Number 72
February 2012

HPN
Humanitarian
Practice Network
Managed by
Humanitarian Policy Group

Network Paper

Local to Global Protection in Myanmar (Burma), Sudan, South Sudan and Zimbabwe

Commissioned and published by the Humanitarian Practice Network at ODI

Ashley South and Simon Harragin, with Justin Corbett, Richard Horsey, Susanne Kempel, Henrik Fröjmark and Nils Carstensen

In brief

• This Network Paper presents the findings of five community-based studies on self-protection in Myanmar (Burma), Sudan, South Sudan and Zimbabwe.
• The studies demonstrate how vulnerable people take the lead in activities to protect themselves and their communities, and how local understandings of 'protection' vary from how the concept is used by international humanitarian agencies. While hugely important for everyday survival, local understandings and self-protection activities are rarely acknowledged or effectively supported by aid agencies.
• The case studies also illustrate that, while self-protection strategies may be crucial for survival, they are rarely fully adequate. Local agency cannot be regarded as a substitute for the protection responsibilities of national authorities or international actors.
• The paper suggests two distinct but complementary approaches to protection: strengthening local capacities for self-protection, and generating the political will to prevent or stop targeted attacks on civilians.

About HPN
The Humanitarian Practice Network at the Overseas Development Institute is an independent forum where field workers, managers and policymakers in the humanitarian sector share information, analysis and experience. The views and opinions expressed in HPN's publications do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Humanitarian Policy Group or the Overseas Development Institute.

odi
Overseas Development Institute

ODI is Britain's leading independent think-tank on international development and humanitarian issues

Overseas Development Institute
111 Westminster Bridge Road
London SE1 7JD
United Kingdom

Tel. +44 (0) 20 7922 0300
Fax. +44 (0) 20 7922 0399

HPN e-mail: hpn@odi.org.uk
HPN website: www.odihpn.org

Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN)
Overseas Development Institute
111 Westminster Bridge Road
London, SE1 7JD
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 7922 0331/74
Fax: +44 (0)20 7922 0399
Email: hpn@odi.org.uk
Website: www.odihpn.org

Printed and bound in the UK

About the authors

Ashley South is an independent analyst and consultant specialising in humanitarian and political issues in Myanmar and South-east Asia.

Simon Harragin is an independent consultant and writer on anthropology and development issues. His research focuses on the delivery of aid in humanitarian emergencies in Sudan and other countries in East Africa.

Justin Corbett is an independent consultant with over 20 years' experience working with local communities, governments and aid organisations in Africa and Asia. He focuses on community empowerment, civil society, governance and capacity-building.

Richard Horsey is an independent consultant specialising in political, human rights and development issues in authoritarian states.

Susanne Kempel is a social anthropologist focusing on local governance, livelihoods, civil society and political development in Myanmar.

Henrik Fröjmark is a policy and advocacy advisor to Church of Sweden/ACT Alliance and a co-initiator of the L2GP initiative.

Nils Carstensen is a writer and senior humanitarian adviser to DanChurchAid/ACT Alliance. He is the manager and co-initiator of the L2GP initiative.

About L2GP

Local to Global Protection (L2GP) is an initiative to document and promote local perspectives on protection in major humanitarian crises. It was initiated by a group of organisations within the ACT Alliance (http://www.actalliance.org), in cooperation with other organisations and individuals in Myanmar, Sudan, South Sudan and Zimbabwe. The analysis and opinions in this Network Paper are solely the responsibility of the authors and cannot be attributed to any of the participating institutions.

LOCAL TO GLOBAL PROTECTION
WWW.LOCAL2GLOBAL.INFO

All L2GP studies are available at http://www.local2global.info.

ISBN: 978-1-907288-58-6

© Overseas Development Institute, London, 2012.

Photocopies of all or part of this publication may be made providing that the source is acknowledged. Requests for the commercial reproduction of HPN material should be directed to the ODI as copyright holders. The Network Coordinator would appreciate receiving details of the use of any of this material in training, research or programme design, implementation or evaluation.

Contents

Executive summary

This Network Paper presents the findings of five community-based studies on self-protection in Myanmar (Burma), Sudan, South Sudan and Zimbabwe.

The studies demonstrate how vulnerable people take the lead in activities to protect themselves and their communities. Often, local understandings of 'protection' are at variance with – or extend beyond – how the concept is used by international humanitarian agencies. In most of the studies, livelihoods and protection were intimately linked. Customary law and local values and traditions mattered at least as much as formal rights. Psychological and spiritual needs and threats were often considered as important as physical survival. Local understandings and self-protection activities, while hugely important for everyday survival, are rarely acknowledged or effectively supported by aid agencies.

The studies also examine how vulnerable communities view the protection activities of local, national and international agencies, including humanitarian organisations, as well as political and armed groups. In some cases, local organisations provide valuable protection services, while non-state armed groups can represent both protection actors and agents of threat. Protection initiatives by outside actors (states, humanitarian agencies and peacekeepers) are seen as less important than strategies of self-protection.

The case studies also illustrate that, while self-protection strategies may be crucial for survival, they rarely provide the degree of safety, security and dignity that people need. Furthermore, some local protection activities expose people to further risk. Thus, vital as it is, local agency cannot be regarded as a substitute for the protection responsibilities of national authorities or – when that fails – international actors.

The paper suggests that two distinct but complementary approaches to protection are required: strengthening local capacities for self-protection, while at the same time generating the international political will (as well as national public interest) to prevent or stop targeted attacks on civilians. It concludes with some guidance for promoting locally-led protection.

Chapter 1
Introduction

The humanitarian enterprise has traditionally been guided by the principles of neutrality and impartiality – meaning in practice that aid agencies are expected to steer clear of politics. Following the end of the Cold War, however, many aid agencies reconceptualised their mission, under the broad rubric of a 'new humanitarianism'. According to this position, humanitarian actors should address not only needs (e.g. for food and medicine), but also the causes of vulnerability, including socio-political (and possibly economic) structures of violence. A defining feature of the 'protective turn' in humanitarianism was a shift from viewing vulnerable civilians as passive victims to assisting and protecting them as active rights-holders.

According to the most widely accepted definition, humanitarian protection aims to limit or mitigate the impacts of abuses. Protection 'encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. international human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law)'.[1] In this spirit, 'rights-based' programming seeks to promote and protect vulnerable people's access to internationally recognised rights, with various agencies having mandates in different sectors.

During the 1990s, and especially following the Rwandan genocide in 1994, policy debates centred on the right of international actors to intervene in situations of large-scale and systematic human rights abuses. During the subsequent decade, the focus shifted to the responsibility of governments to protect their citizens – and on the international community's role in cases where states were unable or unwilling to provide this protection. In these discussions, however, protective action remained the prerogative of the sovereign nation-state, or failing that (and by default) the international community.

Building on the work of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, in 2005 the UN World Summit Outcome Document endorsed the doctrine of the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P), according to which international actors may intervene in situations of acute crisis in order to prevent, mitigate or otherwise respond to widespread rights violations, if the state concerned was unable or unwilling to do this. Although subsequently endorsed by UN Security Council Resolution 1674 in 2006, this doctrine has been contested and has not yet been universally accepted as part of international customary law. Furthermore, the R2P doctrine relates solely to activities approved by the UN Security Council, and by extension to the actions of states and their agents – the international humanitarian system (UN agencies and selected international NGOs) – and is only applicable in the case of genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Elements within the human rights and activist communities have nevertheless sought to mobilise the R2P doctrine, in order to encourage and justify a broad range of rights-based interventions, including on the part of non-state actors such as NGOs.[2]

> *'We tried to help as best we could. Those who had badly bruised or broken body parts we tried to help with bandages from pieces of clothes and other materials to support and protect the wounded parts. We then mended a broken boat so we could row those who were badly wounded to [the nearest town].'*
>
> – Myanmar men in the Delta

In a complementary move, humanitarian and development agencies have endeavoured to elicit beneficiaries' participation in their programming, as articulated in various standard-setting exercises such as the Sphere Project, the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) and the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative. Likewise, the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response has called for 'acknowledging, making visible and diminishing the power imbalance between organizations and disaster-affected persons; involving affected persons meaningfully in key decisions and processes that influence their lives; [and] building relationships with affected persons that are characterized by dignity and respect'.[3] However, programme aims and objectives are usually designed to fit the requirements of agency headquarters and donors, and protection continues to be seen as an activity undertaken primarily by outsiders, on behalf of vulnerable communities. Affected communities and their representatives are rarely consulted in any meaningful sense in the design of humanitarian interventions. This can be problematic because external interventions that fail to recognise and support indigenous efforts may inadvertently undermine existing coping mechanisms, disempowering local communities. Furthermore, only very small amounts of foreign aid money are provided directly to local actors.

To a degree, the prioritisation of external agency may be an operational necessity, especially in emergency situations where addressing immediate needs and the effective distribution of large-scale assistance is a priority. Nevertheless, opportunities exist to better understand and relate to a range of 'non-system' protection actors – especially affected communities. This approach to protection relates to the 'second pillar' of R2P, according to which outside actors may help states to build their protective capacities.

Box 1

The 'three pillars' of R2P

1. **The protection responsibilities of the state.** A state has a responsibility to protect its population from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing (mass atrocities).

2. **International assistance and capacity-building.** If a state is unable to protect its population on its own, the international community has a responsibility to assist the state by building its capacity. This can mean building early-warning capabilities, mediating conflicts between political parties, strengthening the security sector and mobilising standby forces.

3. **Timely and decisive response.** If a state is manifestly failing to protect its citizens from mass atrocities and peaceful measures are not working, the international community has a responsibility to intervene at first diplomatically, then more coercively, and as a last resort with military force.

Local to Global Protection

Local to Global Protection (L2GP) is an initiative to document and promote local perspectives on protection in major humanitarian crises. Based on research in Myanmar, Sudan, South Sudan and Zimbabwe, L2GP explores how people living in areas affected by natural disaster and armed conflict understand 'protection' – what they value, and how they go about protecting themselves, their families and their communities. The research also examines how people view the roles of others, including the state, non-state actors, community-based organisations and national and international aid agencies. Are they seen as protection actors or sources of threat – or a combination of both?

L2GP was in part prompted by a sense of disconnect between globally-driven protection initiatives and the vast range of actions undertaken by people at risk. The initiative documents and analyses the agency of local people affected by terrible situations, who nevertheless struggle to retain their dignity and some control over their own lives. It adopts an 'appreciative enquiry' approach in order to identify and promote what works in difficult circumstances, rather than focusing just on mistakes and abuses (which is not to argue that human rights violations should not be documented and denounced). Above all, L2GP has sought to respect sometimes diverse local understandings and activities in the field of 'protection'. For most international aid agencies, 'protection' is usually taken to mean access to rights articulated in international law and conventions (the ICRC definition). In most crisis situations, however, these notions are imported or imposed, and do not always resonate with the realities and experience of local people.

The L2GP studies

This Network Paper presents the main findings of L2GP studies conducted between 2009 and 2011 in Myanmar (the Karen-populated south-east and the Irrawaddy Delta post-Cyclone Nargis), Sudan (South Kordofan and the Nuba Mountains), South Sudan (Jonglei) and Zimbabwe.[4]

> *'We stay alert and informed so that when we hear of possible attacks from war veterans we flee from our homes with our children. But we still live with fear.'*
>
> – Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) activist, Mashonaland East, Zimbabwe

Each of the studies followed a similar approach. The lead consultant (who is also primary author) for each study engaged with a wide range of stakeholders, including international and national state and non-state agencies, NGOs and CBOs and – most importantly – members and representatives of affected communities. From the outset the studies elicited the views and participation of affected communities. However, the authors realise that the L2GP initiative – originating as it does in the international humanitarian community – represents a profoundly unequal power relationship between 'outside' researchers and the communities being researched. The process of carrying out the studies showed how difficult it is to capture genuine local voices. Calling a research study 'participatory' is rarely enough to change the fundamental power dynamics and communications gap that exist between global and local actors, but it is important to be explicit and honest about that gap, rather than contending that outsiders can unproblematically speak on behalf of local actors.

Each study involved close collaboration between international and national researchers, using a combination of individual and focus group interviews in the field. During the subsequent report-drafting process, extensive feedback was sought from involved individuals and groups in a series of formal and informal sessions at national and local levels. Where local perspectives were dissonant with global ones, we have tried to represent this.[5] Likewise when local narratives are internally contested we have tried to represent this complexity.

The studies were part-funded by a group of organisations within the ACT Alliance. Subsequently a number of organisations and individuals in Myanmar, Sudan, South Sudan and Zimbabwe have joined the project. The L2GP initiative has benefited from advice and support from the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG), as well as from individuals associated with the Listening Project.[6] The initiative has been financially supported by Danida (Denmark) and Sida (Sweden).

The most important and inspiring finding emerging from the research is the manner in which vulnerable people

take the lead in activities to protect themselves and their communities. As well as affected communities, indigenous civil society networks play key protection and assistance roles, while the activities of armed groups and national authorities are often perceived as having mixed impacts. Often, local understandings of 'protection' are at variance with – or extend beyond – how the concept is used by international humanitarian agencies. In most of the studies, livelihoods and protection were intimately linked. Customary law and local values and traditions mattered at least as much as formal rights. Psychological and spiritual needs and threats were often considered as important as physical survival. However, local understandings and self-protection activities, while hugely important for everyday survival, are rarely acknowledged or effectively supported by aid agencies.

