"The Emperor Carries a Gun": Capacity Building in the North Caucasus

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The 2004 U.N. Consolidated Appeal for the North Caucasus announced increased attention to support for capacity building of local humanitarian organizations, communities, and governmental bodies, along with a stronger focus on human rights programming. Capacity building and rights protection in the North Caucasus context, however, is an extraordinarily complex undertaking, and necessitates an analysis of the overall political, social, cultural and economic context of the region. In addition, the humanitarian presence has had a definite impact on the political and social environment in the region that should be measured and carefully assessed. Analysis of this impact will aid in the construction of proactive measures in line with the humanitarian mission and principles and will facilitate the humanitarian community's preparedness to undertake capacity building objectives. This article describes this context and impact, spotlighting the republics of Chechnya and Ingushetia, which together are targeted as an "anti-terrorist operation" by the federal government of the Russian Federation.

Brief Historical Background of the Russian-Chechen Conflict

The Chechen nation is a people of ancient origins, dated in the Northern Caucasus region from approximately year 200 – 300. As a collective, Chechens embraced the Islamic faith in the 17th century. At the last census taken, in 1990, the Chechen nation totaled about 1,000,000. The Ingush peoples, who number only 300,000, are the closest ethnic relatives of Chechens, and together the two nations are historically known as the "Vainakh" nation. Chechnya borders Ingushetia to the east, and the republic of Dagestan to the west.

The Northern Caucasus has been a fought-over region for centuries and finally came under Russian rule in the 16th century. During Soviet times, Chechnya and Ingushetia were legally united as one "Chechen-Ingush Republic." Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, although part of the Russian Federation under the Russian Constitution, a secessionist movement in Chechnya began in 1990 and, in October 1991, Chechen leadership declared Chechnya an independent country. At that time Ingushetia held its own referendum and the Ingush population opted to remain within the Russian Federation. In March 1992, leadership in Chechnya also adopted a Chechen constitution that was not recognized by the Russian Federation or the international community. An uneasy period followed which culminated in heavy Russian

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offensives inside of Chechnya in 1994. After a protracted war with heavy casualties on both sides, Russian forces, unable to defeat resistance fighters in the mountainous south, withdrew from Chechnya in August 1996. In all, approximately 50,000 people died, thousands more were made homeless, and much of Chechnya was destroyed.

In August of 1999 Chechen rebel incursions into the Republic of Dagestan took place but were pushed back into Chechnya by Russian forces. During this same period, bombs in apartment buildings in Moscow and two other Russian cities killed over 300 people. The Russian government blamed the Chechen rebels and, in October 1999, Russian forces once again moved into Chechnya and launched heavy attacks. Thousands of Chechens fled to seek refuge in neighboring republics. The majority fled to the Republic of Ingushetia, numbers amounted to approximately 200,000 at that time, and 150,000 in 2001. At present there are approximately 70,000 - 80,000 displaced Chechens yet residing in Ingushetia, with 8,000 in tent camps, 25,000 in temporary settlements, and the remainder residing in the private sector. Thousands of others are displaced to Dagestan, Kalbardino-Balkaria, other areas of the Russian Federation, and abroad.

Meanwhile, during the past year the political landscape of the Chechen conflict has changed perceptibly. Federal political authorities have, for the time being at least, consolidated their efforts into forcing a resolution of the seemingly intractable conflict. A variety of strategies have been designed to give the impression that the Chechnya conflict has stabilized, resistance forces have been eradicated, and the general Chechen population rejects independence and opts to remain within the Russian Federation. A referendum on state status, a presidential election, and a variety of "carrot" incentives, including amnesty laws, destroyed property compensation, and public announcements of reconstruction plans, are proffered to the Chechen population as proof of federal authorities' victory, and goodwill towards peaceful rehabilitation of the republic and cohabitation with Russia.

Whatever changes have occurred recently in political strategy, conditions of war-affected populations in Chechnya and Ingushetia remain fairly unchanged and yet precarious. Present day Chechen nation lingers in a social, political, and economic crisis. Physical infrastructure is destroyed, including schools and other public services, up to 80% of the Chechen population is officially unemployed, and the outflow of large numbers of educated skilled workers is ongoing. Children and youth have known war and violence all of their lives, illiteracy has reappeared in Chechen society, and consequential to these conditions, a large number of young people are falling under the influence of harmful tendencies, including narcotics and other drug use. Armed conflict continues daily in Chechnya, between federal forces and resistance fighters. The world community stands indifferent to the numerous human rights abuses that occur daily, including kidnapping, arbitrary detention, torture, and summary executions. Forced

expulsions and involuntary returns of IDPs, along with suicide bombings and other acts of hostility, are the emergency of the moment.

Overview of the Humanitarian Operational Environment

Humanitarian Programming Philosophy and Trends

Reactive Emergency Programming

The bulk of the humanitarian response in the region has been reactive attempts to mediate a legitimate humanitarian presence and ensure that civilian affected groups receive minimal levels of basic needs provision. Humanitarian objectives have, up to now, been focused on stabilizing conditions of war-affected populations, with minimal purposeful effort in developmental programming. Programming has focused to a large part on shelter, water/sanitation, food, public health, primary and secondary education, and psychosocial needs and rehabilitation. In the past two years vocational training, conflict resolution, and rights training have also received minimal funding attention, but on a small scale to limited populations.

The most significant reason for the continued emergency framework of humanitarian programming is the long-term political instability in the region, the seeming perpetuity of the status quo – the unabated no-win, no-end nature of the conflict, all of which continue to result in emergency conditions for the civilian populations. Under these conditions it has been difficult to predict any measurable change in the direction of political events, and there has remained the possibility that the situation could actually destabilize further. This context has rendered to the humanitarian community a rather murky selection of options. Further, because the physical security environment in both Chechnya and Ingushetia has remained extremely precarious, and the international political context of the conflict rather sensitive, humanitarian choices have been limited further, awaiting both political decisions and improvement in conditions.

