf) were endorsed by the groups, although it was felt that some required strengthening and amplifying.

There was considerable debate which proved extremely useful in drawing out the complexities behind the recommendations and the constraints under which the agencies work.

Two speakers, Richard Dowden of The Economist and Janet Douglas of ODA made several important points about the aid agencies' responses to disasters:

- that the underlying problems are social and political and that there is a risk that these might be compounded by politically insensitive or inappropriate responses by the agencies;

- that many workers have no real understanding of the country in which they are working and need training and briefing to sensitise them to often vastly different cultures and value systems;

- that the present attitude of the media towards aid and aid agencies is friendly, but that this outlook may not necessarily last if the agencies come to be seen as incompetent, wasteful or self-serving;

- that donors need to clarify responsibility for managing and funding 'grey areas' such as post-emergency rehabilitation;

- that the aid community needs to improve its understanding of conflict and instability if it is to improve its response;

- that improvement in operational response is dependent on improved professionalism among aid workers.

It was recommended that:

Selection and Recruitment

- All candidates participate in a rigorous selection procedure
- Candidates are screened for vulnerability factors
- Effective registers of suitably qualified available personnel are maintained
- Appropriate methods are used to identify and short-list eligible candidates for posts
- Field staff are recruited against specific job descriptions

Briefing and Training

- Induction and briefing programmes are provided for all outgoing field staff
- Comprehensive briefing programmes should be provided for all newly arrived field staff
- Security briefing and training are provided prior to departure when appropriate
- Appropriate training for field staff is provided including stress management techniques, negotiating skills and conflict resolution
- Management training for staff is provided on an ongoing basis

Management in the field

- Strategies for managing continuity in the field are developed
- Strategies are developed to reduce stress in the field
- Appropriate and timely security guidelines for field conditions are developed
- Strategies are developed for dealing with risk taking behaviour
- Performance review procedures are developed and implemented

Debriefing and Support

- Appropriate professional debriefing mechanisms are developed
- Methods are developed to improve the use of field information to monitor and evaluate programmes
- Methods are developed to ensure the psychological health of field workers

Terms and conditions

- Adequate health care is provided for field workers
- Adequate insurance cover is provided for all field workers
- Agencies implement disciplinary and grievance procedures for staff

7.2 The Inter-Agency Coordinator

The post of Inter-Agency Coordinator was proposed at the outset of the project to follow on from the author's post and the need was agreed by the workshop. The primary task suggested for the coordinator would be to strengthen and clarify the recommendations which might then form the basis of a code of practice. Two further tasks would be to formalise and gain overall ratification for the code of practice and to work towards setting up a professional body. The success of this role would depend essentially on the support of the community of agencies involved in relief and development, and it would be crucial to include as wide a range of interests in the management structure as feasible.

7.3 A code of practice

In 1994 the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief was developed. This document, referred to hereafter as the Code of Conduct, aimed to provide all humanitarian agencies with a framework with which to judge and monitor their work (IFRC, 1994).

The authors of the Code of Conduct discussed the lack of an accepted body of professional standards to guide their work. They also point out that ‘there is as yet no international association for disaster response NGOs which possesses any authority to sanction its members’.

The Code of Conduct does provide these standards. However, in order to achieve a high level of professionalism in overall performance, it is essential to have highly professional staff at all levels throughout the organisation.

A code of practice for agencies in the management and support for their staff would assist agencies in achieving this greater professionalism, and would complement the Code of Conduct. The remit of the code would embrace the same issues both in relief and development. The recommendations from the workshop would form the basis of this code of practice although they may need revision and strengthening.

7.4 The need for a professional body for relief and development

The Code of Conduct was later published in an RRN Network Paper by ODI. In the preface it was argued that the recognised lack of an enforcement body is the principal weakness of the Code (ODI, 1994).

The author would argue that there is now an urgent need for the aid community to set up a professional body or association to provide a focus for excellence in relief and development.

The weaknesses exposed by the research in the management of relief and development programmes are fundamental to the existing organisational structures. These weaknesses can result in poor performance by staff and thereby diminish the quality of programmes.