> *'The international did nothing to protect us. The [government forces were] trying to kill us. We depended on ourselves and the SPLA. If we did not fight to defend ourselves we would be dead.'*
>
> – Atoro woman, South Kordofan

The activities of international aid agencies are often crucial in saving lives and supporting longer-term rehabilitation. However, outside actors miss many opportunities to build on and strengthen local capacities, despite numerous evaluations pointing to the importance of not just engaging local populations in all phases of humanitarian programming, but also building 'outsider' protection responses on the existing capacities of local populations – and where these are lacking, seeking to build capacities through a context-specific approach.

There are a number of reasons why such aspirations are commonly frustrated, including technical issues and questions of mandate and funding. Ultimately, however, the difficulties which many international donors and agencies face in understanding and effectively engaging with local self-protection efforts derive from deep-rooted institutional factors, including the (conscious and unconscious) values and incentive structures within humanitarian organisations. Such issues relate to the complex and dynamic power relations that exist between international, national and local agencies in disaster-affected contexts, and the generally marginalised status of many vulnerable communities, *vis-à-vis* both the state and the international humanitarian 'system'. Put bluntly, the unspoken reality is that, for many agencies, the next grant remains the ultimate priority. Local communities have little or no say in decision-making, planning and coordination processes.

Humanitarian agencies and donors should do more to understand and engage with local realities and actions in the field of protection. This will enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of their interventions. However, local approaches are not in themselves a solution to the wide-ranging and serious abuses suffered by the people who contributed to these studies. On the contrary, all the case studies illustrate that, while self-protection strategies may be crucial for survival, they rarely provide the degree of safety, security and dignity that people need. Thus, vital as it is, local agency cannot be regarded as a substitute for the protection responsibilities of national authorities or – when that fails – international actors.

Chapter 2
The case studies

Myanmar (Burma): Karen study

Ashley South, with Malin Perhult and Nils Carstensen[7]

The first L2GP case study examines the realities and perceptions of ethnic Karen people living in conflict-affected south-east Myanmar.[8] This is an area to which international agencies have little or no access, due to restrictions on the part of the Burmese military government and related security concerns. In the absence of international humanitarian access, local groups engage in various assistance and protection activities. These groups include a range of CBOs and local NGOs, some of which are closely affiliated with parties to the conflict. Furthermore, various non-state armed groups position themselves as protectors of the civilian population. More important than any such activities, however, are the often brave and ingenious self-protection strategies vulnerable people themselves employ.

Methodology

The project conducted research at a variety of locations in south-east Myanmar. These included government-controlled and ceasefire areas, as well as zones of ongoing armed conflict and regions subject to multiple armed groups. More than 200 in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted by the lead consultant, alongside 30 research assistants from six local NGOs (four opposition-oriented groups working along the Thailand–Myanmar border, and two based in Rangoon). As well as Karen civilians, interviewees included ICRC, INGO and UN staff, diplomats and donors, CBO and local NGO personnel, politicians and members of non-state armed groups. The findings of the study were shared with and shaped by local researchers. However, not all of those who participated in the research agreed with all of the analysis and conclusions presented here.

Context

Ethnic minority-populated parts of Myanmar have been affected by armed conflict since independence from Britain in 1948, and the country has been subject to military rule since 1962. Less well-known than the primarily urban-based struggle for democracy, Myanmar's long-running ethnic conflicts have disrupted the lives of millions of people, with at least 500,000 currently displaced in the south-east, plus about 140,000 people living in refugee camps in neighbouring Thailand and another two to three million working as (often highly vulnerable) migrant workers in the region. Many of these people are members of ethnic minorities (or 'nationalities'), including various sub-groups of Karen people.[9]

Most reports on armed conflict and its impact in Myanmar focus on vulnerable civilians as 'victims', without taking account of the agency of affected communities.[10] Furthermore, advocacy groups tend to report exclusively on the situation of border-based communities and actors aligned with armed and political opposition groups, including particularly the main Karen insurgent organisation, the Karen National Union (KNU). The past decade has seen the production of large numbers of reports which have done much to highlight the difficult situation faced by people in the remaining areas of Myanmar affected by armed conflict. However, existing literature generally fails to investigate the roles played by armed ethnic groups and the manner in which insurgent attacks (or even the presence of insurgents in an area) can provoke reprisals against civilians. Few studies focus on the situation in areas controlled by non-KNU armed factions.

Access, assistance and protection

The L2GP project undertook research on both sides of the 'front line' of armed conflict in Karen-populated areas in the south-east: in territory accessible to the KNU and its affiliates and in areas controlled by the government and by groups that have agreed ceasefires with the state, as well as in areas under the authority of multiple armed groups.

> *'My nephew became a Peace Council [PC – ex-KNU armed faction] soldier in order to protect the family. If you do not have someone in the PC, no one in the family can travel around. As someone connected to the PC, we can travel freely, and get no trouble at checkpoints. Without the PC, villagers would have to be afraid of the Burma Army.'*
>
> *'Before making this trip, I prepared lots of money to pay the checkpoints. However, at the "gate" the Burma Army soldiers didn't ask any questions or search me, because they know my nephew who is in the PC.'*
>
> – Karen villager

In the absence of protection by the state or international agencies, CBOs and local NGOs provide limited amounts of assistance and protection to vulnerable communities. This mostly takes the form of food assistance (often cash distributions), emergency medical aid and some education and community development work.

A range of local aid agencies working in zones of ongoing armed conflict operate across the border from Thailand. These include the welfare wings of armed ethnic groups and other more independent organisations. As cross-border aid is often the only way to help highly vulnerable communities, agencies working in zones of ongoing armed conflict have little choice but to accept some form of relationship with insurgent groups.

Donor support for IDPs, and particularly refugee assistance programmes in the border areas, support civilians in dire need – but arguably also help to sustain the armed conflict. This occurs when, for instance, insurgent personnel receive shelter or supplies from refugee camps in Thailand, and are legitimised through the support they receive from international agencies. This is a classic humanitarian dilemma faced in a number of other conflicts, including Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan and Sri Lanka. In recent years, donors and NGOs have made considerable progress in ensuring that the refugee administration is more accountable to camp residents. Nevertheless, armed opposition groups in Myanmar still rely on the refugee camps for important resources.

'Regular villagers cannot go to the refugee camps, especially if they are Buddhists, and have no contacts in the KNU. The camps are for Christians. They get preferential treatment in the camps, and more opportunities for resettlement.'

– Female Karen Buddhist leader

'Migrant workers here don't go to the refugee camps because we don't know people there – we don't have any connection … those who enter the refugee camps have money, or family in the camps'.

– Male Karen Buddhist migrant worker

Local NGOs and CBOs operate inside government-controlled Myanmar in areas inaccessible to cross-border agencies. Several are engaged in low-profile, community-based responses to conflict. In some cases, faith-based leaders are able to provide limited protection for civilians in their areas of influence, building community trust and social capital. Some (particularly faith-based) leaders are able to create local zones of tranquillity and limited physical protection to their followers. Such activities generally receive only limited outside assistance – a constraint which also has benefits, inasmuch as it allows local actors to maintain a low profile.

For some Rangoon-based international organisations, local civil society actors are often viewed instrumentally, as a means of gaining access to conflict-affected communities in order to implement aid agencies' mandates. Thailand-based agencies supporting cross-border work are generally supportive of local agency, but there is very little discussion regarding how such engagement contributes to the ongoing conflict.

Armed non-state groups are also important actors in south-east Myanmar. International human rights and humanitarian law provide little recognition for the role of non-state armed groups as protection actors. Nevertheless, a variety of armed groups position themselves as defenders of Karen populations, providing physical safety and livelihood security and protecting elements of Karen culture and identity. These claims are made notwithstanding the widespread use of landmines by all armed groups and the fact that insurgent military operations launched against 'the enemy' provoke army reprisals against civilians. Although bitterly opposed on the battlefield and in the political arena, leaders of the main Karen armed factions all regard themselves as legitimate representatives and guardians of the Karen peoples.

Ultimately, assessments of these different approaches to protection will depend on the legitimacy accorded to key actors by local communities and national and international humanitarian and political agencies. For many international donors and activists the Western-oriented KNU, with its emphasis on state-building and its rights-based agenda, is considered the sole legitimate Karen political actor. Karen civilians interviewed by the L2GP project expressed a range of opinions regarding different conflict actors. Many demonstrated some sympathy for the KNU and sometimes also for the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA), which split from the KNU in 1994, as representing 'our people'. However, some of the very same people often expressed dismay about the impact of KNU and DKBA actions on villagers' safety, questioning the appropriateness of armed conflict as a strategy after 60 years of civil war.

Self-protection and survival

People interviewed for this study demonstrated a detailed and sophisticated understanding of threats to their safety, livelihood options and general wellbeing. As is the case in the other L2GP studies, for ethnic Karen civilians protection and livelihood concerns are deeply interconnected.

People reported a wide range of concerns, including murder, rape, torture, looting and pillage, forced labour, arbitrary taxation and land confiscation, as well as concerns related to the protection of livelihoods (including widespread indebtedness), and the maintenance of cultural and religious identities. In order to control rural populations, and to exert strategic influence, all sides seek to cut communications between rural communities and towns ('locking down' villages), to the detriment of local people's livelihoods and their health and education. Many respondents identified the Myanmar Army and government authorities, and allied forces such as the DKBA, as the main perpetrators. The KNU was also said to be responsible for abuses, albeit generally not to the same degree as government forces.

'My parents said that, as they were born in this country, they will live in this country, until the end of their lives. People there commonly say that it is their luck to be born in that place, so they will stay with that luck until the end of their lives.'

– Karen IDP

In this context, options for protection are limited. Indeed, some communities and individuals find it almost impossible

to survive. For many people, silence and acquiescence to the demands of the powerful is the only viable self-protection strategy. Nevertheless, the research discovered numerous examples of ingenious and brave practices on the part of vulnerable communities, who act to protect themselves in various ways. The resources that people mobilise include their relationships with fellow villagers and village leaders, with other communities (including neighbouring and more distant settlements) and with various authorities (including civilian leaders and armed groups). The types of relationship that villagers have developed influence the self-protection strategies they adopt. The other key resource necessary to develop self-protection mechanisms is access to information. For some Buddhist and Christian communities, their faith helps them to cope with the many difficulties they face.

'When we go to our plantation, we have no idea where the landmines could be planted. So we have to take the risk to pick the fruits and vegetable. In order to be safe we have been thinking to move to a safe place.'

– Karen villager

It is difficult to develop a consistent 'typology of survival and coping' that reflects the diversity and richness of the examples encountered in this study. Indeed, doing so may distort people's actual experiences by trying to fit them into a framework which risks being arbitrary. Nonetheless, communities affected by armed conflict in south-east Myanmar seem to adopt two main forms of self-protection mechanism: they seek to *contain* or to *avoid* threats. In some cases, these strategies are combined with actions that may be framed as forms of 'resistance' or *confrontation*.

Civilians seek to contain threats or mitigate the impact of abuse through the mobilisation of patronage networks, including maintaining good relations with local authorities and power-holders, such as religious and other civil society figures and armed groups. The personal qualities of individual village leaders are particularly important. In situations where local leaders have the ingenuity, wisdom and courage to engage with power-holders, they can sometimes help to protect villagers and gain access to resources; particularly influential in this respect have been religious (Buddhist and sometimes Christian) leaders, who are able to create zones of relative peace and protection in areas under their influence. Community leaders may be able to persuade power-holders to change their behaviour, or at least limit the extent of abuse.

'When I was a young boy, living in central Karen State, my parents sent me to the monastery, to prevent the KNU from recruiting me.'

– Karen community leader

Particularly in areas subject to more than one authority (i.e. under the influence of both insurgent and ceasefire groups and/or government forces), people may pay tribute to 'multiple masters' in the form of taxation (in cash and kind, including labour), and by aligning themselves with one or more power-holders, for instance by conscripting their sons into armed groups. In many cases, civilians have little option but to comply with demands for forced labour and money, and simply try to cope with abuses. One of the most effective protection strategies is to stay quiet and avoid attracting attention. People may also seek to pay off authorities with cash, but this is not a sustainable strategy, particularly for poor rural communities.

'Sometimes the safest way to stay safe from government forces is to pretend to be a happy idiot.'

– Karen Buddhist businesswoman, Rangoon

As noted, community leaders are sometimes able to engage with power-holders and persuade them to change their behaviour, or at least limit the extent of abuse. Such activities include forms of complaint to the authorities, including direct appeals to Myanmar Army, insurgent and ceasefire group officers to control their troops. These types of local advocacy are not well-documented in the extensive literature on human rights issues in Myanmar. The approach of many rights-oriented organisations is to document and denounce abuses, even if this is not always the most effective way of improving the situation of the villagers whose stories are reproduced in such reports. In many cases, quiet behind-the-scenes advocacy may be more effective in achieving results which actually improve people's lives. That said, the 'document and denounce' approach has some value, not least because power-holders in Myanmar are sometimes reluctant to perpetrate abuses out of fear that their activities may be reported to public advocacy networks, causing problems with their superiors. The documentation of human rights abuses is also important in raising the profile of organisations trying to help affected populations and attracting funding, and may be of some value in the future in the context of transitional justice.