Recent Trends: Protection and Community-Based Programming

There are some recent trends in overall programming strategy and objectives, however. Resources to establish and support monitoring and rights protection activities have been ongoing during the conflict, but these have been confined to a very small number of humanitarian entities and level of activities. Within the past year, however, the U.N. has highlighted protection as a priority strategy, emphasizing monitoring and rights, and particularly in recent months attention to principles of voluntary return of displaced Chechens to their homeland.

Beginning two years ago some donors have also begun to advocate more "community based" programming, though the call has become more verbal only during the past year. In this period of time organizations and projects utilizing such approaches have also been few in number, and forms, levels and extent of community decision-making in programming remain fairly superficial.

The U.N. Consolidated Appeal for 2004 outline of increased emphasis on protection, rights based programming, capacity building of local humanitarian organizations, communities, and governmental bodies is a reflection of both reactive and proactive strategy. The apparent trend in philosophical approach is influenced by several immediate factors.

First, the recent forced changes in the political scene in Chechnya and Ingushetia concomitantly pose considerable alterations in the conditions and needs of war-affected civilian populations. The success of federal political plans depends greatly upon the location and movement of Chechen displaced persons. While the federal center publicizes to domestic and international audiences that the Chechen conflict is under control and winding down, the presence of large numbers of displaced persons remaining in Ingushetia would substantially de-legitimize federal claims. Thus, the recent closure of large tent camps: tent camps are most visible evidence of IDPs. These closures, however, along with a numerous variety of intimidation and pressure tactics to return to Chechnya, present the humanitarian community with responsibility to remind authorities of various rights of civilian populations, particularly principles of voluntary return.

In addition, the humanitarian community recognizes that these war-affected populations are limited in capacity to protect themselves. There are few local advocacy sources and structures in the region, little knowledge of humanitarian principles and rights, and a definite lack of rule of law.

Concomitant with each of these factors is deterioration in security conditions for the range of local and international humanitarian organizations in the region. Whereas in the past kidnapping and robbery have been the greatest threats to humanitarian workers there, the trend over the past year, particularly in regard to international organizations and especially expatriates, has been systematic harassment, intimidation, and even illegal expulsion by government authorities. These tactics are strategically designed to induce certain effects. First, as long as the international presence in Ingushetia remains stable and secure, that presence retains capability to witness, denounce, and even block governmental strategic designs currently underway. It is no accident that these patterns of harassment have been inflicted at precisely the same moment that pressures against IDPs have begun to peak. According to this strategy, an emaciated, subdued, or impotent humanitarian presence is required for other plans to proceed.

The humanitarian community is faced now with particular new challenges in the continuation of efforts to achieve the mandate of protecting and assisting civilian populations. First, obvious population movements and trends in the regional political environment have produced trends in the location, conditions, and needs of beneficiary groups that must be identified and addressed. Second, rights, a fairly non-existent concept in practice in the North Caucasus, will best be protected by dissemination of rights information, and by ensuring that community structures exist to both buttress and support an environment in which rights are imperative. Lastly, the international humanitarian community recognizes that an international presence alone cannot ensure guarantees of protection and assistance; without solid partnerships between governments, donors, agencies, and community, these tasks are profoundly difficult.

Agencies and Actors

A variety of entities, organizations and groups comprise the humanitarian operational environment in the region. These include: the United Nations agencies; international and local non-governmental humanitarian organizations; federal and local political actors; federal and local non-military government service structures, including registration bureau, visa/passport services, tax bureau, humanitarian affairs offices; federal and local intelligence structures; federal and local militia and police; business networks; criminal gangs, and local social structures such as teips and clans.

None of these operates in isolation of the others, and there are many ways that they are interconnected in the course of humanitarian affairs. One can conceptualize these entities almost horizontally, as each possesses certain strengths and advantageous position, as well as limitations. In a sense the balancing of these strengths and weaknesses nurtures a symbiotic relationship between the various actors, the outcome of which is the forms and nature of humanitarian response.

The United Nations

The United Nations entities play several roles in the region. At the pinnacle of the U.N. umbrella is the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator and Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator/Area Security Advisor, (RHC, DHC). The DHC plays a direct field role and security coordination in North Caucasus. U.N. Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) works closely with the RHC and DHC, in monitoring of the humanitarian and security environment, coordinating all efforts with international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and providing public humanitarian information. U.N. High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF), U.N. Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD), World Food Programme (WFP),

and World Health Organization (WHO) function as sector need providers, and they work jointly with U.N. agencies to coordinate and plan regional humanitarian mission and strategy. U.N. Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and U.N. Development Programme (UNDP) have played a very limited role in the region if any, but are assessing a more significant position for the upcoming funding period. Swiss Humanitarian Aid (SWA) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also maintain strong partnerships with the U.N. agencies and support those agencies in programming strategic planning and implementation.

Strengths and Advantages. The overall strength and advantage of the U.N. agencies is their legal standing. The Russian Federation is a signatory to international conventions on human rights and refugee rights, and this provides the U.N. umbrella with a legal and political platform to maintain a lead role in humanitarian affairs in that country, though certainly by invitation. The U.N., together with multilateral and bilateral donors and officials, also possess influence through their strategic policymaking and public information roles. A combination of monetary resources and diplomatic privileges buttresses their authority and buffers vulnerability to any number of hazards faced by other humanitarian actors and civilians.

Constraints. The greatest constraint against U.N. effectiveness is their "guest" status, which is subordinate to Russian Federation state sovereignty. The U.N. can pressure, persuade, and remind a variety of governmental actors about international conventions and beneficiary needs, but the U.N. cannot enforce adherence. The U.N. humanitarian mission has also remained somewhat hostage to international political events and actors. A number of international political factors are related in some fashion to the Chechnya conflict, including "the international war on terrorism," international campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the range of political coalitions and oppositions produced through these events, of which Russia is a major actor. The U.N. mission in the North Caucasus must to some extent await political decisions of governments to make any major programming strategies and decisions.