The establishment of a professional body or association should be seen as an opportunity for agencies, rather than as a threat to be resisted. An understandable anxiety exists regarding loss of autonomy, but many of the existing problems in the industry arise from the isolation in which the agencies work. A body which was the product of voluntary association rather than an imposition could be created in a form that would enhance the agencies' effectiveness without threatening their unique characters and contributions. However, if the agencies wait until donor pressure forces change, they may lose the opportunity to influence that change.

A professional association would have multiple benefits. It would provide individual members with much needed support and opportunities for career development. It would offer a focus for education, training, information and support, in much the same way that other professionals benefit from their own associations and institutes, of which there are many examples, including the British Medical Association and the Institution of Civil Engineers. It would also provide an opportunity for cross fertilisation of ideas between those primarily engaged in development and those working in relief, to the advantage of both. A professional association could be open to many different individuals with a professional interest, not merely those currently employed in the field.

Role and Function of a professional association

- Setting standards for UK agencies
- Accreditation of existing and proposed training courses
- Focus for debate through meeting such as seminars and workshops
- Registers of potential workers:
  - Experienced and inexperienced
  - Interviewed and uninterviewed
- Library and resources
- Information service
- Newsletter or journal
- Contact databases for support functions
- Training courses for workers
- Accreditation of workers, through levels of membership
- Accreditation of agencies
- Advocacy for other countries to conform to codes of practice
- Insurance
- Legal advice

Membership would be corporate and individual, and funding of the association should in the long term be from membership fees.

A need for an association is also demonstrated by the emergence of a number of small organisations or working groups which seek to coordinate agency activities or to provide information on specialist subjects. New groups are continually created to fill identified gaps. A weakness of many of these bodies is that they are often accessible to agencies rather than individuals, while their existence and activities remain unknown to many in the member organisations themselves. Their effectiveness is limited by their inherent inability to disseminate to a wide audience. An association of aid and development could bring their activities together as special interest groups. They would be more widely known while retaining individual spheres of interest.

8. Conclusions

Humanitarian and development organisations are becoming increasingly important on the international stage. With this increasing importance comes a requirement for

greater accountability to the public, to institutional donors and to the intended beneficiaries and a corresponding need for improved professional standards. Agencies must also recognise that this increased professionalism cannot be achieved without competent and well trained staff, who play such a central role in ensuring effective programmes. A code of practice in human resources will assist and enable the development of such a cadre of workers.

The recognition of the need for a professional body can be seen as one of the features of a maturing profession, a rite of passage in the coming of age. Most other professions have already developed their own associations. It is now time that agencies and individuals involved in relief and development do the same, to meet the challenges of the future.

Annex 1

Questionnaire

Please think about your last job/assignment working in the field of aid or development.

For this last assignment please give details of:

Country . . . . . .
Date of starting . . . . . .
Date of return . . . . . .
Position/job . . . . . .

---

1. How would you describe this last job overseas? (tick one box)

Emergency relief	[ ]
Long term relief/rehabilitation	[ ]
Development	[ ]
Mixed programme of the above	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

2. How many expatriate workers, including yourself, were employed by your agency in the country? (tick one box)

One	[ ]	10-19	[ ]
2 - 4	[ ]	20-49	[ ]
5 - 9	[ ]	More than 50	[ ]
		Other	[ ]

3. How many expatriate staff, including yourself were based at your workstation? (tick one box)

One	[ ]	10 - 19	[ ]
2 - 4	[ ]	20 - 49	[ ]
5 - 9	[ ]	More than 50	[ ]
		Other	[ ]

Recruitment

4. How were you recruited to your last job? (tick one box)

Replied to an advertisement	[ ]
Member of a register	[ ]
Previous employee of the agency	[ ]
Sent speculative application to agency	[ ]
Invited to apply for job	[ ]
Word of mouth	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

5. What form did the selection process take? (tick one box)

Informal chat	[ ]
Formal interview, but the only candidate	[ ]
Competitive interview	[ ]
General interview for a register	[ ]
General interview + specific interview	[ ]
Assessment day with several activities/interviews	[ ]
Other	[ ]
None	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