When local protection strategies are unavailable or prove unsuccessful, vulnerable individuals and communities seek to avoid the threats they face. Often, they have few options other than to relocate. Patterns of forced migration are complex and varied, and include movement into government- and ceasefire group-controlled areas (including towns and peri-urban settlements), as well as flight into the jungle (often involving extensive periods living 'in hiding' as internally displaced people), crossing the Thai border to become migrant workers or seeking access to refugee camps. In many cases, families or communities split up during migration, with members choosing different strategies depending on their resources and networks and local opportunities and constraints.

Many people displaced by conflict display great courage and tenacity. Despite terrible hardships they try to help each other, by sharing food and maintaining strong community bonds. Karen civilians living 'in hiding' in the jungle also adopt 'clandestine' forms of agriculture, in order to evade detection and the confiscation or destruction of their crops.

> *'If you join a ceasefire group, you can avoid portering. You need to have information and be able to understand which groups have more power in relation to the government. Many people therefore join the DKBA or PC. If you give a son as a soldier, you can move to their area – but not otherwise … If you give a son to the KNU – or if you already have connections in that group – you can join their area of control and protection.'*
>
> – Karen community leader

The decisions people take in terms of migration and other protection strategies depend on their relationships, and available resources. For some (particularly Buddhist) villagers who are poor and do not have contacts in the KNU, access to asylum in the refugee camps in Thailand is perceived as difficult, as the camps are considered by many displaced civilians to be influenced by the KNU, and for those without connections to the insurgency money is required to enter the settlements. In contrast, for those who are associated with opposition groups it can be very dangerous to enter government or ceasefire group areas (including relocation sites). Those with family in the KNU or friends and relatives in border areas are more likely to flee to insurgent-controlled or -influenced areas, including refugee camps. Those without such contacts, or who enjoy non-threatening relations with government forces and/or the DKBA, may choose to enter official relocation sites (where these exist), or move into areas under these authorities.

As well as the importance of networks and relationships for survival, information is essential in devising self-protection strategies. Villagers need to know where armed groups are situated, what their relationship is with government forces and each other, the location of landmines, where the best escape routes are, what their friends and relatives have done or are doing and what services may be provided by conflict actors or CBOs.

Often, the containment or avoidance strategies vulnerable communities adopt will expose them to further risk. Under such circumstances, people have to balance the protection threats they face with the need to secure other benefits, such as livelihoods for themselves and their families. Examples include the willingness of farmers to enter landmine-infested fields in order to tend their crops, or the danger and exploitation faced by migrants (e.g. trafficking). Another striking example is the willingness of some villagers in conflict zones to use landmines to protect their communities.

> *'When the Burma Army came, we prepared our belongings. We took some with us to jungle and hid some food and prepare to find a safe place. We went together as a whole village and helped each other … We have to stop our kids crying by stuffing clothes into their mouths.'*
>
> – Female villager

Conclusion

Most international agencies focusing on Myanmar's south-eastern borderlands demonstrate only limited awareness of local realities and the complexities of communities' survival and coping strategies. Assistance and protection are often conceived of as something which 'we' (the aid agency) attempt to do on behalf of 'them' (vulnerable people).

International agencies should do more to understand local protection priorities and strategies, and elicit beneficiary participation not just in project implementation and evaluation but also in programme design. A good first step would be to engage more substantially with community-based networks. At the same time, donors and aid agencies should adopt 'Do No Harm' approaches, taking care to examine the social, economic and political impacts of their interventions.[11] This will not be a straightforward undertaking in south-east Myanmar, where the humanitarian agenda is highly politicised. Another set of complications involves the vulnerability to state suppression of local NGOs and CBOs, and the manner in which their priorities and activities can be distorted by engagement with the juggernaut of international aid. Such caveats notwithstanding, local humanitarian activities *can* mobilise communities and help to build trust and capacity, and international donors *can* engage positively with such initiatives.

Myanmar: Delta study

Ashley South, Malin Perhult, Nils Carstensen and Susanne Kempel

This is a summary of the second full-length report of the L2GP project in Myanmar, following the Karen area study. While the Karen study focuses on a situation of protracted armed conflict, the Delta report explores the local realities and perceptions of communities affected by a natural disaster: Cyclone Nargis, which struck the Irrawaddy Delta on the night of 2 May 2008.

Methodology

The study is based on field research and interviews with several hundred people, including villagers from affected communities, community workers and the staff of local and international aid agencies. Most of the research was undertaken in late 2009 over a period of two months in two Townships, by a team of four expatriates and 15 local researchers from two Burmese CBOs.

Context

For many people interviewed, the abiding impression

is the overwhelming ferocity of the storm. Particularly in the most vulnerable coastal areas, entire villages were destroyed and very few people survived. Altogether, some 2.5–3 million people were displaced. The death toll was approximately 140,000 – and possibly as many as 200,000 – most of whom died in a period of less than 12 hours.[12] Survivors were exhausted and traumatised, in many cases having lost their entire family. Some were left naked, having had their clothes ripped from their backs by the ferocious winds and rain; many were injured, and all were hungry and thirsty.

Access, assistance and protection

Among the immediate threats faced by vulnerable communities were drowning and lack of food, water, shelter, healthcare and means of transportation or communication. In terms of the problems faced by communities, what is also striking is what was not said – for example, very few cases of rape or other forms of sexual harassment were reported by the people interviewed.

In the weeks after the cyclone, threats, risks and concerns included trauma and psychological shock, problems associated with the presence of numerous unburied dead, forced return from displacement and other patterns of non-voluntary migration, restricted humanitarian access (particularly government restrictions on international agencies: see below), lack of inputs for the reconstruction of homes and livelihoods, lack of access to affordable credit or education, delivery of inappropriate aid items and local perceptions of unfair food aid targeting, inconsistent decision-making by local authorities and a general lack of support from the state, including lack of protection from thieves. While some of these concerns existed prior to the cyclone, they were greatly exacerbated by it.

Self-protection and survival

People's responses to the threats and concerns they were exposed to varied depending on an ongoing assessment of the likely success and risks involved. Villagers reported that such informal assessments took into account access to physical resources such as money and transport; relationships (did they know people who could intervene with the authorities or aid agencies or be sympathetic?); the perceived influence and stature of local leaders (could the local leader argue his case strongly with local authorities or aid providers?); reliance on support from others; knowledge of laws and rights, and how to make use of this knowledge; and previous experiences, responses and rates of risk and success.

Local responses to threats varied from avoiding or ignoring them to containing, mitigating, managing and negotiating or more directly confronting them. In most cases communities sought to manage the threats in an indirect, non-confrontational manner. If faced with overwhelming power or the perceived risk that assistance would be stopped if they voiced their concerns, villagers often stayed quiet or managed the threat themselves. Alternatively, they would try to mitigate the threat by withholding information or providing false information to the authorities and aid providers. In cases involving direct threats to their livelihoods or access to basic services, respondents tended to first rely on their own resources and partly ignore the threat. If the threat did not go away, they would often employ more collective and direct responses, such as appealing to or negotiating with authorities or aid providers.

Communities were better at managing, negotiating and confronting threats where they had strong leaders, good relations with the authorities or others in positions of power and the financial resources they needed to respond. However, some issues, particularly related to individuals' well-being – rather than collective concerns – were not resolved by negotiation with the authorities. The fact that communities did not have prior experience of engaging with aid agencies also limited their response. The risk – real or perceived – that complaining to the authorities or local or international aid agencies might cause these outsiders to withdraw their assistance meant that many communities and individuals tended to stay silent.

Respondents rarely referred to legal or rights-based aspects of protection, either as articulated under Myanmar domestic law or under international law or conventions. Villagers seemed to have only very limited expectations of the protection or assistance they could expect from local or national governments. Although some villagers (particularly elites within communities) engaged with the state, few of the self-protection strategies reported related to the activities or responsibilities of the state (e.g. affected communities did not seek to mobilise legal or ethical claims on state authorities or aid agencies). However, informants did place considerable importance on the ability of community leaders to negotiate with both government actors and aid agencies in order to gain access to assistance.

In general, interviewees made little distinction between immediate protection concerns related to physical safety and security and longer-term issues of livelihoods security. The protection and rehabilitation of property was a key concern for many informants. Some respondents observed that those most severely affected by the cyclone were 'rich' (e.g. landowners, who had the most to lose), while the most vulnerable were 'poor' (e.g. landless labourers, with few resources). Many informants stated that the cyclone had affected both rich and poor villagers indiscriminately. Such varying perceptions have profound implications for the manner in which affected communities perceive outside assistance, and engage with aid agencies.

In responding to and recovering from Cyclone Nargis, affected communities experienced three phases of assistance. First and foremost were the self-protection strategies of affected people themselves. Despite the utter devastation, from the outset affected villages were at the centre of self-protection, survival and recovery efforts, and later undertook many activities to begin rehabilitating their communities. The

next phase of assistance came from ordinary citizens, businesspeople and local CBOs and NGOs, who collected donations and purchased supplies to send to affected areas. In some instances, the Myanmar armed forces were also among the first to provide assistance, particularly in the most remote areas and where troops had been deployed for security reasons. This was striking given that the army is usually portrayed as the perpetrator of abuses. Informants seemed to have mixed views of the role of the army, sometimes accusing soldiers of being quite rough and not respecting the feelings of affected communities or the dignity of the dead. Only a handful of international agencies were present on the ground in the most remote areas, in part because of access restrictions imposed by the government. Few international agencies were able to provide large-scale support until approximately one month after Cyclone Nargis, when government restrictions on access were relaxed.

Self-protection mechanisms included self-help within communities, local informal leadership, the prioritisation of protection and assistance for the most vulnerable, sharing and support within and between communities, social and religious networks beyond the community, (temporary) movement, the redistribution of aid and mostly low-key advocacy with local authorities and aid providers. Community and especially religious leaders played important roles in organising and inspiring survivors. Informal networks and unofficial as well as official local leaders (many formal leaders had died and the distinction between formal and informal leaders largely vanished in the first weeks after the cyclone) were important in helping communities to survive, organise and protect themselves, contacting the authorities and other outside agencies and bringing in assistance from larger towns to the villages. Local leaders did not wait for instructions from higher authorities but acted on their own initiative, taking on leadership and organisational roles in the first few days and weeks when survival was at stake. They were also active in deciding whether and how to move to government-organised temporary resettlement sites, although in some cases the decision to move was not taken voluntarily, and there were instances of forced relocation.

Supplementing the numerous ways in which villagers helped themselves, additional assistance was provided by Myanmar citizens. Many recipients, as well as local aid actors, understood such activities in terms of 'donations'. In a traditional Buddhist context, criticism of aid givers is considered culturally inappropriate. In many cases, the first people from outside the area to arrive on the scene were concerned individuals and families and private businesses, who responded with great generosity and perseverance.

Although early needs assessments and distribution techniques were necessarily quite basic, there is no doubt – according to both the accounts of cyclone survivors and subsequent agency assessments – that Myanmar citizens contributed a great deal to the survival of many people. Many life-saving interventions were initiated by civil society organisations, often working in partnership with affected people. These included informal networks of citizens and businesspeople, as well as more formally organised CBOs and local NGOs. These locally conceived and led activities received more prominence in the media and in aid agency accounts than might be expected due to the relative lack of international assistance in the early response phase. Some local responses did not meet international humanitarian standards and in some cases CBOs may have been created partly to exploit the opportunities presented by foreign donations. Myanmar NGOs and CBOs learned a great deal in responding to Cyclone Nargis, and the civil society sector was generally strengthened through this experience. However, international agencies and donors often failed to support local initiatives, or welcome Myanmar CBOs and NGOs into planning and coordination mechanisms, such as the UN-led cluster coordination system.

Much has been made in advocacy circles of the government's restrictions on international humanitarian access in the first weeks after Cyclone Nargis. The government did not give adequate warning of the impending disaster, and subsequently denied many communities access to humanitarian aid. Meanwhile, threats by foreign governments and activists to impose aid unilaterally, and attempts to mobilise the R2P doctrine, led to further delays, as external advocacy triggered a defensive military deployment of Myanmar Army units. Thus, the already stretched resources of the state were deployed on a security setting, rather than in relief and recovery efforts. The deployment of Myanmar Army units to the most vulnerable and cyclone-affected areas in the southern Delta may have served to discourage local and international aid agencies from assisting people in these militarised zones. This is because international aid agencies have been reluctant to work closely with (or even in geographic proximity to) the Myanmar Army, out of concern for the latter's poor human rights record.

Advocates for activating the R2P doctrine may argue that international pressure eventually forced the military government to open up access to humanitarian assistance. About one month after the disaster, access to the affected area for international humanitarian agencies improved dramatically, and has subsequently remained relatively good. This 'breakthrough' in access was however primarily achieved through the diplomatic activities and 'peer-pressure' of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the UN, rather than as a result of public advocacy campaigns.

In the three years since Cyclone Nargis, exile and overseas-based advocacy groups have on occasion criticised the post-Nargis aid effort – often with limited acknowledgement or understanding of the achievements of ordinary citizens and civil society networks in providing assistance in an extremely difficult environment, as well as the work of international aid agencies.

Conclusion

Despite many positive achievements on the part of affected communities, large numbers of people remain deeply

traumatised by their experience of Cyclone Nargis. Among many other problems faced by affected communities are increased indebtedness, and concerns about achieving food security in the short and long term.