Non-Governmental Humanitarian Organizations

A small number of international non-governmental humanitarian organizations (INGOs) maintain a steady presence in the North Caucasus. Approximately 25 such agencies function at field level in Ingushetia and/or Chechnya with regular sustained funding and program implementation. Of these 25, funding and beneficiary scope and scale vary widely. About 17 local humanitarian organizations maintain a field presence. Of these 17, only about 8 function with high visibility sustained funding and programming, and approximately 6 operate with a funding and beneficiary scope and

scale comparable with mid-level INGOs in the area. 3 of these 6 local organizations are involved in fairly high profile protection, human rights and democracy building work.

Strengths. Strengths of INGOs in the area include endurance and adaptability in unstable emergency situations. The steady presence of these organizations, many of which have maintained a presence throughout the first and second Chechnya conflicts, has helped build in certain context specific institutional capacities, including procurement knowledge, and some level of survival skills such as political perceptiveness in the local environment. These organizations are also knowledgeable of regional donors, and donor requirements and trends.

Strengths of local NGOs include their more in-depth understanding of the political environment, along with social and cultural knowledge that remains obscure to the vast majority of expatriates in the region. A small handful of local NGOs benefit from strong supportive partnerships with U.N. agencies, which provides protective benefits against potential governmental hazards.

Constraints. *Security.* INGOs face many hazards in the operational environment in Ingushetia and Chechnya. Security risks are high and encompass a number of threats and factors. In recent months one of the greatest risk is at the hands of governmental departments and intelligence forces and officials. Intelligence officials in particular regularly maintain both covert and overt surveillance of expatriates and international organizations, and through any number of types of operatives. When local authorities move against an INGO, they usually follow a pattern of first targeting lead expatriates, through a number of devices, including accusations of agitation and subversive activities, partnerships and support for resistance forces. Authorities also utilize other tactics that involve searching for or inventing problems with individual and organization registration, taxes, and even software violations. Each of these strategies is devised primarily to create documented reasons to expel expatriates, close organizations, or extract money to solve the imagined located problems.

Over the past year a pattern of official harassment of humanitarian organizations has become acute, resulting in several measures taken against individual expatriates and organizations, including registration refusal, deportation, tax fines, and closure and/or destruction of program sites and facilities.

A dual source of general lawlessness persists in this North Caucasus region. First, official authority structures discriminately interpret and enforce laws, utilize enforcement structures for non-legal purposes, and utilize non-legal means in law enforcement. Second, this first factor is compounded by the interconnectedness of official structures and criminal groups, along with the inability of official structures to maintain absolute

control. In this environment, law is in the hands of whoever makes it, and payoffs, comprising both monetary and gifts of influence, determine both the maker and the outcome of law.

The state of lawlessness affects humanitarian workers in two main ways. First, the general high prevalence of crime, including feuds, shootings, executions and assassinations, kidnappings, armed robberies, thefts, and break-ins, combined with the ubiquitous presence of weaponry and explosive devices, presents substantially high odds that humanitarian workers will become victims. Second, whether targeted or incidentally involved, humanitarian workers cannot be assured of effective protection in the hands of authorities.

Insufficient Protection Structures. The sheer number and weightiness of humanitarian organizations' constraints in the North Caucasus are compounded by their lack of rights and protection both within Russian Federation and in partnership with the United Nations agencies. In other words, if humanitarian organizations were simply harassed and plagued on a local level, with access available for redress to higher structures and authorities, these organizations would maintain a much more stable position in their operational affairs, thereby retaining the ability to serve beneficiary needs more effectively. But though local authorities operate with much impunity, they also function under the patronage and operatives of these higher federal sources, and the U.N. is limited in capacity to protect independent NGOs.

The United Nations agencies, though also guests on Russian Federation territory, retain some relative advantages in comparison to NGOs. First, it is much harder to dismiss or abuse U.N. agencies and personnel, as to do so would have serious diplomatic implications. Second, the presence of the U.N. and U.N. assistance helps to give the impression of state compliance with international conventions, which the Russian Federation needs in order to appease or dilute anti-Russian sentiment in regard to the Chechnya conflict. Third, the U.N. agencies are a strong source of monetary resource, which assists state authorities in meeting the needs of war-affected populations, but also provides inputs to the federal economy on many levels.

NGOs do not retain these levels of advantage; as such, they are much more easily dispensed of. During a series of conferences with local and federal authorities regarding government harassment of humanitarian expatriates and organizations, one government official asked a presiding lead U.N. representative, "Why do you care, anyway? You have immunity as U.N. personnel," to which the U.N. official replied, "Of course we care – they are our partners, we work together with them." Though U.N. leadership in recent months has particularly stepped up advocacy of NGOs, the effectiveness of this leverage

will become more apparent over the coming months' transitions and changes in the North Caucasus.

Lack of Social and Cultural Knowledge. Expatriate humanitarian workers in the North Caucasus face a distinct disadvantage due their limited knowledge of social and cultural structures, norms, and customs. A variety of factors limit expatriate staff's knowledge or learning in this regard, including time constraints, deeply rooted biases, media information and misinformation, lack of familiarity, social learning, past experiences, and a simple deficiency in knowledge of exactly what "culture" is, including how to identify and analyze cultural processes. Incentives and motivations to understand culture are also lacking, often because of staff indifference or insecurity in actively learning the culture of their colleagues and environment, lack of purposeful organizational training in culture learning, and due to the ways that staff groups physically position themselves and exclude others in their working and social environments. In the North Caucasus security concerns and protocols are particularly stringent, placing great limitations on expatriate integration in the local environment.

The general climate of intimidation also discourages this type of learning and the extent to which expatriates can embed themselves locally. Local social leaders also impede the learning of local doings, by maintaining norms of secrecy, and by providing selective information.