6. Do you feel that you were well matched to your last job? (tick one box)

Well matched	[ ]
Over qualified	[ ]
Under qualified	[ ]
Inappropriately qualified	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

7. Did you do the job for which you were recruited? (tick one box)

All the time	[ ]
Most of the time	[ ]
Part of the time	[ ]
Not at all	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

8. What kind of information was provided to help you decide if it was an appropriate job for you? (tick any boxes that apply)

Responsibilities of the post	[ ]
Project details	[ ]
Country background	[ ]
Political/economic background	[ ]
Person specification	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

9. How detailed was the information? (tick one box)

Very detailed	[ ]
Fairly detailed	[ ]
Not very detailed	[ ]
No detail at all	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

10. In hindsight, how accurate was the information? (tick one box)

Very accurate	[ ]
Fairly accurate	[ ]
Not very accurate	[ ]
Inaccurate	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

11. In general, how important is it for you to have a good picture of the job you are going to do in the field? (tick one box)

Very important	[ ]
Fairly important	[ ]
Not very important	[ ]
Not at all important	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

Pre-departure training and briefing

12. What kind of training or briefing were you given before departure? (tick those that apply)

	Was given this	*Would have liked this*
Programme information	[ ]	[ ]
Management structures	[ ]	[ ]
Agency systems/methods of working	[ ]	[ ]
Agency policy guidelines	[ ]	[ ]
Country information	[ ]	[ ]
Cultural information	[ ]	[ ]
Security information	[ ]	[ ]
Accommodation details	[ ]	[ ]
Personal equipment list	[ ]	[ ]
Stress management/coping strategies	[ ]	[ ]
Group/team working	[ ]	[ ]
Staff management	[ ]	[ ]
Logistics, planning and communication	[ ]	[ ]
Financial/budgeting	[ ]	[ ]
Technical updating	[ ]	[ ]
Update on emergency response	[ ]	[ ]
Four wheel driving	[ ]	[ ]
Language training	[ ]	[ ]
First aid	[ ]	[ ]
Other	[ ]	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

13. If you did have training or briefing, do you think it helped you to do your job more effectively? (tick one box)

Definitely	[ ]
Probably	[ ]
Possibly	[ ]
Probably not	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

14. Did you meet any other of the team members before departure?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Not relevant [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

15. Did you have a medical examination before departure?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

16. Did you have a health briefing (advice on self care) before departure?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

For Red Cross workers only

17. Did you have a briefing in Geneva before departure?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

18. If yes, how useful did you find it? (tick one box)

Very useful	[ ]	Not very useful	[ ]
Fairly useful	[ ]	Very poor	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

19. Were you seconded to ICRC or the Federation?

ICRC [ ] Federation [ ]

In country briefing and support

20. What did your briefing consist of on arrival in country? (tick any that apply)

Country update	[ ]
Reports/files	[ ]
Management systems	[ ]
Organisational structures	[ ]
Administrative procedures	[ ]
Office systems	[ ]
Introduction to staff	[ ]
Personal health	[ ]
Security	[ ]
Cultural/social awareness	[ ]
Other	[ ]
None	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

21. How useful was this briefing? (tick one box)

Very useful	[ ]	Very poor	[ ]
Fairly useful	[ ]	Non-existent	[ ]
Not very useful	[ ]		

Please explain . . . . . .

22. How useful was the handover from your predecessor? (tick one box)

Very useful	[ ]
Fairly useful	[ ]
Not very useful	[ ]
Not at all useful	[ ]
No handover done	[ ]
No predecessor	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

23. How important is it for you to have a handover? (tick one box)

Very important	[ ]
Fairly important	[ ]
Not very important	[ ]
Not at all important	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

24. Did you have access to your agency's policy guidelines? (tick one box)

Yes	[ ]
Had access, but did not need	[ ]
No access, but guidelines existed	[ ]
No guidelines existed	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

25. Do you feel that you understood the programme by the end of your briefing? (tick one box)

Had good overview of the programme	[ ]
Understanding limited to own part of programme	[ ]
Poor understanding of the programme	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