This study raises questions regarding what it means to talk about 'local' approaches to protection. There is not one local ('grassroots') voice, but rather a variety of interests and identities, resources and opportunities for and constraints on action and expression, at the community or village level. It is necessary to unpack these positions in order to appreciate the complexity and richness of local agency and 'voice'. These different voices and positions are illustrated by the issue of aid agency-promoted 'wealth ranking'. Most focus group discussions in affected communities displayed a consensus that aid agencies should not distinguish between landowners and the landless in targeting food assistance, but rather should distribute aid to everyone in the community. However, when interviewed separately (out of local elites' earshot), many of the poorest (landless) villages preferred targeting – indicating that their voices in public discussions are often dominated by local elites.

While interviewees repeatedly expressed their gratitude for the assistance they received from both local and international donors, many questioned the appropriateness of some aid items (e.g. the wrong type of boat or seed). Although there were reports of aid being mismanaged or diverted, more common were complaints regarding the failure of outside organisations (particularly international NGOs and UN agencies) to consult communities about which relief items should be provided and how. Beneficiaries were often reluctant to complain about the goods and services received, fearing that aid agencies would withdraw their assistance. These findings illustrate the importance of external aid agencies understanding local perceptions and realities, and fully engaging local communities in designing and strengthening responses.

Sudan: South Kordofan study

Justin Corbett

This section summarises the findings from a field study initiated in May 2010 in the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan State, Sudan. Its intention was to learn from the experiences, perceptions and insights of local communities who lived through the 1986–2005 war, and the subsequent Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) period between 2005 and 2011.

Methodology

The initial study involved semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions over an eight-month period with 162 women, children and men from the main ethnic groups in and around the Nuba Mountains (Nuba tribes, Misseriya, Hawazma, Falata). Wherever possible interviews were carried out by teams of local researchers in the mother tongue. Core research findings were cross-checked during a two-week visit by the lead researcher in June 2011, just as fighting was resuming in the Nuba Mountains.

Context

At the time of writing, the war in the Nuba Mountains continues, with well over 200,000 people displaced and civilian casualties at least in the many hundreds and possibly very much higher. Protection issues include summary executions of civilians based on ethnicity and political affiliation, the aerial bombardment of civilian targets and the use of hunger as a weapon of war. International humanitarian access is denied to over one million civilians, and international protection of local civilians has been either extremely limited or totally lacking.

Access, assistance and protection

Local understandings of protection

The research highlights the inter-connectedness of different types of threats during conflict. External actors tend to analyse issues of physical safety, livelihoods and rights separately, while local people perceive them as inextricably linked. The study also reveals that the psychological needs of war-affected people – such as dignity, self-esteem, a sense of belonging, friendship and fun (through traditional music shows, dance, sport, listening to the radio, watching films, festivals and ceremonies) can be as important as people's physical needs. Interviews with Nuba who fled to Khartoum and other northern cities highlight the significance of psychological suffering for IDPs.

> *As citizens of Sudan do we have no right to grow food for our family to live? To drink water? In the war, we risked being shot, raped or imprisoned when we go to our fields or wells. We die because we have no rights.'*
>
> – Otoro woman
>
> *'We are not animals. We don't just need food and water to live. We like to make ourselves look beautiful and dance even when we are hungry'*
>
> – 37-year-old Moro woman

Self-protection

The Nuba conflicts demonstrate the fundamental role threatened communities play in protecting themselves. Respondents prioritised three core components of self-protection:

- fleeing to the mountains (seeking safety from fighting and bombing, and shelter);
- collecting wild foods and medicines; and
- solidarity, sharing, mutual self-help and caring (survival, services and psychological needs).

The study identified numerous practical examples of communities and individuals attempting to protect their physical safety, livelihoods and rights, including through early warning systems, hiding food and key possessions and sharing information. There are significant opportunities for local actors to strengthen their own capacities for

self-protection, with the help of external agencies. A key finding of the research is that ideas, knowledge and local leadership skills are not evenly distributed across affected communities. Much could be achieved by actively sharing the lessons from local experiences in self-protection among all threatened villages.

Self-protection measures are often inadequate or can have severe negative side-effects: fleeing to the mountains and caves may, for example, provide safety from bombs, but it can also result in death from exposure or malnutrition. As such, while self-protection may potentially reduce the impacts of war, it is never sufficient to remove the need for concurrent international interventions. Despite the resilience and self-protection of the Nuba, civilian deaths during the last war were probably in the tens of thousands.

> *'So many civilian people died from hunger. In Tulushi village I found three children all dead in one small bed from hunger and their parents killed by soldiers, lying dead and rotten on the floor outside the house.'*
>
> – Young Tulushi man, who was 12 at the time of this incident

Women's vulnerability

Rape was widespread during the conflict, and there is evidence that Sudanese government forces used it as a weapon of war. Except where armed resistance was possible, women had no effective means of protecting themselves. The effects of rape on Nuba women remain poorly understood, at least by outsiders, and further research is needed.

> *'Many women were raped and even girls. When we were attacked I saw a girl of 10 being raped by many – she was crying and covered in blood.'*
>
> – Moro man, 34 years of age
>
> *'Sometimes we knew when we went to get water that they [enemy soldiers] might be waiting to rape us. But we had no choice.'*
>
> – Otoro woman, 40 years of age

Despite these harrowing experiences, many women respondents noted that, in other ways, women were *better* able than men to cope with the challenges of war. They explained that they were by nature more adaptable, flexible and patient, and thus felt *better* equipped to endure the mental hardships of the war without wasting energy on getting angry or depressed. They also felt that they had more stamina and physical endurance than men, and were thus able to focus on their role of caring for the family. All the Nuba men interviewed admitted the crucial role of women in caring for the family, as well as their wider contribution to communal activities at village level.

Civil society, relief and service delivery

Local Nuba civil society organisations (both non-sectarian and faith-based) served as important conduits of international aid and played a significant role in providing local educational and health services. During the last war, the great majority of international support (too little and too late as it was) was channelled through these CSOs since most international NGOs considered it too dangerous to operate on the ground. In addition to their own, often extensive local presence, faith-based groups also had considerable international outreach, resources and influence.

International organisations found it particularly difficult to provide high-quality capacity-building support to local CSOs, and little progress was made in expanding the capacities of Nuba CSOs to design, deliver and manage accountable or participatory projects. This seems to be linked to the tendency of INGOs and donors to focus on the delivery of immediate outputs, as well as their own lack of capacity to facilitate organisational development processes.

Unofficial, secret, cross-line markets played a crucial role in supplying basic commodities to blockaded civilian populations. With care and sensitivity, opportunities for supporting such local trade could be explored. Cash distributions by local organisations during the last war were an important means of stimulating local economic activity, improving the redistribution of local assets and access to goods in a situation where air-drops of food or commodities were impossible due to cost and insecurity.

Perceptions of armed forces and groups

Civilians who fled to the mountains regarded the Nuba Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) as a legitimate protection force defending them against attack and enabling them to engage in livelihood activities that would otherwise expose them to risk (i.e. collecting water, gathering fuel wood, cultivating fields, grazing livestock). While there is little doubt that the presence of SPLA forces at times provoked attacks by government troops, all interviewees from SPLA areas considered the protection benefits of the SPLA presence to far outweigh any negative consequences. No respondents mentioned the Sudanese armed forces as having a protective role.

> *'If we cannot defend ourselves with weapons we would not be able to survive.'*
>
> – Misseriya cattle owner

Significant efforts were made by the Nuba SPLM/A during the last war to prioritise good governance by upholding the rule of law, supporting civil authorities and public

services and initiating a grass-roots consultation process. The importance of these efforts came across clearly from the interviews. They are seen as contributing to unity and enhanced dignity and self-esteem while also boosting popular determination to overcome hardships. This suggests that supporting good governance during a conflict (of both parties, on both sides) can strengthen local self-help and resilience. The research suggests a link between a threatened society's sense of pride and self-esteem and its ability to support itself through its own efforts.

This does not imply that the Nuba SPLA was above criticism, and respondents cited instances of the commandeering of food, looting of livestock, drunk and disorderly behaviour and sexual harassment (including rape). However, respondents did not see these incidents as regular or widespread, but rather as secondary negative consequences of the wider crisis.

International protection efforts

Clearly, self-protection by affected communities was not sufficient to prevent high levels of civilian death and suffering during the last war in Nuba, and nor is it in the current conflict. External intervention is required to strengthen local coping mechanisms and to intervene to prevent civilians from military aggressors. Mainstream aid mechanisms and international 'peacekeeping' missions are however not able to provide this protection.

The dominant institutional priorities, structures and approaches of UN agencies, donors and INGOs do not encourage local participation. Key obstacles include centralised command lines, high donor compliance, high risk aversion and a superficial understanding of local people and their perspectives. The potential for supporting local agency, and for responding to emergent (and often short-lived) opportunities for protection initiatives, is not being realised.

The research also identifies what can be achieved through existing institutions when key individuals are prepared to invest in understanding and engaging with local actors. INGOs and UN agencies have had the biggest impact when their staff are prepared to take risks and be creative, have the space to make decisions, are open to networking and care more about affected people than they do about their bureaucracies.

As for the peacekeeping mission, senior UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) staff acknowledged serious weaknesses and a sense of resignation that institutional inertia and resistance to change was too great to overcome. An alternative model is, however, available: the ceasefire that preceded the CPA from 2002 to 2005 was successfully overseen by a small force of unarmed monitors known as the Joint Military Commission (JMC).[13] The JMC's structure and approach was leaner, more nimble and more sensitive than UNMIS, and depended on gaining local knowledge and building local relationships, rather than large forces and military hardware. The JMC showed what can be achieved with a different institutional framework that allows a much tighter chain of command and much quicker response. As General Jan Erik Wilhelmsen, head of the JMC in South Kordofan and a highly experienced peacekeeper, put it: 'I also want to underline that this kind of mission [the JMC approach] is far more effective than huge UN industrial peacekeeping missions, which I really do not believe in'. Perhaps the debate should not be about how to improve UN peacekeeping forces, but how to replace them with an alternative model.

Protecting the peace

The study clearly showed respondents' lack of confidence in the CPA and their concern that, as the underlying reasons for war in South Kordofan remained unresolved, conflict would resume. This throws into sharp relief the gap between local and global analysis and priorities. Many local communities felt that much more could have been done during the CPA period to initiate the social, economic and political changes required to avoid a return to violence, including support for dialogue both within South Kordofan and with the wider public of northern Sudan. However, global actors focused on ensuring that the secession of the South went according to plan, and that good relations were maintained with the government in Khartoum. It is possible that, had greater attention been paid to local realities (and less to agendas based on external analyses and global priorities), a return to war could have been averted.

The study provides some evidence that a growing aversion among the northern Sudanese public to what was happening in Nuba during the worst of the atrocities in 1992–93 may have helped dissuade hardliners in the Sudanese government from pursuing such brutal policies. The research explored local perceptions as to the value of attempting to communicate with attacking forces. Many considered this to be worth trying (although difficult). It is now being tried by CSOs during the renewed conflict.

> *'The soldiers were told to kill us like we were animals. If they know we are equal to them and innocent and praying five times a day and fasting would they kill our women and children?'*
>
> – Nuba Muslim cleric

Protection during the current conflict

With the resumption of fighting in South Kordofan, L2GP is attempting to support an integrated response based on the lessons generated by the study so far, and subsequent (unsuccessful) efforts at promoting peace. There are six interdependent components:

- A Nuba CSO initiative to strengthen local capacities for 'integrated' self-protection (i.e. for physical safety and core survival, as well as for rights and psychological wellbeing).
- A local, Nuba-led multi-agency response (CSOs, INGOs and UN) providing targeted relief to fill gaps in self-protection efforts.

- Promotion of good governance among local duty bearers to prioritise civilian needs, public services and rights, as much as is possible within the context of war.
- A multi-faceted advocacy strategy (developed by the same Nuba-led alliance) aimed at promoting Sudanese and international initiatives to stop the targeting of civilians, support the humanitarian response, address the underlying political causes of the war and generate alternatives to armed conflict.
- An ongoing dialogue between Nuba and non-Nuba communities within South Kordofan, to contribute to longer-term post-conflict peace-building.
- A coordination mechanism that can bring together the contributions of the various participating actors.

This strategy is currently being rolled out. At this stage, the emerging role of newly established Civilian Protection volunteers appears of particular interest. Thirty Nuba women and men, working in pairs, are moving (on foot) between the villages in their allocated areas to disseminate key protection messages and advice generated by the L2G research (e.g. setting up early warning systems, prepositioning of household food stocks and survival items, dealing with bombing raids, making a village plan, providing key primary health care information). They are facilitating cross-learning between villages and beginning to identify and map out local leadership strengths and needs. They provide basic human rights awareness (helping villagers to understand that they are equal citizens with legal rights), as well as documenting IDPs' accounts of human rights abuses. Apart from information, ideas and encouragement, the inputs they provide are minimal: to date, they have distributed only empty grain sacks to allow prepositioning of food, and in some cases water purifying tablets.