Lack of knowledge of social and cultural structures and norms has impact on several levels. Though expatriates in the region are generally highly qualified in their specialized fields, most spend relatively short periods of time in the North Caucasus. Due to the security climate and the rigorous and difficult work conditions, most rotate out after approximately one to one and a half years. This relatively short time period, combined with limited ability to integrate locally, means that organizations are unable to identify constructive local structures and strengths upon which to build community capacity.

It is also the case that internal conflicts between expatriates and local staff, some of which are serious, persist in a large number of INGOs. Underlying sources of these conflicts are often clashes of interest, between institutional preferences, policies, and mechanisms, and those of local groups. Often the measures taken to deal with cultural differences and quell conflict are not constructive, are cyclical in conflict building, and substantially negate the humanitarian spirit and practices of the organizations, a consequence ironically at odds with the goal of the humanitarian mission. In the North Caucasus, because of the range of dangerous interconnected actors and factors, serious internal upheaval is a fundamental security concern that creates conflict cycles within an organization and propels them far into the external social environment. Reflective

learning of local norms would enable organizations to develop mechanisms that help to prevent conflict and safeguard the organization simultaneously.

*Donor Relations and Mandates***.** Donors who finance INGOs in the region are generally mainstream, larger and well-known donors. In many other conflict regions of the world more critical and equity focused foreign donors seek to fund projects such as women's empowerment, rights focused projects, and advocacy for persecuted groups. Because of the extreme political sensitivity of the Chechnya conflict, donors for the North Caucasus region have weighted heavily on the side of caution, with more "neutral" programming objectives such as provision of basic needs, but to the neglect of equity and rights programming. Many donors view the latter types of programming as "too political."

As is also the case in many other conflict regions worldwide, local organizations in the Northern Caucasus focus on the latter types of programming more than do INGOs, but in this region the number and scope of these organizations is also very small. Because of the scope of conflict interests in the region, local organizations are vulnerable to attack and persecution from a range of sources. And because politically feasible funding sources are limited, and limited types of programming able to be implemented because of limited funding mandates, local organizations in the region as a whole are not well supported financially.

These conditions pertain, however, to local humanitarian organizations that are visible interactively with the mainstream humanitarian community and that function in partnership with U.N. and related donors. There are numbers of less visible (to the mainstream humanitarian community) local groups and organizations that receive donations from a variety of sources connected with political interests. Though the scope and scale of these activities are less calculable they are, nonetheless, not recognized or supported by the U.N. and related partners.

Local organizations suffer from a number of other limitations in attracting the larger mainstream donors. First, most do not have adequate knowledge of donor cultures and understandings. They do not know how donors think, what kinds of systems, procedures, and interests are key to international donors, and in particular, local organizations do not know how funding priorities are established, the procedures for learning these interests, and how to write adequate proposals and project reports. There is simply a large communication gap and lack of understanding between donors and local groups and organizations. Moreover, systems are not established whereby local groups hold accountability to international donors.

Available international donors in the region also carry a perhaps unconscious bias in regard to local groups and organizations. Because the North Caucasus region, and the Russian Federation in general, are known for financial corruption, donors do not have large faith in local organizations. Combined with apprehension of involvement in activities that may seem politically sensitive or not socially constructive, that are predicted to exacerbate social relations, or that are interest group related, donors thus far have simply been reluctant to invest in local capacity building.

The Chechens and Ingush: Social, Cultural, Education and Economic Factors

In order to effectively consider community based and capacity building programming in the North Caucasus, the humanitarian community must develop a more highly tuned understanding of local Chechen and Ingush social and cultural factors, structures and norms, and education and economic histories. Through this understanding one may also locate social and cultural strengths, or constructive aspects of Chechen and Ingush cultural communities, upon which to build relevant programming.

Historical Collective Memory

In understanding the mindset of the Chechens in particular, one must keep in mind that historical collective memory is a strong factor in the perpetuity and intactness of Chechen cultural identity. Centuries of invasions and wars by outside "foreigners" play a profound role in maintaining Chechen identity as distinct from "others." In simple terms, Chechens know who they are, and that knowledge to an important extent is derived from the history of aggression against the collective Chechen nation.

In the current conflict, living memory of the February 1944-1957 deportation of the Chechens under the Stalin region to East Asian lands is particularly acute and publicly commiserated on the deportation anniversary date each year. The Ingush were also deported during that time. They commiserate the anniversary as well, but perhaps with somewhat less anguish, given their somewhat more secure position in relation to Russia at the current time. For a weighty proportion of Chechens, the latter years of Soviet policy granting national political and education rights have not served to erase or soften historical memory of oppression, and the current conflict certainly serves as a painful reminder, as well as a forewarning of future relations.

Social Structures

Universally, Chechens and Ingush are socially collective. Individuals have no place socially in Chechen and Ingush affairs. Individual social and political leaders are

recognized and emerge in various contexts of these affairs, but those individuals also operate at the behest of or in alignment with group interests.

There are a variety of types of norms and structures that mediate Ingush and Chechen social processes and relations. Teip, clan, family, female-male and husband-wife norms and structures, social behavior customs, Islamic principles, and economic means and methods are particularly important in the relationship processes within and between groups.

Chechens and Ingush have derived Islamic principles into their social meaning systems and blended them into specifically Chechen and Ingush cultural norms. One will perceive many universally Islamic practices and meanings, particularly those guiding thought and behavior towards Allah, family and other individuals and groups. In general, faith, compassion, good deeds, charity, and honesty are deemed obligatory. Within the specific Chechen and Ingush context, families and communities are responsible for the well-being of all members, and are equally socially condemned in the event of individual transgression of those norms and customs. Groups monitor closely the behavior and undertakings of their own members as well as those of other groups. This social system of norms provides a sort of "check and balance" scheme that enforces these norms and checks against inappropriate conduct. In the event of disfavor or conflict, recognized or designated community members are responsible for mediating wrongdoings or grievances. Each individual person, however, is also accountable for maintaining proper language, mannerisms, and behavior towards others, as a means of preventing conflict.