26. Where were you located for most of your time in this job? (tick one box)

At the head office	[ ]
At a sub office	[ ]
In a small autonomous team	[ ]
Working on your own, travelling	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

27. How satisfactory did you consider the management structures at your workplace? (tick one

box)

Very satisfactory	[ ]
Fairly satisfactory	[ ]
Not very satisfactory	[ ]
Very unsatisfactory	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

28. Were you clear who your line manager was?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

29. Where was your line manager based? (tick one box)

In the same place	[ ]
In the same country, not the same place	[ ]
In a different country	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

30. Did this cause difficulties for you? (tick one box)

Always	[ ]
Often	[ ]
Sometimes	[ ]
Occasionally	[ ]
Never	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

31. Did you feel that your line manager had the appropriate skills and experience for his/her role?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Not sure [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

32. Was she/he readily accessible to you? (tick one box)

Always	[ ]
Usually	[ ]
Often	[ ]
Sometimes	[ ]
Rarely	[ ]
Never	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

33. Were regular team meetings held? (tick one box)

Daily meetings	[ ]
Weekly meetings	[ ]
Monthly meetings	[ ]
None	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

34. How satisfactory was this? (tick one box)

Very satisfactory	[ ]
Fairly satisfactory	[ ]
Not very satisfactory	[ ]
Very unsatisfactory	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

35. Did you feel that **you** had the appropriate skills and experience to manage other staff? (tick one box)

Yes	[ ]
No	[ ]
Not sure	[ ]
Did not manage others	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

36. Did you work as part of a team, or independently? (tick one box)

Leader of the team	[ ]
Member of team	[ ]
Independently	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

37. How well defined was your role? (tick one box)

Clearly defined	[ ]
Some overlap with other team members	[ ]
Considerable overlap with others	[ ]
Very undefined	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

38. How satisfactory was this? (tick one box)

Very satisfactory	[ ]
Fairly satisfactory	[ ]
Not very satisfactory	[ ]
Very unsatisfactory	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

39. Were you clear about the roles of the other members of the team?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

40. How were team conflicts generally resolved? (tick one box)

By discussions among the team members	[ ]
Through intervention by the line manager	[ ]
By referral to senior management	[ ]
Not resolved	[ ]
No conflicts	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

41. Was this satisfactory? (tick one box)

Very satisfactory	[ ]
Fairly satisfactory	[ ]
Not very satisfactory	[ ]
Very unsatisfactory	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

42. Do you feel that you got satisfactory management support? (tick one box)

Very satisfactory	[ ]
Fairly satisfactory	[ ]
Not very satisfactory	[ ]
Very unsatisfactory	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

Performance review

43. Was there a system of performance review in place? (tick those that apply)

At end of contract only	[ ]
At regular intervals	[ ]
None	[ ]
Not known	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

44. Was the review optional or required? (tick one box)

Required	[ ]
Optional	[ ]
No review system	[ ]

45. Did you have any input to your performance review? (tick one box)

Was a participatory review	[ ]
Had the opportunity to discuss review	[ ]
Was able to add written comments	[ ]
Did not have an review	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

46. Did you find your evaluation useful? (tick one box)

Very useful	[ ]
Fairly useful	[ ]
Not very useful	[ ]
Not at all useful	[ ]
Did not have an evaluation	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

Stress

47. What were generally the most stressful aspects of your posting? (Please number in order of importance)

Your job	[ ]
Your workload	[ ]
Your line manager	[ ]
Your expatriate colleagues	[ ]
Your local colleagues	[ ]
Organisational issues	[ ]
Security	[ ]
Accommodation	[ ]
Transport	[ ]
Communications	[ ]
Your health	[ ]
Lack of privacy	[ ]
Culture of country	[ ]
Isolation	[ ]
Separation from partner	[ ]
Separation from friends/family	[ ]
Witnessing suffering	[ ]
The climate/environment	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

48. Did any event(s) occur that was particularly difficult to deal with, on a personal or professional basis?

Please describe . . . . . .
. . . . . .

49. How did you resolve the problem(s)?

Please describe . . . . . .
. . . . . .