Conclusion

Like the other studies, this analysis of the Nuba conflict reveals the fundamental role of threatened communities in protecting themselves from violence. It also highlights that, regardless of the self-protection measures taken, there is still likely to be large-scale death and suffering if external actors do not better mitigate state-sponsored violence against civilians. Thus, it seems that two distinct but complementary approaches to protection are required: strengthening local capacities for self-protection, while at the same time generating the international political will (as well as national public interest) to prevent or stop targeted attacks on civilians. A coordinated, multi-agency approach is required, involving both local and international organisations. A deep understanding of the local context (political trends, conflict dynamics, strengths and weakness of self-protection efforts, cultural factors, organisational capacities) is needed, alongside proven expertise at developing the capacities of local organisations.

The Nuba study also highlights the need for significant reform in the way protection is delivered. International actors must become better at listening to local people, and more honest about the shortcomings of their current 'protection' interventions. Greater institutional incentives (originating with donors) are required for all implementing agencies to become much more responsive, opportunistic, risk-taking and innovative. Such approaches are essential in the highly complex operating environments that typify conflict. In particular, fundamental changes are needed in how UN peacekeeping missions are designed and implemented.

South Sudan: Jonglei study

Simon Harragin

This study focuses on the Dinka population of Duk, Twic East and Bor Counties in Jonglei State, South Sudan. It describes how violence characterises the past and present of the area, and is likely to characterise its future as the North–South civil war makes way for second-tier conflicts. The research sought to establish how effectively people's rights were being protected, and whether the traditional culture and patterns of local governance were protecting the weakest members of society, or contributing to their vulnerability.

Methodology

For this study 11 local researchers were selected from different *payams* across Jonglei and trained in interview techniques. A questionnaire based on the research in Nuba (described above) was drawn on so that the results would be comparable. The study was divided into five research assignments or questions, and was conducted over a five-month period in 2010.[14] A month was spent investigating each assignment. Ongoing follow-up was conducted as reports came in to improve the methodology and information gathered. Reports were triangulated with other information and observations on the ground. During the course of the study, enumerators were encouraged to eliminate questions that did not work and reduce their dependence on the questionnaire. The most capable enumerators were kept on to do further work on specific subjects that had been poorly addressed in the initial questionnaires, or to explore interesting topics that had been suggested by the initial results.

Context

Violence in Jonglei has deep roots in the history and culture of the state. Central to this violence is competition over grazing pasture, water points and cattle. The state was the starting point for the civil war that began in 1983, and was subsequently the site of some of the fiercest fighting between Southern groups, notably the Dinka and the Nuer. Relations between Dinka sections are also marked by a history of conflict, splits and schisms.

Access, assistance and protection

Local understandings of protection

The study suggests that local people associate protection strongly with physical security and the safety of their herds. Numerous witnesses claimed that the part of Jonglei under study (Duk, Twic East and Bor) was more insecure than it had been for most of the civil war. Some villages had seen their populations double as surrounding settlements were emptied of their inhabitants due to cattle raids and

abductions. A forcible disarmament programme between December 2005 and May 2006 has been acknowledged by the Governor of Jonglei State to have been a failure. In any case, disarmament alone is unlikely to bring many benefits when some parties remain armed, and when the state and UN peacekeepers fail to provide security themselves, forcing people to rearm.

Livestock are central to the livelihoods of the people of Jonglei. However, the importance of livestock has been systematically underestimated by outside actors, both culturally and economically, as have the lengths to which people will go to obtain cattle, and the insecurity that this fuels. There is an undercurrent of violence and competition over economic resources between local sections, leaving aside so-called 'inter-tribal' attacks and conflict caused by civil war. These complex 'second-tier' conflicts have been dangerously downplayed in the CPA.

Self-protection

In the face of the disarmament of local people, it seems doubtful that self-protection will ever be especially successful. As one individual interviewed in February 2010 in Bor said: 'With a gun, one person can raid a whole village' – and the whole village will be scared of following if they are unarmed. Although local patrols (*akar*) are sometimes deployed to form a protective ring around communities, this is usually more about early warning than preventing determined raiders. Courts play an important role in protecting the 'rights' of community members, but their lack of cross-County jurisdiction and the absence of harmonised customary law and compensation regimes mean that they have little influence in defusing local conflicts. Cases that involve killing are even more difficult to resolve, and often lead to revenge killings and a blood feud. Mechanisms for mediation therefore need to be permanent, rather than the periodic peace meetings or conferences, usually arranged and funded by external actors, that result in a temporary cessation of hostilities but do not address the underlying causes of the violence or historical grievances.[15] That is not to say that it is easy to address these structural causes. However, vigilante activity is the inevitable result of disarming one side without providing adequate state security from traditional enemies that remain armed on the other side; the cycle of violence that is thus provoked is extremely difficult to resolve without long-term commitment.

Local concepts of vulnerability

People without cattle are seen as vulnerable despite being at less risk from raiders. Cattle play a vital role in providing nutrition for children and the elderly (particularly during the 'hunger gap' in cereal availability), and are essential bridewealth for marriages. Those who have cattle can forge alliances with other groups and build up family size – which is seen as vital for providing better protective cover for family members. In Dinka the expression '*atuel ci biok tueng*' (literally 'throwing the stick forward') also means investing in the future in strategies that will provide protection later. Those without cattle are caught in a cycle, with boys unable to marry and girls unable to command sufficient bridewealth. Those who are alienated from a support network, or whose network is small, poor or powerless, suffer serious consequences. Women are sometimes caught between the protective structure of their husband's family and their own family and do not get sufficiently protected – and this affects their children too. Others who cannot have a family or who are part of a very small family are likewise vulnerable. It is not easy for outside agencies to identify or assist these vulnerable individuals. Instead of seeking out such 'actionable categories', agencies should be prepared to get involved in more developmental work to build up societal resilience, beginning by increasing livelihoods margins.

Local protection mechanisms for the vulnerable

Given that the extended family is responsible for the support of its members, family mediation plays the primary role in seeking solutions for the vulnerable. For those without any protective family structure, courts (both customary and judiciary law) are vital in providing 'protection' for local people. Customary courts demonstrate a very human and at times humane interpretation of the law, rather than following legal precedent to the letter; they are designed to resolve disputes and mediate between parties, rather than mete out punishment. People use the courts and feel that the justice provided in both traditional and judicial courts responds to local concepts of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Many cases involve sexual transgression or infidelity; without the courts people would end up taking matters into their own hands.

The Dinka concept of *cieng* is the rights framework within which local people operate, and family mediation and the court structure are the institutions that protect their rights if they have behaved 'properly'. Cattle and its use in bridewealth payments is probably at the heart of much of the violence in Dinka society as marriage controls access to reproduction. Bridewealth payment is also the means to legitimise the family unit, protect girls from sexual advances and give rights (and inheritance) to one's children. However, young people, particularly those brought up outside Sudan, are increasingly arguing for 'love marriages' and sometimes present a *fait accompli* to their parents by eloping. This shows that *cieng* can be dynamic and that change can be initiated by local actors and need not always be driven by external aid agencies.

The role of the government in providing protection

As a result of the slow roll-out of local government structures throughout South Sudan, administration and justice rely on the old system of traditional chiefs, while local security has been left in the hands of a nascent police force that does not yet have sufficient numbers of trained policemen to ensure safety. According to Jonglei State Governor Kuol Manyang, of the 8,000 police and wildlife forces in the state only '2,000 to 3,000 have guns'.[16] The SPLA meanwhile is more concerned with issues of external security and has in general been unwilling to be seen to take sides in local clashes.

The protection of its citizens is a primary obligation of the South Sudan government, and it cannot leave local people to ensure their security unarmed. The government is aware that this is its main challenge, and the Governor has made combating lawlessness his first priority. To date 'robbery and raiding' in the South have not attracted the attention that atrocities in Darfur have received, but casualties in the South are now surpassing those in Darfur and local people are demanding protection.

The role of aid agencies in providing protection

Local attitudes to protection – including a general feeling of insecurity, the emphasis on the need for physical protection from insecurity and the local idea that the vulnerable are best protected by their own families – have implications for the work of aid agencies. Providing physical safety to civilians during periods of violence is beyond their remit – even while they advocate for responsibility-bearers to provide better security.[17] This study has shown that local people prefer agencies to provide humanitarian assistance and services for the majority, rather than 'humanitarian protection' for a minority.

The definition of protection used by aid agencies focuses on the legal entitlements of citizens rather than the threats that civilians face, and this sets the tone for a theoretical rather than practical analysis of the problem. Agencies involved in protection are rightly concerned about protecting individual human rights, but this should not mean conflating abuse of civilians by warring parties or even inadequate governance structures with abuse of vulnerable individuals by their own societies, nor should it imply assuming that the societal values that underpin the prevailing culture disappear during civil war. It is important to recognise that a society that does not take care of its own vulnerable individuals is not a fully-functional society; presenting aid workers as 'protectors' risks ignoring what local people do to protect themselves, and prioritises humanitarian agency over local agency.

In South Sudan people's safety is intimately linked with the safety of livestock, and livestock play a fundamental role in their lives and livelihoods. Many international agencies underestimate the role of livestock and systematically downplay its importance, leaving local people feeling that agencies have failed to understand that livestock are both the source of much insecurity and the social lubricant that keeps society working. Only by helping people to build up a healthy buffer in terms of livelihoods will agencies be able to claim that they have helped protect people should instability return.

The role of UNMIS/UNMISS in providing protection

Opinions on UNMIS, on the rare occasions when local people expressed them, were often based on things heard on the radio or on seeing UNMIS convoys passing by in the distance. People noted that UNMIS acted in an 'observer' capacity without actively engaging with the problems they faced on a daily basis (particularly insecurity). Understanding the reasons behind this invisibility on the ground requires knowledge of the mandate and capacity of UNMIS, which most local people, including some local officials and local researchers, did not have. In the same way that aid agencies feel the need to engage in politically-informed protection work, so too peacekeepers have increasingly seen Protection of Civilians (PoC) built into their mandates. UNMIS' Chapter VII Protection of Civilians mandate was subject to differing interpretations at different levels of HQ, Mission and troop-contributing countries, meaning that there was no common understanding of PoC.[18] Disagreement between what a mandate says and what troop-contributing countries accept as rules of engagement is a poor basis on which to run a mission, especially if the mandate is more interventionist than the troops. The self-interest of the force-providing nations is often the defining factor, which meant that UNMIS countries had little interest in sacrificing their peacekeepers' lives to defend the CPA.[19] As a result, local people's expectations that armed peacekeepers would defend them during periods of insecurity were not met. Time and again the presence of peacekeepers has been shown to be mainly symbolic.

While observation and 'witnessing' of insecurity incidents is important, insufficient work was done to engage with government efforts to provide protection. One of the biggest failures of UNMIS was that soldiers did not leave their bases in the State Headquarters to set up permanent bases in the Counties and engage with the 'protection' issues that local and national governments grapple with on an everyday basis – the local issues that are fuelling armed violence in villages, sections and cattle-camps. Arguably, by focusing on PoC one is not judging the operation by a fair criterion, given the constraints of troop numbers (around 10,000 for UNMIS and 7,000 for its successor, UNMISS), the size of South Sudan and logistics capacity. One could argue that UNMIS's main role in South Sudan was monitoring the CPA, but there is little evidence that UNMIS monitoring was instrumental in the run-up to the peaceful referendum on secession, not least because the mission only put in place ten of the 70 planned Referendum Support Bases.

Conclusion

Policies for protection must be built upon the most commonly-experienced scenario – that outsiders are usually only spurred into action once violence has already broken out – rather than the more optimistic scenario of being proactive enough to anticipate violence and prevent civilian suffering. Political and peacekeeping actors need to develop a better understanding of the drivers behind violence in South Sudan, and work with the government in addressing it as a vital contribution to state-building and creating national rather than local identity. For their part, aid agencies need to address the livelihoods needs of armed and under-employed youths, who see cattle-raiding as an economic opportunity and an easier way to make progress and marry than investing in farming or commerce. Donors need to retain realistic expectations of the political changes that humanitarian aid could or should be achieving, and recognise that livelihoods interventions are legitimate responses to build up the resources and resilience of local communities. The international community needs to be sympathetic to the complexities that the Government of South Sudan faces – though this is sometimes at odds with a human rights model that sees local authorities as the perpetrators of atrocities. Stock patrols set up in April 2011 as

a UNDP pilot project in Kolnyang Payam, Bor, must be rapidly expanded and UNMISS must be prepared to contribute aerial reconnaissance in the run-up to large raids to remove the element of surprise, facilitate air access for local peace envoys and, in the event of a raid, to follow raiders by air to prevent them from escaping with looted cattle.

This study has shown how the internal management of aid agencies and UNMIS/S encourages accountability to headquarters rather than local populations. This management culture needs to be reversed. Coordination between agencies engaged in protection would be easier with fewer agencies involved and clearer lines of responsibility and accountability. As South Sudan is huge and no one agency (including UNHCR) has the capacity or willingness to cover it all, the work needs to be divided clearly between agencies with legally-mandated protection responsibilities; reporting and coordination mechanisms must be radically improved and made more accountable and transparent.

Zimbabwe: Harare, Mashonaland East and Matabeleland North study

Richard Horsey

This case study examines the protection implications of the multiple economic, social and political crises that Zimbabwe has been going through in recent years. It looks at how communities perceive the threats they face, and the steps they take to protect themselves from these threats.