The Chechens in particular are an especially industrious people. Under a variety of circumstances they are highly adaptable. They are adept at improvising, at creating means to produce improvements. Because of their intact Chechen identity, they are quick to facilitate "normality" and rebuild towards the protection and perpetuity of social boundaries and needs. They are also highly capable of formulating *ad hoc* alliances in the pursuit of objectives and goals. Motivation is key here – Chechens are strongly motivated people, at the impetus of many incentives, and they produce concrete results at the catalyst of these incentives. War affected populations worldwide are described as exhibiting certain wide-scale symptoms of immobilizing depression. Though Chechens certainly may be described as experiencing high levels of anger and sense of injustice, as well as a range of other symptoms indicative of stress and war trauma, debilitating depression is uncommon amongst these communities.

Social and Cultural Norms and Values (Within the War Context)

This section provides a brief description of some key values and norms that Chechens and Ingush ascribe as central to their culture. These values must be understood

as idealisms, however, and how they correlate to the collective nation and outsiders is important. At present, these key values are particularly interesting, because the war context has rendered them at times difficult to practice communally. The reality of life's context, and war in particular, is not easily fitted to idealism.

Charity

In general, both Ingush and Chechens share amongst themselves and take care of one another. However, this applies largely to the family and clan context. A wage earner will automatically and perhaps universally share her/his earners to take care of non- or less-earning relatives. Extended families live together, and a place in one's home is assumed to be available without question for whoever might need it. Borrowing and loaning money is a part of life's customary patterns.

The Ingush population together is only 300,000, yet this population received and accommodated up to 200,000 Chechen IDPs at one time on the Ingush territory. Thousands live in the private sector, renting apartments and houses from Ingush owners. Thousands live in temporary settlement areas, in barracks, unused factories, etc., that are owned by Ingush. Under the Ingush president Aushav's term, the Ingush government certainly took fair measures to ensure the adequate accommodation and fair treatment of Chechen IDPs. Chechens work in the local Nazran bazaar selling their goods, though their section is separate from the Ingush section. These efforts have been remarkable for such a small and largely poor Ingush population.

The Chechens, however, vary in their opinion of Ingush charity. Some say that the Ingush population treats them well, even loaning them small land plots to grow vegetables. Others, however, complain that the Ingush "do not give." They claim that Ingush homeowners regularly raise the rent price, or evict the Chechen IDPs in order to secure a higher rent from other tenants. Many Chechens claim that they have moved several times each year in Ingushetia for these reasons.

Though Chechens and Ingush will claim forthrightly the magnitude of importance of charitable customs and behavior, the existence of a very large gap in conditions between economically wealthier and poorer groups tells a different story. Amongst Chechens this is most apparent. Whereas there is certainly a lot of money connected with various groups of Chechens, there is a significantly less amount amongst the general population. This is obvious in the conditions of people living in tent camps and temporary accommodations, paralleled with the visibility of symbols of wealth elsewhere. A good proportion of the small number of local humanitarian organizations that operate in the region are not well funded, and cannot manage to secure funds from wealthy Chechen business interests, many of which are connected with Moscow central

interests. Some may not wish to seek funding from these sources, either because of a disagreeable element in the source of the funds, the lack of connection with the social groups privileged with the wealth, or because of conditions connected with obtaining the funding.

Whereas one may perceive some level of general social welfare concern and activity in many areas of the world, this is not the case in the North Caucasus. Though pressures against local humanitarian groups and charities are great in this region, it is the spirit of humanitarianism that is lacking in the North Caucasus.

Humanism

Chechens and Ingush are extremely hospitable to guests, both foreign and local, and many Chechens claim that Chechens have never held themselves up higher than other national or ethnic groups. From the Chechen philosophical perspective this attribute is "humanistic." A great many Chechens do not hold the general Russian public responsible for the war inside of Chechnya, and Chechens rarely denigrate other national groups outside the Russian Federation. In fact, both Chechens and Ingush often speak positively, and openly, of other nations worldwide, though they may not approve of their ways of life as desirable to their own cultural meanings. Yet, in this wartime, one will find a not insubstantial degree of intolerance amongst Chechens themselves, and between Chechens and Ingush.

Freedom and Self-rule

There is no denying that Chechens especially are a freedom-loving people. "Freedom" is perhaps the cornerstone of Chechen cultural identity. Whereas the bulk of Ingush are at least acquiescing to a republic status within Russian Federation rule, this cannot be said of a sizeable portion of the Chechen nation. Though many Chechens are tired of war and weary of the future should Chechnya not comply with Russian rule, there are ample Chechens who will never agree to that rule, and a majority percentage is certain that future problems will occur in the event of that relationship. Most of those who are pro-Russia alliance are those who stand to gain economically or politically from various partnerships with the Russian federal center.

Generally both Chechens and Ingush do not recognize "rule of law" in the liberal sense of the word, meaning codified state statutes, law-abiding citizenry in relation to those state statutes, and un-compromised government and law-enforcement bodies and officials. Central legal structures and bodies are particularly alien, and particularly the concept of "government," and certainly to Chechens. Because Chechen social authoritative structures are so decentralized by village, teip, clan, family and other loyalty

groups, centralized structures simply do not fit well into the well-formed indigenous system. Chechens generally are proud of their social governance structures and norms, including systems that rely upon self-appointed leadership figures within a variety of contexts. They are especially proud of their own Chechen character, along with the characterizations that they apply to themselves, and the capabilities of the Chechen nation to persevere and make its own social and cultural path (within the framework of Allah's wisdom and the fates he confers).