50. Did you have someone that you could discuss any problems with?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

51. Did you use any particular strategy(ies) to reduce stress? (tick those that apply)

Working longer hours	[ ]
Talking about problems	[ ]
Talking about unrelated subjects	[ ]
Meditation/yoga	[ ]
Exercise/sport	[ ]
Drinking more than usual	[ ]
Smoking more than usual	[ ]
Drugs	[ ]
Sleeping	[ ]
Being on your own	[ ]
Socialising	[ ]
Relationships	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

52. On average, how many hours did you work per week? (tick one box)

Less than 30 hours a week	[ ]
Between 30-39 hours a week	[ ]
Between 40-49 hours a week	[ ]
Between 50-59 hours a week	[ ]
Between 60-69 hours a week	[ ]
Seventy or more hours a week	[ ]

53. How satisfactory did you find this? (tick one box)

Very satisfactory	[ ]
Fairly satisfactory	[ ]
Not very satisfactory	[ ]
Very unsatisfactory	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

54. Were you able to take time off every week? (tick one box)

Always	[ ]	Rarely	[ ]
Usually	[ ]	Never	[ ]
Sometimes	[ ]		

Please explain . . . . . .

55. How often did you get more than a weekend off? (tick one box)

At least every six weeks	[ ]
At least every eight weeks	[ ]
At least every twelve weeks	[ ]
Less often than every twelve weeks	[ ]
Never	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

56. Were you able to get away from your workstation during your time off? (tick one box)

Always	[ ]	Never	[ ]
Sometimes	[ ]	Did not get time off	[ ]
Rarely	[ ]		

Please explain . . . . . .

57. Were staff required to take regular leave/time off? (tick one box)

Yes, enforced for all staff	[ ]
Yes, enforced for some staff only	[ ]
Yes, but not enforced	[ ]
Not permitted time off	[ ]
No policy	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

58. How satisfactory were the leave/time off arrangements? (tick one box)

Very satisfactory	[ ]
Fairly satisfactory	[ ]
Not very satisfactory	[ ]
Very unsatisfactory	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

Security

59. Were there any security problems at your posting? (tick one box)

Active war zone	[ ]
Violence related to a conflict	[ ]
Civil unrest	[ ]
Widespread criminality	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

60. Were there security guidelines in place? (tick one box)

Yes, adequate and enforced	[ ]
Yes, adequate, but not enforced	[ ]
Yes, but inadequate	[ ]
Yes, but never tested	[ ]
No security guidelines	[ ]
None required	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

61. Were security evacuation plans in place? (tick one box)

Yes	[ ]
No, but were required	[ ]
No, not required	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

62. Were you adequately briefed on security? (tick one box)

Yes, on arrival	[ ]
Yes, when necessary	[ ]
Inadequately briefed	[ ]
Not briefed on security	[ ]
No security problems	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

63. Did you ever have anxieties about your personal safety? (tick one box)

Most of the time	[ ]
Some of the time	[ ]
Occasionally	[ ]
Never	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

64. Did you ever feel pressed to do something that was unsafe? (tick one box)

Frequently	[ ]
Sometimes	[ ]
Occasionally	[ ]
Never	[ ]
Not relevant	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

65. Did you ever knowingly take risks with your safety?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

66. Is there anything your organisation could have done to reduce stress on their expatriate staff?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Terms and conditions

67. Were terms and conditions of service clearly stated? (tick one box)

Stated, unambiguous	[ ]
Stated, but ambiguous	[ ]
Not stated	[ ]
Other.....	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

68. Did the agency have a grievance procedure in place?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Not known [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

69. Did you have any reason to consider using a grievance procedure?

Yes [ ] No [ ] Not known [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

70. Did you consider that the financial benefits were: (tick one box)

Over generous	[ ]
About right	[ ]
Too little	[ ]
Very poor	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

71. Would you like to contribute to an agency organised pension scheme? (tick one box)

Already contribute to an agency pension scheme [ ]
Would contribute if available [ ]
Have made alternative arrangements [ ]
Other ..... [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

72. Do you consider the insurance arrangements are adequate? (tick one box)

Comprehensive [ ]
Adequate [ ]
Inadequate [ ]
No insurance arrangements [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