Methodology

Research for this study was conducted in three parts of the country: Harare (with a focus on poor 'high-density' suburbs and peri-urban settlements), Mashonaland East (both urban and rural areas) and Matabeleland North (again, both urban and rural areas). The research was conducted in November and December 2010. A total of 259 people were interviewed – 189 in in-depth, semi-structured individual interviews, and 70 as part of focus group discussions. A series of interviews was also conducted with key protection actors and organisations in Harare and at the local level.

The interviews were conducted by a group of local Zimbabwean researchers assembled for the project, as well as by the author. The Zimbabwean researchers worked for a local NGO with long experience of conducting research in these areas of the country, and all of the researchers were given extensive training on the aims of the initiative and the specific research methodologies to be used.

Context

Zimbabwe's decline has been precipitous: in a few years the country has gone from one of the most developed in Sub-Saharan Africa to one of the least developed.[20] The rural economy collapsed and industry closed down, leading to mass unemployment. The country has experienced one of the worst episodes of hyperinflation in history, which was only ended by the abolition of the Zimbabwe dollar and the adoption of foreign currencies as legal tender. Social and municipal services, including water supplies, electricity and sewage systems, collapsed. People were left with little time to adjust. It is therefore hardly surprising that coping strategies are still evolving, and expectations (of employment in the formal sector, of government services and so on) are not yet aligned to the reality of life in the country. While the unity government installed in 2009 has succeeded in halting economic decline and providing temporary relief from the political crisis, Robert Mugabe's Zanu-PF continues to control most of the levers of power and violence, and the future remains uncertain.

Access, assistance and protection

Local views of protection

As in many crisis situations around the world, ordinary people focus on day-to-day survival, and often feel remote from the political currents ultimately affecting their lives. At the same time, the crisis in Zimbabwe has been so recent, and has had such major consequences for the people of the country, that there is an acute recognition that the impacts on people's lives are the result of political forces. A common response when people were asked to identify the main threat that they faced was 'politics', but a little further probing revealed that, in most cases, it was the livelihoods impacts that were most acutely felt and the cause of greatest concern.

The research showed that politics and livelihoods interacted in complex ways. For example, many of the political grievances that people expressed focused on the livelihoods impacts of politics – the fact that forced attendance at political rallies takes people away from their fields, or that both sides of the political divide use economic tools to further their interests, rewarding their supporters by, for example, allocating them plots of land or market stalls, and punishing their opponents by withholding these rewards. Another example of politics impacting on livelihoods, frequently mentioned in interviews in urban areas, was the politically-motivated destruction of houses as 'illegal settlements'. The most notorious case was 'Operation Murambatsvina', (literally 'drive out the trash'), which began in 2005 and led to 700,000 people losing their homes or livelihoods (or both).[21] The operation started in Harare, and went on to affect most major cities. But it is a tactic also used on a smaller scale to punish perceived opposition supporters.

It was also clear that much 'political violence' was only peripherally related to politics, and that politics and the impunity it confers is often used as a convenient cover for something else: settling old scores, gaining commercial advantage or plain corruption and opportunism. Moreover, given the high levels of violence in Zimbabwean society, most threats – particularly for women and children – were not related to politics; they occurred within families and communities.

Typically, violence within communities is dealt with by traditional mechanisms at a local level. Traditional leaders, particularly in rural areas, are the custodians of customary law, which plays an important role in protection. This can be both positive and negative: by providing effective local mechanisms of mediation and redress, but also in some cases failing to protect the vulnerable in society or perpetuating abusive cultural practices.

It was obvious that particularly traumatic past events – serious election violence in 2008, a major cholera epidemic in 2008–2009 and (in Matabeleland) the 'Gukurahundi' massacres of the 1980s – have a significant impact on people's contemporary protection concerns. Across Zimbabwe, people's worries about the future are shaped to a large degree by their experiences of such traumatic past events.

Zimbabwe's multiple crises have taken a heavy toll on the population, and together with the breakdown in social service provision have left communities with a heavy burden of care. This is particularly acute given that in many communities there are very few working-age people left – the legacy of a devastating HIV/AIDS epidemic, and of the fact that a large proportion of Zimbabwe's labour force has left the country (or in some cases moved to urban centres within the country) in search of work. The burden of care thus falls disproportionately on grandparents, or on children themselves.

Zimbabwe's political and economic crises have undoubtedly affected relations within communities. However, varying views were expressed as to the nature and extent of these effects. Many people referred to a feeling of distrust within communities, as a result of political polarisation and fear of informants. Political violence in particular was seen as very divisive. Others pointed out that pre-existing divisions within communities facilitated political violence. However, it must be recognised that a significant proportion of the threats that people identified did not relate directly to the political and economic crises in the country. Some were social issues, such as gender-based and domestic violence, alcohol abuse and petty crime; others related to the geographic context, such as problems with erratic rainfall or drought, or problems and dangers associated with wild animals; and some were specific to the socio-cultural setting, such as fear of black magic, avenging spirits or possession by demons.

Socio-cultural issues such as witchcraft and occult beliefs are not mere novelties or curiosities. They may be highly relevant as threats, and in shaping responses to threats. Yet most of these related issues would not fit any standard protection questionnaire. Other aspects of traditional and religious belief can have a significant impact on protection – such as the proliferation of religious sects in Zimbabwe with doctrines prohibiting conventional medical treatment, or denying girls education or facilitating forced child marriages in a context of polygamy.

Coping strategies

Individuals and communities develop sophisticated strategies for responding to the various threats they face. These strategies are not always very effective, since there is often no good way of responding to grave threats. In some cases, these strategies themselves lead to other problems, or 'secondary threats'. It is often the case that impossible trade-offs must be made: for example, between health and economic survival (when a person takes on a 'dirty and dangerous' job); or between economic survival and physical security (when a person supports themselves through illegal activities, or flees from political violence, leaving job and home). It is also important to recognise that coping strategies are sometimes (perhaps often) illegal, immoral or otherwise 'negative' in some normative sense.

A summary of threats and coping strategies that the research identified is set out in Table 1.

Table 1: Threats and coping strategies

Threat	Coping strategies
Political violence	Cooption (e.g. joining Zanu-PF, befriending those committing violence); compliance (e.g. pretending to support a party's views, or attending its rallies or buying membership cards); political neutrality (in fact or in appearance); threat management (e.g. walking in groups, carrying a loud whistle, information sharing); seeking protection (e.g. from another party, local power holders or mediators); bribery (e.g. paying protection money, or bribing police to provide protection); threat avoidance (e.g. by fleeing or hiding); resistance (e.g. issuing threats, fighting back or retaliating).
Economic deprivation	Community organisation (e.g. forming 'clubs', self-help groups or cooperatives); subsistence strategies (e.g. subsistence agriculture or urban farming, living off the land); barter trade; frugality (eating less expensive food or skipping meals); participating in the informal economy (e.g. informal vending, piece work, cross-border trading); unregistered cottage industries or home businesses; illegal or criminal activities (illicit gold-panning or diamond prospecting/trading, making and selling illicit alcohol, drug dealing, prostitution, shoplifting, burglary, fraud); migration (internal and to neighbouring countries or beyond).
Theft and burglary	Guarding crops (individually or through community protection groups); neighbourhood watch; black magic (e.g. tying threatening symbols or objects to crops, 'using magic to punish thieves'); reporting to the police (and sometimes bribing them to take action).
Lack of municipal services (electricity, water, etc.)	Using alternative fuels (wood, paraffin); using diesel generators (expensive); relying on communal boreholes; purchasing water; digging backyard wells; bribing local authorities to provide services.
Health threats	Resorting to traditional medicines; relying on witch-doctors and faith healers; using unregistered midwives or traditional birth attendants (cheaper than government clinics); home births without trained help; running away from hospitals after treatment/birth without paying bills.

The role of the authorities and outside actors

When asked their views about how the authorities at different levels contributed – positively or negatively – to protection, the initial response of the overwhelming majority of interviewees was negative. Most of the problems they faced, they said, were caused directly or indirectly by the authorities. This has led to distrust of, or avoidance of, the state. It has also led to widespread political disengagement, with politics seen as dangerous or disreputable.

However, further probing revealed many complexities in this picture. The colonial period created parallel structures of authority in Zimbabwe: the old, traditional structure of Chiefs and headmen (in rural areas), on which a newer system of state authority was superimposed. At independence the government tried to dismantle the system of dual authority by stripping the Chiefs of their governance powers and leaving them as symbolic cultural figureheads. But these efforts were never fully successful. The Chiefs are the traditional custodians of customary law, and wield huge influence. Over time, the government began to see the value of co-opting, rather than attempting to curtail, traditional power.

The present research indicated that Chiefs are viewed in two ways. In some cases, people saw them as executing their functions in an efficient and non-partisan way, and therefore as effective leaders of their communities. In other cases, people viewed them as having lost the respect of people, leading them to be openly criticised. But in general, views of government authority structures were more negative than views of traditional structures.

As regards the role of outside actors in addressing protection concerns, many people referred to the activities of local and international NGOs and church organisations in providing assistance. For a significant proportion of interviewees, 'relying on NGOs' or 'church handouts' was one of the coping mechanisms they referred to. UN agencies were mentioned less often, presumably because they implement many of their programmes through local partners – although some agencies (including UNICEF and WFP) were mentioned as important sources of support, perhaps because of the scale of their operations and the fact that they had been involved in major crises such as the cholera epidemic and the major food shortages of recent years.

Although the scale of some of these programmes is clearly large (WFP, for example, has been providing food aid for some 10% of the population in recent years), it is also clear that needs in the country are enormous, and therefore it is not surprising that a significant proportion of people interviewed indicated that they had not received support from either government or non-government sources, or felt that levels of support were not sufficient. Some interviewees claimed that international assistance was not reaching the people who needed it because it was being stolen or diverted by the authorities to particular political constituencies. Such claims must be treated with caution. This perception clearly exists among a (non-negligible) proportion of people, and this in itself is something that agencies might need to address. But assessing the veracity of such perceptions is another matter. Strong monitoring and reporting mechanisms would help here.

As regards the role of outside actors in advocating for political change, most responses were superficial, indicating that the majority of people – and in rural areas the vast majority – are not following these issues closely. It was generally known that South Africa was playing some sort of mediation role, but there was little knowledge of the details of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) process. Those people who did express views were mostly sceptical of the prospects of such a process, though many recognised that there were good intentions behind it. Beyond this, almost nothing was known about international advocacy on behalf of Zimbabwe's people by agencies and governments.

Conclusion

Threat perceptions are mediated by fears and cultural beliefs, which are not objective (we may be more scared by the harmless spider in our bathroom than by the potentially deadly electric hairdryer sitting on the edge of the bath). Recognising this is important in humanitarian protection, since it is necessary to consider both imagined threats and real threats, as both can have protection implications – fear of witchcraft or of vaccinations, even if they lack rational justification, can have effects that are just as real as fear of violence or cholera. People also need to be protected from things that they do not necessarily recognise as threats, but should: water-borne diseases, or the risks of falling victim to human trafficking.

A similar consideration applies to the prioritisation of threats. Political violence is extremely emotive: even if it physically affects a relatively small proportion of a population, it can instill widespread fear (that, after all, is its raison d'être) as well as indignation. To take an extreme example, fear of goblins – not uncommon in Zimbabwe – is also highly emotive and can be very powerful, even though from a rational standpoint there is no real threat. Such issues are particularly relevant when people come to make the difficult trade-offs between different protection concerns: should they flee to protect themselves from potential violence, at significant cost to their livelihood? Should they spend scarce resources on magic charms, at the cost of less food?

This study made an effort to highlight, along with more prosaic threats, the protection dimensions of such things as witchcraft, occult beliefs and religious sects. This is for two reasons. First, there is a tendency to dismiss such things as curiosities, whereas – at least in Zimbabwe – they can represent real protection issues that should not be ignored. Second, they provide obvious examples of the kinds of culturally-specific issues that tend to be missed in protection assessments. Any global protection framework, however well designed and effectively implemented, will

inevitably fail to capture local and cultural phenomena. In some cases what is missed may be important, in other cases it may not be – but the only way to determine this is to carry out the local-level research and find out. This is rarely done in practice: it is difficult, the issues are complex and communities themselves are complex – there is no single or coherent 'local perspective' on protection, just as there is no global one.

Finally, and most importantly, the impact of external protection interventions will always be relatively minor compared with the actions affected communities and individuals take themselves. It is therefore vital for external protection actors to be modest in what they can hope to achieve, to be sensitive to the local context and to identify and support appropriate local protection strategies as much as possible.

Chapter 3
Lessons learnt and ways ahead

Over the three years since the launch of the L2GP initiative, the authors contributing to this Network Paper have held numerous discussions with a range of stakeholders at local, national and international levels. In discussing the themes and challenges outlined above with national and international colleagues, we have generally received very positive feedback. However, a number of interlocutors have observed that our findings regarding the importance of local agency, and the international humanitarian community's difficulties in relating meaningfully to community-based self-protection, are hardly new. A number of studies and assessments have identified the need to engage more effectively with 'beneficiaries'. Why, then, do humanitarians continue to find it so difficult to act on this knowledge?

The research presented here does not claim to have all the answers to this important and vexing question. However, we believe that our findings demonstrate more widely and systematically than before the strengths of local communities in the face of often desperate and terrible circumstances. It is understandable if some (particularly more rigidly 'rights-based') agencies may find it difficult to endorse or support all of the local strategies described. Indeed, some of the trade-offs and difficult decisions faced by vulnerable communities are highly disturbing. However, only by attempting to understand such realities can outside actors hope to engage effectively with local coping strategies, and work with communities to expand the range of options available to them.