These notions of freedom and self-rule must be further examined. For example, the Chechen and Ingush impose some very strict social norms within their collective cultural fabric. As mentioned above, an individual has no place in Chechen and Ingush society. Alternative lifestyles and thinking is not tolerated. A related group must approve any changes or alterations in the practices of any one individual. In fact, few doings of any individual or group go unnoticed, or unnoted, by other groups. In this sense, because of the lack of secrets within these societies, the extent to which each sternly monitors the other, and the lack of flexibility in bypassing the norms and structures, it would seem that freedom is lacking internally. In fact, Chechens especially would refer to this system as that of "self-rule," meaning that rule by outsiders, imposed outside norms, is anathema to the Chechen sense of "freedom," – the ability of a nation to rule itself.

Equality

Related to freedom is the Chechen concept of "equality." Chechens proclaim equality as another important norm of Chechen social systems and culture. In the Chechen sense this means that autocratic rule within the collective nation is not acceptable, as no one group can claim the right to rule others. Equal authority is recognized across groups. However, from another perspective equality within groups does not mean equality of influence and authority, as recognized leadership figures within groups exercise more social authority than do other group members. In addition, a system of recognition of "most respected" families and individuals implies that others are less respectable. Behaviors, actions, resources, character, age (and age of clan or teip) are standards by which to estimate respectability.

Gender Equality. Gender roles and relations are also a matter of interest in regard to equality. In Chechen and Ingush society both men and women play important recognized roles in the maintenance of Chechen social and cultural systems. Men hold government and other state authority positions. Women, however, maintain important influence within the family and clan structures. Many Chechen women assert that if the relationship between husband and wife is "good," meaning perhaps partnership-like, then the wife can maintain a great deal of influence on the husband in family and other

relationship decision-making, including a wide range of social and business related affairs. In current times, women are also engaged in forms of business themselves, buying and reselling merchandise to support their families.

Nevertheless, in public women do not hold strong leadership roles amongst combined groups of men and women, though female leadership figures prevail in female circles. Women's behaviors in public especially are more harshly judged, as are women in general less visible in public and maintain less decision-making and influence in public affairs.

The Struggle over Culture

Decline of Collective Culture and Rise of Fractious Alliances

During the past decade war conditions have directly fed hard-scale criminality and inter-clan rivalries. In this wartime, Chechen community is increasingly marred by fractious, competing alliances, which are commandeered by strong-arm leaders. Much of this conflict is propelled by outside forces, created deliberately by the Russian center to nurture Chechen disagreement over social and political policy, and demands for political allegiances. A small-sized Islamic radical force, (unsupported by the majority Chechen population, who claim this group is not Chechen) also pressures the population into alliances and goals. A great deal of the internal conflict in Chechnya and amongst Chechen IDPs also stems from opportunistic efforts to seize resources and the means of procuring and securing those resources, much of which is proffered through the federal center, but also through international humanitarian agencies. Yet in current day Chechen communities, there are few alternative social means, community resources and sources of thought to bring the nation together.

Competition for Legitimacy of Cultural and Moral Values

Inarguably there exists in Chechnya a strong competition between various groups to claim legitimacy for the "proper" Chechen value base. Musa Akhmadov, a writer and advocate of traditional Chechen values describes, referring to the pressures of radical forces:[1]

> [Today] there remains the feeling of constant psychological pressure. It is the regrettable result of the activity of those wishing the Chechens to abandon many of their purely national customs and traditions that are allegedly in conflict with the requirements of Islam. In point of fact, there is no contradiction between the

[1] Musa Akhmadov, in *Chechnya, the Right to Culture*, by LAM – Center for Research and Popularization of the Chechen Culture, Polinform-Talburi Publishers, Moscow, 1999, pp.112-113.

> Chechen and the Moslem concepts. God has created us as both Moslems and Chechens. Our traditions and adats (religious laws) are in full harmony with Islam, excepting individual cases when our adats are more rigid and demanding than the norms of the Shariat. Whatever the situation, it is now of primary importance to offer resistance to the radical trends imposed from without, however alluring their slogans.
>
> Today Chechen spiritual culture, in particular our traditional one, is in need of strong and thorough support both from the state and all sound forces of society in order not to be ruined irrevocably. From olden times the Chechen people have had their greatest spiritual property, that is, a kind of institute of moral rules.
>
> Owing to the tireless preachings of ustazes our Chechen mentality has always been free of self-praising and the feeling of national supremacy. The concept "nokhchalla" (Chechenness) has never been thought of by our ancestors as something higher than "admalla" (humaneness), a vivid example of which is our folklore where the main positive characters often are not only Chechens but representatives of other nationalities.

Under protracted conditions of widespread violence, with generations of children, families, and regions suffering the bitter losses and consequences of these conditions, it is not difficult to understand how such conditions produce catastrophic and shattering effects on the constructive moral and social norms of whole communities. Chechen communities, while evermore reminded of their collective Chechen status, are currently engaged in a struggle to know and disseminate just what Chechen norms and values mean, in present times and in future development.

Education Histories

Certainly the Chechen population in recent decades has enjoyed formal educational and cultural institutions and access. Prior to the wars in that republic, Chechnya "was a nation that readily absorbs the achievements of modern scientific thought, a republic with research institutes, theatres, libraries and higher educational institutions."[2] The Chechen Republic within the Soviet Union was certainly not educationally under-equipped: before the beginning of the fighting in 1994, there were 450 general schools, 11 vocational secondary schools, and 3 institutions of higher education. In current times the formal education structural system as a whole suffers greatly: mainly the schools in the larger villages and towns of the Chechen flatlands are

[2] Zuleikhan Bagalova, in *Chechnya, the Right to Culture*, by LAM – Center for Research and Popularization of the Chechen Culture, Polinform-Talburi Publishers, Moscow, 1999, inside cover.

in working order. In the smaller villages, most schools have not been in operation since the first war due to lack of funds. Nearly all of the schools in the mountainous areas have been destroyed over the course of the two wars.