73. How was access to transport for off-duty hours organised? (tick one box)

Every expatriate worker had equal access to identified vehicle [ ]
All expatriate workers had equal access to pool vehicle [ ]
Access to vehicles was unequal [ ]
No access to organisation vehicle [ ]
Bought own vehicle [ ]
Other [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

74. How satisfactory was the arrangement? (tick one box)

Very satisfactory [ ]
Fairly satisfactory [ ]
Not very satisfactory [ ]
Very unsatisfactory [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

75. How would you like access to transport to be organised?
. . . . . .

76. How was your accommodation organised? (tick one box)

Had house/flat to yourself	[ ]
Shared house/flat with 1-2 others	[ ]
Shared house/flat with several others	[ ]
Lived in hotel	[ ]
Lived in tents	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

77. How satisfactory was this? (tick one box)

Very satisfactory	[ ]
Fairly satisfactory	[ ]
Not very satisfactory	[ ]
Very unsatisfactory	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

78. Did you have sufficient privacy? (tick one box)

Sufficient	[ ]
Insufficient	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

79. Were conditions adequate to ensure health?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

80. How would you prefer accommodation to be organised?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Debriefing

81. Did you handover to your replacement in country? (tick one box)

To expatriate replacement	[ ]
To national replacement	[ ]
Not replaced	[ ]
Replaced, but no handover	[ ]

82. How satisfactory was this? (tick one box)

Very satisfactory	[ ]
Fairly satisfactory	[ ]
Not very satisfactory	[ ]
Very unsatisfactory	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

83. Did you have a debriefing? (tick those that apply)

In country, before departure	[ ]
On return to UK	[ ]
In another country	[ ]
No debriefing	[ ]

84. What was involved in the debriefing? (tick all that apply)

Discussion with programme staff	[ ]
Discussion with personnel staff	[ ]
Discussion with technical staff	[ ]
Presentation of final report	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

85. How satisfactory did you find the debriefing process? (tick one box)

Very satisfactory	[ ]
Fairly satisfactory	[ ]
Not very satisfactory	[ ]
Very unsatisfactory	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

86. Do you consider debriefing to be important? (tick one box)

Very important	[ ]
Fairly important	[ ]
Not very important	[ ]
Unimportant	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

87. Who do you consider the main beneficiary of your debriefing? (Number in order of importance)

The programme	[ ]
The agency	[ ]
Individual staff members	[ ]
The returned worker	[ ]
Future workers in programme	[ ]
Others	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

Personal debriefing

88. Did you have a medical examination on return? (tick one box)

Yes	[ ]
No, but was offered one	[ ]
No, none offered	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

89. Did you have the opportunity to discuss the emotional impact of your posting?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

90. Did you find it a helpful process? (tick one box)

Very helpful	[ ]
Fairly helpful	[ ]
Not very helpful	[ ]
Not at all helpful	[ ]
Did not discuss	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

91. For those who did not have this opportunity

Would you have liked the opportunity to talk about the emotional impact of your posting?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

92. Do you think that personal debriefing should be offered routinely? (tick one box)

For all returning aid workers [ ]

Only for those in difficult posts/countries	[ ]
Only for those who request it	[ ]
Never necessary	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

Returning Home

93. Did you have any problems with adjustment on your return? (tick those that apply)

Nowhere to live	[ ]
Problems with finding suitable job	[ ]
Financial problems	[ ]
Feeling of disorientation	[ ]
Sleep disturbance	[ ]
Lack of understanding from partner	[ ]
Lack of understanding from friends/family	[ ]
Depression	[ ]
Loneliness	[ ]
Other	[ ]
None	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

94. Are you still having difficulties with readjustment? (tick one box)

Considerable difficulty	[ ]
Some difficulty	[ ]
Not much difficulty	[ ]
No difficulty	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

95. Would you like another overseas assignment? (tick one box)

As soon as possible	[ ]
Within next six months	[ ]
Within next year	[ ]
At some time	[ ]
Never	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

Career opportunities and development

96. How do you see career development and promotion opportunities in aid and development

work? (tick one box)