Common themes and challenges

Despite the very diverse contexts in which the research was undertaken, a number of common issues emerged. First, the biggest contribution to people's survival and protection stems from their own activities, based on an often detailed and sophisticated understanding of the threats and challenges they face. In particular, community resilience, cohesion and solidarity, combined with good, strong local leadership, are crucial for the protection and survival of communities. Self-protection activities help to build 'social capital' and develop inter-community bonds. In both the Nuba and Zimbabwe studies, economic cooperation emerged as an important element in community self-protection. Elders and traditional authorities are another important source of protection, and can play a crucial role in preventing and mitigating violence. Local social, moral and religious values are also seen as crucial, far more so than human rights conventions and international advocacy activities, which are not generally well-known.

Second, individuals and groups often face terrible dilemmas, including trade-offs between different risks. Sometimes, individual rights are superseded by family or community needs. Self-protection and survival mechanisms often entail tough decisions, with vulnerable people sometimes having to choose between safety and livelihood security. Many self-protection strategies expose vulnerable people to further risks (e.g. forced migration or trafficking), and might be identified as 'negative coping mechanisms'.

Third, the activities of international agencies constitute only one (often small) element in contributing to people's survival, protection and livelihood options. The impacts of mandated international protection actors (UN agencies, the ICRC and UN peacekeepers) are often perceived as marginal by the very people at risk who were interviewed for these studies. Likewise, international normative and legal frameworks generally fail to recognise or support the protection activities of individuals, families and communities or other non-state actors, while very rigid rights-based approaches to programming may not always be able to appreciate and support local self-protection activities. Although local people regard armed/political groups as both a source of threat and a source of protection, very few outside agents engage with these groups in any substantive way. Like other local actors, non-state armed and political groups can have very different conceptions of 'protection' than those held by international humanitarian agencies. In particular, local communities may well regard psychological issues (trauma, isolation, togetherness or fun) as just as important as physical safety.

Finally, self-protection efforts are highly contextual and time-specific, and must be understood and analysed at the national, community, family and individual levels. As the Myanmar Delta study shows, 'local' voices have to be broken down into specific (and sometimes contested) individual and group interests.

The studies also reveal a number of challenges to engaging more meaningfully with self-protection activities, including misleading and exaggerated assumptions about the importance and protective impact of mainstream humanitarian action, a fear that engaging with self-protection may threaten vested interests, undermine institutional and conceptional control and challenge long-established identities within the humanitarian sector and among donors. Fundraising efforts tend to highlight international interventions over local action, perpetuating stereotyped perceptions of 'saviours' and 'victims'. At the same time, international agencies have legitimate concerns regarding humanitarian principles and rights-based programming, and are generally reluctant to deal with the protection of armed groups, or to engage meaningfully with customary law and local values and local systems of religious and spiritual belief. By the same token, agencies often fail to appreciate the importance of 'exotic' cultural threats, for instance witchcraft in Zimbabwe. Although in many cases customary laws, while diverging from international rights-based standards, offer specific vulnerable groups a degree of protection that they would

otherwise not have, agencies may feel that supporting self-protection may amount to admitting defeat for IHL and R2P. Conversely, some members of affected communities (usually the better-off) may feel that the targeting of assistance to the most vulnerable is against local norms, and potentially divisive.

There are also institutional issues at work. The increasing professionalisation and specialisation of humanitarian action appears to have decreased agencies' capacity for flexibility and the increased concern with upwards accountability tends to give priority to donor compliance rather than creativity, risk-taking and innovation. Specialisation also encourages agencies to compartmentalise their analysis, while affected communities tend to see these issues in a much more holistic way. In all the case studies, it was evident that protection concerns and responses are often interlinked. The Zimbabwe case, for instance, illustrates the complex connections between politics and livelihoods; the Jonglei study demonstrates the social and economic importance attached to livestock. In many international organisations, national staff are a repository of institutional memory and have a better understanding of the context than most of their international colleagues, but they are rarely in a position to use this knowledge. It is also the case that national staff are sometimes vulnerable in ways that internationals are not.

Action-learning, checklists and humanitarian cultures

If humanitarian agencies are to engage more effectively with the diverse, ingenious and often brave ways in which vulnerable communities understand and respond to disaster, there needs to be a major shift in culture and values. Many organisations and individual aid workers are profoundly attuned to local realities, but nevertheless often struggle to create space for that insight in a donor- and headquarter-driven humanitarian hierarchy. More flexible programming is needed, focusing for example on outcomes rather than outputs – and allowing local communities and field staff more influence over interventions.

The Nuba case study was originally seen as significant because of the range of protection threats communities experienced, the paucity of international protection and the remarkable levels of self-reliance demonstrated during the civil war. In June 2011, while the L2GP lead researcher was in Nuba cross-checking the findings, the current conflict started, and quickly spread across much of the original research area in South Kordofan. This rapid and brutal return to war clearly required a more hands-on, action-oriented approach. A number of locally-led protection and assistance responses were developed, supported by outside agencies. This was learning born out of necessity, responding to an extremely difficult environment.

The experiences of Nuba people and aid agencies working in South Kordofan illustrate the potential for partnership between vulnerable communities and national and international humanitarian agencies. Further work in this area would require flexible funding and monitoring mechanisms to facilitate locally-focused activities, including initiatives which link protection concerns with broader issues, including livelihoods. As part of such action-learning, projects could be developed to share insights within and between different communities, for example between villagers and CBOs in similar crisis situations.

Another possible way forward for the L2GP initiative would be to develop context-specific self-protection checklists of questions and guidelines, to help aid workers in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects. Again, the Nuba study provides an example of how a tailor-made checklist could encourage humanitarian actors to explore local understandings and activities in the field of protection and, where appropriate, support them. A sample of an L2GP checklist derived from the Nuba study is included in Annex 1. Adapted to the specific context, these questions, along with the interview questions which guided the individual studies, may be helpful in engaging with local protection.

The development of a 'definitive' L2GP checklist would come with associated risks. The most serious of these is the danger that the 'L2GP approach' could be bureaucratised as yet another box to tick among the many other considerations for aid workers in the field – thus stultifying what should be a dynamic ethos. Therefore, any future development and propagation of an L2GP checklist or set of guiding questions must be undertaken with caution. This would only work if it was part of a wider process of experimental learning including small pilot projects supporting community protection and ongoing evaluations. First and foremost, such pilots must ensure continuous in-depth dialogue with communities and other local stakeholders, promoting their experiences, priorities and preferences, rather than those of donors and aid organisations.

In order to promote change and encourage aid workers to engage more readily with local actors, humanitarian interventions could be evaluated on their ability to support local resilience. Such activities can take place in peacetime or prior to any expected natural hazards, allowing local people to build up their own defences (in this context it is notable that very little has been done in terms of even the most basic disaster preparedness in for instance the Nuba study area). Such preventive measures are cheaper than last-minute emergency interventions, and can be as basic as anticipating a drought or a bout of fighting leading to food shortages. As well as ongoing donor support, such preventative action requires aid agencies to deploy sophisticated social, political and economic analyses.

It may be helpful – even necessary – to distinguish more clearly between a definition of 'protection' based on international law and concepts of protection among affected communities. The majority of L2GP study informants referred to threats to the safety and livelihoods of civilian populations (including crime) when talking about 'protection', rather than access to rights per se. It is also important to note that protection mandates as interpreted in peacekeeping operations in Nuba

and Jonglei do not, in reality, imply the physical protection of vulnerable populations – an ambiguity which can create false expectations. People at risk need to understand that, when international agencies and UN peacekeeping operations use the language of protection, this does not necessarily mean that they have the capacity or the will to provide physical security for anyone other than themselves.

Impunity in the face of national and international law is widespread in the countries and contexts studied in this research. In most of the case studies cited here, the states in question themselves were seen as major sources of violations and threats. People at risk are therefore often forced to act to ensure their own basic survival, by whatever means possible. Outside agencies and donors – acting within their mandates – could do more to support such local efforts in a pragmatic way. Perhaps one model to follow is the 'Do No Harm' doctrine. Developed in the 1990s, 'Do No Harm' has entered the lexicon and practice of humanitarian agencies. Often, the doctrine is implemented in the form of discrete checklists, but more profoundly it requires aid agencies to reassess the nature of their work and its impact, in order to ensure that humanitarian interventions do not inadvertently harm the very people they seek to aid. There are strong affinities between L2GP and 'Do No Harm'.

The L2GP studies have tried to provide a local perspective on matters of protection and survival in emergencies – a debate usually dominated by 'outside' voices and perspectives. The research demonstrates that, in these cases, national governments, humanitarian agencies and international peacekeepers are generally failing to provide vulnerable people with the protection they need. The studies also show that local actions and initiatives aimed at improving protection are at least as important as outside interventions. Yet these local actions are not generally recognised or supported in proportion to their importance.[22]

The manner in which international aid actors understand and support local agency is likely to become increasingly significant given the shifting global balance of power. The global financial crisis that began in 2008 has accelerated the shift in financial and ultimately political power away from Europe and North America. Since the end of the Cold War, these areas have been the sponsors of rights-based interventions in situations of humanitarian crisis and complex emergency. These global shifts, epitomised by the rise of China, are having significant impacts on many sectors including development and humanitarian activities. In future, less financial and political capital will be available to back external interventions based on notions of human rights. This is not to deny the legitimacy of liberal-democratic, rights-based values, but to recognise the declining capital of their Western sponsors. In an era that is likely to be marked by increasingly frequent natural disasters, it seems probable that aid responses will become more regionalised, at least in Asia, with China (and perhaps India and other countries) playing prominent roles. This constitutes another reason for those engaged in protection to pay closer attention to local realities.

L2GP initiatives will continue to focus on local concepts of protection, and thus contribute to the continued transformation and evolution of the wider humanitarian enterprise.[23] Above all, the L2GP initiative will continue to ask (when necessary awkward) questions – of international aid agencies, donors, conflict- and disaster-affected states and those who write and read about humanitarian practice and policy.

L2GP guidance for promoting locally-led protection

Humanitarian protection activities should be grounded in a recognition that the first, and usually most important, response comes from affected communities. This paper suggests a number of recommendations to help bring this about.

1. A stronger connection must be made between local context and global action. This requires international actors to become better at listening to and learning from local voices, and appreciating local agency.
2. Outside assistance must be informed and shaped by an analysis of locally perceived threats, challenges and priorities, a mapping of locally led initiatives and a detailed understanding of socio-political contexts. In sudden-onset crises this analysis will first have to be based on knowledge provided by experienced national and international resource persons – and subsequently developed through action research accompanying operations.
3. Give greater priority to supporting communities with assistance which expands their options and opportunities (cash, food and other easily exchanged/traded items). The specific context will determine how this can best be done (individual cash grants, community cash grants, vouchers etc.)
4. Vulnerable communities see protection and livelihoods as closely interlinked. Supporting livelihoods can help to promote local self-protection efforts, and prevent some harmful long-term effects of crises.
5. The protection function of local values, traditions and customary law should be understood and supported – while being alert for possible (gender, age, race, religious) bias, and the exclusion of marginalised groups.
6. Support local capacities for self-protection through disaster prevention and preparedness training, building social capital and promoting networking and community organisation. This can be done both ahead of and during crises. Representatives of affected communities should participate in all stages of programme conception, design and implementation.
7. Whenever possible, international agencies should work with national and local authorities to develop capacities to protect and be accountable to vulnerable populations.
8. Donors and international agencies should develop creative and flexible mechanisms for supporting indigenous initiatives, including reporting procedures adapted to local situations and capacities.
9. International agencies should prioritise advocacy aimed at preventing or stopping targeted attacks on civilians. Local organisations should inform domestic constit-

uencies about abuses. In both natural disasters and armed conflicts, advocacy strategies should incorporate local (sometimes behind-the-scenes) 'persuasive' activities, as well as the public denunciation of abuses.

10. The role and value of international peacekeepers in the protection of civilian populations needs to be reassessed and thoroughly revised, informed and directed by local realities and priorities.
11. Where appropriate, recognition should be given to the protective roles of civil society actors and other non-state groups – while being alert to the dangers of protection activities becoming co-opted by conflict actors.
12. Agencies mandated under international human rights, humanitarian and refugee law should do more to understand and respect how individuals, families and communities attempt to protect themselves, and where appropriate support the protection activities of civil society and other non-state groups.
13. Given the importance of self-protection, international normative and legal frameworks need to be re-examined and possibly revised, in order to recognise and better support the protection activities of individuals, families and communities, and where appropriate other non-state actors.

Annex 1
Checklist for local and international agencies considering interventions aimed at protection of civilians

1. Does the proposed intervention arise from a sufficiently insightful understanding of local realities at a household and community level to allow it to:

    a) build on or complement the existing self-protection assets and actions of threatened communities, including strengthening the capacity of local leadership at community level?
    b) alleviate any negative side-effects (and fill gaps) of existing self-protection measures, whether related to safety, livelihoods or rights?
    c) respond holistically to the different and changing needs (between location and over time) of threatened communities living either side of the conflict line?
    d) recognise the importance of the psychological needs of people attempting to survive long-term insecurity and displacement? (including self-esteem, knowledge of rights, belonging and enjoyment)?
    e) build on the key protection role played by women?