Now, due to war conflicts, in the mountain villages of Chechnya more than one generation of children has already come of age without an education of any kind, neither European nor traditional Chechen. These adverse conditions have caused the return of the literacy problem, which was thought to have been resolved at the beginning of the 1970s. Additionally, many children in Chechnya and Chechen IDPs in Ingushetia have experienced a multi-year interruption in their studies, resulting in a large number of students who should be in the 10th or 11th grade undertaking 6th and 7th grade coursework.[3]

In addition, in the early 1990s there were 360 state-run libraries, dozens of clubs, two dramatic theaters, a puppet theater, and a state folk dance ensemble, one of the best in the Caucasus. Today in mountainous regions such as Shatoi, Sharoi, and Itum-Kalin not a single cultural institution remains. In Grozny six libraries remain out of thirty and none of the eleven art or music schools for children still exist. Not a single republic-level cultural institution survived the first and second bombing campaigns.

Employment Histories

In practical terms, employment histories of many Chechen groups provide strong foundation for improvisation and rebuilding. Groups from larger towns in particular have long histories of commuting to other regions and countries in order to secure work and income. In current times, about 80% of the Chechen working public remains officially unemployed. Now, however, many Chechens have retained and/or established a variety of unofficial "income networks" to generate sources of income, though benefits are limited to select groups. Many Chechens claim that whereas women have a work history in that republic, Chechen women now claim a bulk of official legal job positions, particularly in schools. In addition, thousands of Chechen and Ingush women now maintain retail positions at the local bazaars in Ingushetia and Chechnya. These women purchase and/or make clothing, household and other items from outside the region and resell them in the bazaars. The vegetable and fruit produce, dairy products and breads, etc., are either purchased as well outside the region or produced locally and then sold at the markets. These income sources are amongst the few available to the Chechen and Ingush population as a whole. A more recent and viable source of income for families and related groups, however, are employment positions in humanitarian organizations, about which is described further below.

[3] Ibid.

Humanitarian Impact and Interaction with Social Structures and Community Conditions

The humanitarian presence has achieved some expected impacts on local community conditions and needs in the North Caucasus. First, certainly without the assistance of the humanitarian community thousands of school children would not have continued their studies over the past decade. Some vocational training has provided a minimal level of skills learning to portions of the Chechen IDP population in Ingushetia in particular. Shelter, water, sanitation and public health needs have been sustained in large part because of humanitarian assistance. Further, the presence of the humanitarian community certainly does serve at least a monitoring and information role in regard to human rights abuses, etc. However, there are several unanticipated and unplanned ways that the international humanitarian community has impacted local community conditions, and even social structures. Differences in incentives, methods and understandings have also become highlighted through the interaction between expatriate and local groups and processes.

New Employment and Economic Input

Thousands of Chechen and Ingush peoples are employed in humanitarian organizations in the region, many of who have maintained such employment for a number of years now, during the first and second war conflicts. These employment positions span a range from cleaners, cooks, drivers, teachers, psychosocial specialists, engineers, administrators, security staff, and sector and general managers. The influx of humanitarian organizations has served to attract qualified workers to these organizations, but has also built the professional skills of many in their fields of qualification and adapted those skills into the context of humanitarian work. However, though humanitarian work has provided job incomes for these workers, many local individuals working in humanitarian organizations are employed in positions in which they do not have opportunity to utilize previously acquired professional skills. There are, for example, drivers who are accredited medical doctors, and administrators who prior to the war were professional teachers.

In general, the presence of humanitarian organizations has provided some stimulation to the local economy. Humanitarian taxes are now being paid, along with registration costs, local jobs increase purchasing power of the population and boost local businesses, including cafes, bazaars, and small shops. Humanitarian procurement certainly has supported a range of material and equipment production. There are also unmeasured and more hidden effects, created through the transfer of humanitarian resources into non-humanitarian channels. Needless to say, though official humanitarian

income generation projects in the region are fairly non-existent, many businesses have been constructed and sustained due to the humanitarian presence.

Education, Training, and Knowledge Transfer

Some knowledge topics have been purposefully disseminated into local communities directly involved in humanitarian project activities, including some limited human rights and conflict resolution training, along with ongoing teacher training in educational specializations and school/classroom management, and psycho-social training within the war context. Many involved in material procurement and financial administration have learned international and institutional standards and procedures (as well as how to blend them into local structures and needs). Finance workers as well as organization administrators are also rapidly learning Russian Federation financial standards and procedures that pertain to humanitarian organizations, ambiguous, changing and invented as they may be.

There is ample talent and skills amongst the Chechen and Ingush populations to fulfill many humanitarian job positions. There are some skills, however, that are distinctly absent amongst these local populations. Whereas humanitarian agencies have worked in the area for a decade now, few local people have learned how to develop and sustain a humanitarian organization. International institutions simply have not transferred these skills and knowledge. Humanitarian ethics and principles are unknown, donor relations and communications, and proposal-writing skills are absent. The greatest problem is that, though this does not pertain to a handful of individuals, the local communities do not know the donor system and mentality, how to begin the grant process, what a project entails, and how to prove to donors that program funding should be granted and continued. In short, should international organizations move out of the region today, surely local staff could sustain current projects, given their strong implementation experience and capabilities, but it is not likely that they could continue to build programs to quality level in future.

Reinforcement and Building of Social Networks

An interesting but unintended effect of the presence of humanitarian organizations has been the reinforcement of previously existent social connections and the creation of new networks. It is the case that nearly all of the international humanitarian organizations operate on a local social structure of teips, clans, families, and other loyalty groups such as villages, and educational and professional acquaintances, most of which existed prior to the wars in Chechnya. Local groups utilize several tactics and methods for bringing their "own" people into organizations, ranging from personal hiring, explicit recommendations to expatriates, and to discreetly disposing of job applications, and

blocking applicants, either through direct persuasion or incentive to alternative benefits. Teachers in IDP schools, psychosocial workers, and especially management level positions and security workers, amongst others, are selectively chosen through these methods.