Very good	[ ]
Fairly good	[ ]
Fairly poor	[ ]
Very poor	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

97. Did the agency offer information or advice on your future career?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

98. How important is it for you to have job security? (tick one box)

Very important	[ ]
Fairly important	[ ]
Not very important	[ ]
Not at all important	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

99. Which statement most closely reflects your views on your future career in aid and development work? (tick one box)

Would like long term contract with one agency, working overseas in different posts	[ ]
Would like long term contract with one agency, mixing overseas and UK posts	[ ]
Would like long term contract with one agency, based in the in the UK	[ ]
Would like to have short term posts, mainly with one agency	[ ]
Would like to change agency when change job	[ ]
Do not want career in this field	[ ]
Other	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

100. Which statement most closely reflects your views on recruitment among aid agencies? (tick one box)

All jobs should be externally advertised, followed by interviews [ ]
Jobs should be advertised to all current employees and those on agency register, followed by interviews [ ]
Agencies should give priority to former/current employees, only interviewing when unable to find suitable person [ ]
The most reliable method of recruitment is to approach people known to the agency or its staff [ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

Final summary of experience

101. How would you summarise your last overseas experience?

a. Personally (tick one box)

Very satisfying	[ ]	Not very satisfying	[ ]
Fairly satisfying	[ ]	Very unsatisfying	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

b. Professionally (tick one box)

Very satisfying	[ ]	Not very satisfying	[ ]
Fairly satisfying	[ ]	Very unsatisfying	[ ]

Please explain . . . . . .

Personal information

Name . . . . . .

Age last birthday . . . . . .

Sex	Male	[ ]	Female	[ ]
Status	Married/Cohabiting	[ ]	Single	[ ]

Do you have financial commitments? (tick those that apply)

Dependant partner	[ ]
Dependant children	[ ]
Mortgage	[ ]
Pension	[ ]
Other(s)	[ ]

What is your professional background?

. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Number of aid/development assignments (incl. this one) . . . . . .

Which agency did you work for on this last assignment? . . . . . .

Which other agencies, including ODA and UN, have you worked for in the past?
. . . . . .

Please return, using enclosed envelope, to:
Rebecca Macnair, Expatriate Support Adviser, British Red Cross Society,
9 Grosvenor Crescent, London, SW1X 7EJ

Annex 2

Terms of Reference

1. To review current systems at BRCS for induction, briefing, in-field support and debriefing of expatriate staff contracted to work internationally for the BRCS

2. To review procedures for counselling, psychological needs assessment and follow up for BRCS funded expatriate staff

3. To make recommendations for the development of psychological support services for BRCS funded expatriate staff

4. To develop and define recommended minimum standards for the pre- and post-assignment support of BRCS funded expatriate staff

5. To carry out a general audit of current induction, briefing, in-field support and briefing systems in other British and Irish based aid agencies

6. Through consultation with other British and Irish based aid agencies, in particular with DRI partners, to provide a statement of requirements for the post of Inter-Agency Coordinator, including specific Terms of Reference for the post and a detailed definition of the role of the Coordinator

7. To provide advice and assistance on the development of a 'returned expatriate staff network' for BRCS funded expatriate staff

8. To produce a final report, which would be relevant for other agencies, detailing the following:

   - the results of the research carried out in the BRCS and in the general audit

   - recommended minimum standards for the pre- and post assignment support of BRCS expatriate support

   - a statement of requirements and terms of reference for the post of Inter-Agency Coordinator, including a time frame for implementation.