2. Does the agency have sufficient understanding and capacity at local and national level to allow it to:

    a) provide relevant capacity-building support to local CSOs and NGOs that are attempting to respond to civilian needs?
    b) justify possible engagement (or not) with local armed forces and governing bodies to strengthen their positive contribution to civilian protection, while minimising any threats they pose?
    c) facilitate communication and dialogue between the communities being attacked and those who are carrying out the attacks?
    d) raise awareness of the wider national public of what is being done to civilians in their own country (such that they might take their own initiatives to influence the authorities responsible)?
    e) work with peacekeeping forces (especially those of the UN) to strengthen their understanding of local realities and increase their efficacy?
    f) support community-based peace-building initiatives post-conflict as a means of preventing a slide back into conflict?

3. Does the agency have sufficient understanding and capacity at international level to allow it to:

    a) contribute to efforts aimed at raising sufficient international political will to stop or prevent state-sponsored violence against citizens?
    b) advocate for changes in UN peacekeeping interventions: how they are designed, managed and implemented?
    c) provide relevant capacity-building support to local CSOs and NGOs that are attempting to respond to civilian needs?
    d) support threatened communities to learn from the self-protection experiences of those from other conflicts?

Notes

1 Sylvie Caverzasio (ed.), *Strengthening Protection in War: A Search for Professional Standards* (Geneva: ICRC, 2001).

2 The trend towards rights-based protection programming has been critiqued by 'humanitarian minimalists'. Marc DuBois of MSF argues (in *Humanitarian Exchange*, March 2010) that most uses of 'protection' in the humanitarian sector are unhelpful and dangerous as they obscure aid agencies' inability to physically protect people caught up in violence and conflict.

3 SCHR, 'Accountability to Disaster-Affected Populations', *Forced Migration Review*, no. 35, June 2010.

4 Further information about the L2GP initiative, and full texts of the five studies, can be found at http://www.local2global.info.

5 For example, in the Karen case study some stakeholders expressed disagreement with some of the report's findings.

6 See http://www.cdainc.com.

7 This study was originally published by Chatham House as an Asia Programme Paper (ASP PP 2010/04, September 2007).

8 Although this study uses 'Myanmar', the official name of the country, the majority of ethnic nationality informants referred to 'Burma'. Where interviewees have used 'Burma' this is preserved in the quotations.

9 For an overview of the Karen conflict, see Ashley South, *Burma's Longest War: Anatomy of the Karen Conflict*, Transnational Institute/Burma Centre, 2011.

10 An important exception is the Karen Human Rights Group report *Village Agency: Rural Rights and Resistance in a Militarized Karen State* (November 2008).

11 Mary Anderson, *Do No Harm: Supporting Local Capacities for Peace through Aid*, Local Capacities for Peace Project, 1996.

12 Official data records the number of dead and missing at approximately 140,000 (Post-Nargis Joint Assessment report, July 2008). However, aid workers estimate that as many as 200,000 people may have been killed. One reason for this discrepancy in numbers is that there were perhaps 50,000 unregistered migrant workers from upper Myanmar at the time of the cyclone in Laputa Township alone, none of whom were included in official figures.

13 Paula Souverijn-Eisenberg, 'Lessons Learned from the Joint Military Commission', Peacekeeping Best Practices Section, August 2005, http://www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org.

14 The five assignments covered 'Women and Vulnerables', 'Courts, Customary Law and Traditional Authority', 'Safety and Security', 'Livelihoods' and 'Intervention by International Agencies'.

15 M. Schomerus and T. Allen, *Southern Sudan at Odds with Itself: Dynamics of Conflict and Predicaments of Peace* (London: LSE Development Studies Department (DESTIN), 2010).

16 UNMIS, 'Lidder Visits Jonglei State', 12 May 2011, http://unmis.unmissions.org.

17 Marc DuBois, 'Protection: Fig Leaves and Other Delusions', *Humanitarian Exchange*, no. 46, March 2010.

18 Nelly Sabarthes, 'Implementing and Operationalising Protection of Civilians with the United Nations Mission in Sudan: The Case of Abyei', Conference Paper, September 2009.

19 Joshua Craze, *Creating Facts on the Ground: Conflict Dynamics in Abyei*, HSBA Working Paper 26 (Geneva: Small Arms Survey, June 2011).

20 According to UNDP data, Zimbabwe had a Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.241 at independence in 1980, 0.284 in 1990 and 0.232 in 2000. By 2009 it had fallen to 0.118, and as of 2010 the country is ranked lowest of the 169 on the HDI list.

21 See *Report of the Fact-Finding Mission to Zimbabwe to Assess the Scope and Impact of Operation Murambatsvina by the UN Special Envoy on Human Settlements Issues in Zimbabwe Mrs. Anna Kajumulo Tibaijuka*, July 2005, http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/297_96735_ZimbabweReport.pdf.

22 According to IRIN, in 2010 local NGOs in developing countries received only 0.4% of OECD-DAC funding (http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=89982). Although in recent years non-DAC countries such as China and Saudi Arabia have become major aid donors, most of this assistance is bilateral (government-to-government) with very little funding provided directly to local organisations. See Adele Harmer and Ellen Martin (eds), *Diversity in Donorship: Field Lessons*, HPG Report 30, March 2010.

23 The L2GP initiative will be undertaking small-scale pilot projects in order to develop a set of practical approaches and tools for use in various stages of the programme cycle.

Network Papers 2001–2011

Network Papers are contributions on specific experiences or issues prepared either by HPN members or contributing specialists.

36 *Food-security Assessments in Emergencies: A Livelihoods Approach* by H. Young, S. Jaspars, R. Brown, J. Frize and H. Khogali (2001)
37 *A Bridge Too Far: Aid Agencies and the Military in Humanitarian Response* by J. Barry with A. Jefferys (2002)
38 *HIV/AIDS and Emergencies: Analysis and Recommendations for Practice* by A. Smith (2002)
39 *Reconsidering the tools of war: small arms and humanitarian action* by R. Muggah with M. Griffiths (2002)
40 *Drought, Livestock and Livelihoods: Lessons from the 1999-2001 Emergency Response in the Pastoral Sector in Kenya* by Yacob Aklilu and Mike Wekesa (2002)
41 *Politically Informed Humanitarian Programming: Using a Political Economy Approach* by Sarah Collinson (2002)
42 *The Role of Education in Protecting Children in Conflict* by Susan Nicolai and Carl Triplehorn (2003)
43 *Housing Reconstruction after Conflict and Disaster* by Sultan Barakat (2003)
44 *Livelihoods and Protection: Displacement and Vulnerable Communities in Kismaayo, Southern Somalia* by Simon Narbeth and Calum McLean (2003)
45 *Reproductive Health for Conflict-affected People: Policies, Research and Programmes* by Therese McGinn et al. (2004)
46 *Humanitarian futures: practical policy perspectives* by Randolph Kent (2004)
47 *Missing the point: an analysis of food security interventions in the Great Lakes* by S Levine and C Chastre with S Ntububa, J MacAskill, S LeJeune, Y Guluma, J Acidri and A Kirkwood
48 *Community-based therapeutic care: a new paradigm for selective feeding in nutritional crises* by Steve Collins
49 *Disaster preparedness programmes in India: a cost benefit analysis* by Courtenay Cabot Venton and Paul Venton (2004)
50 *Cash relief in a contested area: lessons from Somalia* by Degan Ali, Fanta Toure, Tilleke Kiewied (2005)
51 *Humanitarian engagement with non-state armed actors: the parameters of negotiated armed access* by Max Glaser (2005)
52 *Interpreting and using mortaility data in humanitarian emergencies: a primer* by Francesco Checchi and Les Roberts (2005)
53 *Protecting and assisting older people in emergencies* by Jo Wells (2005)
54 *Housing reconstruction in post-earthquake Gujarat: a comparative analysis* by Jennifer Duyne Barenstein (2006)
55 *Understanding and addressing staff turnover in humanitarian agencies* by David Loquercio, Mark Hammersley and Ben Emmens (2006)
56 *The meaning and measurement of acute malnutrition in emergencies: a primer for decision-makers* by Helen Young and Susanne Jaspars (2006)
57 *Standards put to the test: Implementing the INEE Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crisis and Early Reconstruction* by Allison Anderson, Gerald Martone, Jenny Perlman Robinson, Eli Rognerud and Joan Sullivan-Owomoyela (2006)
58 *Concerning the accountability of humanitarian action* by Austen Davis (2007)
59 *Contingency planning and humanitarian action: a review of practice* by Richard Choularton (2007)
60 *Mobile Health Units in emergency operations: a methodological approach* by Stéphane Du Mortier and Rudi Coninx (2007)
61 *Public health in crisis-affected populations: a practical guide for decision-makers* by Francesco Checchi, Michelle Gayer, Rebecca Freeman Grais and Edward J. Mills (2007)
62 *Full of promise: How the UN's Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism can better protect children* by Katy Barnett and Anna Jefferys (2008)
63 *Measuring the effectiveness of Supplementary Feeding Programmes in emergencies* by Carlos Navarro-Colorado, Frances Mason and Jeremy Dhoham (2008)
64 *Livelihoods, livestock and humanitarian response: the Livestock Emergency Guidelines and Standards* by Catthy Watson and Andy Catley (2008)
65 *Food security and livelihoods programming in conflict: a review* by Susanne Jaspars and Dan Maxwell (2009)
66 *Solving the risk equation: People-centred disaster risk assessment in Ethiopia* by Tanya Boudreau (2009)
67 *Evidence-based decision-making in humanitarian assistance* by David A. Bradt (2009)
68 *Safety with dignity: integrating community-based protection into humanitarian programming* by Kate Berry and Sherryl Reddy (2010)
69 *Common Needs Assessments and humanitarian action* by Richard Garfield, with Courtney Blake, Patrice Chatainger and Sandie Walton-Ellery (2011)
70 *Applying conflict sensitivity in emergency response: current practice and ways forward* by Nona Zicherman, with Aimal Khan, Anne Street, Heloise Heyer and Oliver Chevreau (2011)
71 *System failure? Revisiting the problems of timely response to crises in the Horn of Africa* by Simon Levine, with Alexandra Crosskey and Mohammed Abdinoor (2011)

Good Practice Reviews

Good Practice Reviews are major, peer-reviewed contributions to humanitarian practice. They are produced periodically.

1 *Water and Sanitation in Emergencies* by A. Chalinder (1994)
2 *Emergency Supplementary Feeding Programmes* by J. Shoham (1994)
3 *General Food Distribution in Emergencies: from Nutritional Needs to Political Priorities* by S. Jaspars and H. Young (1996)
4 *Seed Provision During and After Emergencies* by the ODI Seeds and Biodiversity Programme (1996)
5 *Counting and Identification of Beneficiary Populations in Emergency Operations: Registration and its Alternatives* by J. Telford (1997)
6 *Temporary Human Settlement Planning for Displaced Populations in Emergencies* by A. Chalinder (1998)
7 *The Evaluation of Humanitarian Assistance Programmes in Complex Emergencies* by A. Hallam (1998)
8 *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments* by K. Van Brabant (2000)
9 *Disaster Risk Reduction: Mitigation and Preparedness in Development and Emergency Programming* by John Twigg (2004)
10 *Emergency food security interventions* by Daniel Maxwell, Kate Sadler, Amanda Sim, Mercy Mutonyi, Rebecca Egan and Mackinnon Webster (2008)
8 **Revised edition** *Operational Security Management in Violent Environments* (2010)
11 *Cash transfer programming in emergencies*, by Paul Harvey and Sarah Bailey (2011)

A full list of HPN publications is available at the HPN website: www.odihpn.org. To order HPN publications, contact hpn@odi.org.uk.

Humanitarian Practice Network

The Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN) is an independent forum where field workers, managers and policymakers in the humanitarian sector share information, analysis and experience.

HPN's aim is to improve the performance of humanitarian action by contributing to individual and institutional learning.

HPN's activities include:

- A series of specialist publications: Good Practice Reviews, Network Papers and *Humanitarian Exchange* magazine.
- A resource website at www.odihpn.org.
- Occasional seminars and workshops to bring together practitioners, policymakers and analysts.

HPN's members and audience comprise individuals and organisations engaged in humanitarian action. They are in 80 countries worldwide, working in northern and southern NGOs, the UN and other multilateral agencies, governments and donors, academic institutions and consultancies. HPN's publications are written by a similarly wide range of contributors.

HPN's institutional location is the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), an independent think tank on humanitarian and development policy. HPN's publications are researched and written by a wide range of individuals and organisations, and are published by HPN in order to encourage and facilitate knowledge-sharing within the sector. The views and opinions expressed in HPN's publications do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Humanitarian Policy Group or the Overseas Development Institute.

Funding support is provided through the HPG Integrated Programme by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the British Red Cross, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Denmark, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Netherlands, Oxfam GB, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and World Vision International.

To join HPN, complete and submit the form at www.odihpn.org or contact the Membership Administrator at:

Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN)
Overseas Development Institute
111 Westminster Bridge Road
London, SE1 7JD
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0)20 7922 0331/74
Fax: +44 (0)20 7922 0399
Email: hpn@odi.org.uk
Website: www.odihpn.org

© Overseas Development Institute, London, 2012.