Annex 3

Agency Distributing Questionnaire and Response Rate

Agency	**Questionnaires distributed (n)**	**Questionnaires received (n)**
British Red Cross	106	55
Christian Outreach	7	2
Health Unlimited	7	4
International Health Exchange	33	11
MERLIN	40	8
MSF (UK)	70	22
ODA	61	19
Oxfam	45	8
RedR	60	33
SCF	80	36
Tear Fund	24	10
Others		7
Total	**533**	**215**

Annex 4

Reported Security Problems at Posting

	Number	%age
Active war zone	43	22
Violence related to conflict	78	39
Civil unrest	49	25
Widespread criminality	30	15
Other	20	10
None	12	6

Annex 5

Satisfaction with Handover Process in Country

	Satisfied		**Not Satisfied**	
Handover to replacement	71	91%	7	9%
Replaced, but no handover	29	62%	18	38%
Not replaced	8	22%	28	78%

Annex 6

Place of Debriefing

	Number	**%age**
In country	59	30
In UK	142	71
Elsewhere	64	32
No debriefing	17	9

Annex 7

List of Workshop Participants

David Alexander	Red Cross
Cliff Allum	Skillshare Africa
Sarah Attwell	World Vision
Helen Pankhurst	ACORD
Anne Bennett	Quaker Peace and Service
Gabriella Breebaart	MSF - UK
Kay Bugg	Christian Outreach
Sue Chowdhury	OXFAM
Ann Cleary	Goal
Helen Cole	APSO
Karen Cole	ActionAid
Tim Cole	Christian Aid
Mary Considine	Concern Worldwide
James Davidson	Feed the Children
Karen de Rochemont	ActionAid
Janet Douglas	ODA
Paul Emes	Red Cross
Jan Fordham	Open Learning Associates
Libby Hare	Feed the Children
Gay Harper	Save the Children Fund
Dinny Hawes	International Cooperation for Development
Rex Hendriksen	MSF - Holland
Richard Grove-Hills	International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent
Ellie Johnson	Psychotherapist
Lorna Kirkpatrick	ODA
Bobby Lambert	RedR
Ted Lankester	Interhealth
Jennifer Loughlin	Tear Fund
Barbara Lowe	Returned Aid Workers Trust
Isobel McConnan	International Health Exchange
Rebecca Macnair	Expatriate Support Adviser
Annie Macklow Smith	Merlin
Alice Mason	Returned Aid Workers Trust
Harold Masterson	International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent
Lucy Medd	Health Unlimited
Theresa Mellon	Save the Children Fund
Sulieman Mleahat	Medical Aid for Palestinians

Toireas Ni Bhriain	Concern Worldwide
Nicholas Richards	CAFOD
Seonaid Robertson	Tear Fund
Ian Robbins	Psychologist
Philip Rubenstein	UKJAID
Ann Sanders	VSO
Dawn Sewell	Salvation Army
Roland Sewell	Salvation Army
Jane Shackman	Medical Foundation for Victims of Torture
Maria Soltysiak	Care Britain
Helen Spraos	UNAIS
David Talbot	Tear Fund
Leanne Taylor	Red Cross
Andrew Timpson	Save the Children fund
Katherine Trott	Action Health
Tammy Walker	Returned Volunteer Action

Annex 8

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List of Acronyms

CDC	Centre for Disease Control
CID	Critical Incident Debriefing
ICRC	International Committe of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
IHE	International Health Exchange
MSF	Médecins sans Frontières
NGO	Non-governmental Organisations
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
RedR	Registered Engineers for Disaster Relief
SCF	Save the Children Fund
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organisation

Relief and Rehabilitation Network

The objective of the Relief and Rehabilitation Network (RRN) is to facilitate the exchange of professional information and experience between the personnel of NGOs and other agencies involved in the provision of relief and rehabilitation assistance. Members of the Network are either nominated by their agency or may apply on an individual basis. Each year, RRN members receive four mailings in either English or French. A Newsletter and Network Papers are mailed to members every March and September and 'Good Practice' Reviews on topics in the relief and rehabilitation field every June and December. In addition, RRN members are able to obtain advice on technical and operational problems they are facing from the RRN staff in London. A modest charge is made for membership with rates varying in the case of agency-nominated members depending on the type of agency.

The RRN is operated by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in conjunction with the European Association of Non-Governmental Organisations for Food Aid and Emergency Relief (EuronAid). ODI is an independent centre for development research and a forum for policy discussion on issues affecting economic relations between the North and South and social and economic policies within developing countries. EuronAid provides logistics and financing services to NGOs using EC food aid in their relief and development programmes. It has 25 member agencies and four with observer status. Its offices are located in the Hague.

For further information, contact:

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