The system of bringing in one's own is not one hundred percent effective, and many new networks and loyalty groups have been built through interaction in humanitarian activities. Aside from the business interests described in other sections, humanitarian work has produced new interactive groups that include the range of field workers, sector professionals and general office workers within and between organizations. In Ingushetia, in many instances Chechens and Ingush are newly connected in humanitarian work groups. A great many, perhaps most, of these Ingush have come from Chechnya as IDPs, and so they share some commonalities with the Chechen IDPs. In many cases, however, the relations between the Chechens and Ingush in these organizations did not exist prior to the war conflicts.

Local Cultural Differences in Work with Humanitarian Organizations

The Chechens in particular are a strong-willed people. When they know what they want, they do the work, and they achieve. They are quick to take the lead. They value learning, because learning brings new prospects. Both Chechens and Ingush are proud of their identity. They keep their families intact, and they are loyal to their own. They watch out for one another, for and to whom they are responsible. Their psychological and emotional endurance is admirable.

Yet, some of the same general cultural and social characteristics of these two nations serve as differences between them and the mainstream institutional and expatriate cultures in humanitarian organizations. For example, as the Chechen and Ingush people generally dislike outside rules and procedures, and foreign rule, they usually devise their own in parallel with the humanitarian organizations that work in the region. Second, the group nature of their social structures often leads them to support and help mainly their own, which is inappropriate to most general principles of humanitarian work. Third, the lack of humanitarian understanding and spirit amongst them is of concern, in particular because if local humanitarian staff, local communities, and local authorities do not share this spirit, it is terribly difficult to ensure humanitarian objectives. In addition, the high degree of ingenuity and motivation amongst these groups means also that it is terribly difficult to monitor that projects are implemented appropriately, particularly given that monitors likely share many interest connections.

The local social networking system, and how this system interacts with humanitarian staffing processes, provide an example of both benefits and differences

between local and expatriate groups. First, security is a great risk in the North Caucasus, and also of great concern to local staff, so one can be assured that new hires are well screened by local staff. In addition, because of the nature of the Chechen and Ingush social system, it can be beneficial for teamwork purposes to maintain an inner social structure that mirrors the external system. The group collective system is well adapted to teambuilding, given that the group as a whole understands the importance of working together effectively and each member closely monitors one another.

The disadvantages of the system are also notable, however. Where the organization system works to their benefit and interests, local staff will work together to ensure that the system keeps working. There have been cases in the North Caucasus, however, of significant conflicts whereby local staff groups have attempted to block organizational changes initiated at institutional or expatriate level. It is imperative for institutional leaders to understand local norms and implement changes in partnership with these local groups, combining appropriate incentives with astute political perception.

Cultural Differences and Understandings of Local Authorities

Local authorities that are directly concerned with humanitarian organizations, including the FSB (formerly KGB), tax departments, humanitarian affairs committee, and registration officials, also are linked into chains of command that feed directly from the federal center. The position of humanitarian organizations helping Chechens, and within an anti-terrorist operation zone, after all, is of significant notice to federal authorities.

Yet, just as these authorities do not function remotely of Moscow, they also are not isolated from other local forces in the North Caucasus region. The varieties of conflicting interests in the region, political, social, for jobs and resources are affected by, and affect, these authorities. These interests cannot operate locally without mutual agreement with authorities, and that agreement costs, whether money or some other form of compensation.

Yet, in Russian Federation there is ample reason to examine authority structures and attitudes themselves to locate primary sources of aggression against humanitarian organizations and notions of local community empowerment. There exists still in the Russian Federation, perhaps leftover from Soviet and KGB times, a finely tuned system of surveillance and paranoia. These belief systems and intelligence structures combine with high levels of corruption and an extremely dangerous war context to produce a perilous environment for local and international humanitarian organizations.

One of the most significant factors that play into this peril is that local and federal authorities simply have a very limited knowledge and understanding of humanitarian

work and jargon. They possess little understanding of humanitarianism, have shifting regard for humanitarian law and rights, and certainly do not well comprehend foreigners. This lack of knowledge, within a treacherous context, means that humanitarian organizations may operate to the best of their abilities according to appropriate standards and principles, but there is often little common ground on which to build constructive partnerships with authorities. In short, there is a culture gap between authorities and humanitarian organizations.

Examples of this include authorities' exaggerated focus on individual expatriates in the region. They view the expatriates as spies, agitators, infiltrators, and supporters of freedom fighters and bandits. These suspicions would be flattering, giving the appearance that expatriates are in possession of a high degree of capability in the local environment, and backed by powerful sponsors. In fact, however, perhaps 99% of expatriates in the region know a very small fraction of the reality of the context in which they work. And that same 99% generally isolates itself from the local community through social, living and work structures and arrangements, and stays a limited time in the North Caucasus, and so the odds of increasing that fraction of knowledge is not very high.

Some examples of more recent jargon used in the North Caucasus by expatriates and authorities illustrate the slippery understanding between these two groups. First, where expatriates attempt to organize community groups to assume more direct interaction and decision-making in aid provision, local official authorities in the region interpret differently these efforts. Intelligence authorities frequently dispatch (covert) operatives into humanitarian offices to inquire about or suggest ideas of "organizing" refugees and other local community members. From the mindset of these local authorities "organizing" means "agitating." According to this mindset, at a minimum this is suggestive of organizing in protest of government and a maximum, supporting reactionary groups.

At the heart of the matter is the premise of "control" – local authorities see the need to maintain absolute control in what they term the "anti-terrorist operation," so if decision-making is seen to be distributed, these authorities interpret this as obstruction of their own objectives. To some extent, local authorities have reacted to the international presence in the same way they approach other groups such as Chechens, whom they certainly treat more as outsiders and not as citizens. Suspicion, control, unilateral force without dialogue, and motives to financial gain, have formed the context in which these authorities have met the intents of the humanitarian community.

In another sense, the humanitarian presence has also precipitated a genuine need to enact new tax and registration procedures, new committees, and other structures and

systems in order to accommodate humanitarian work within the Russian federal system framework. In this way, the humanitarian presence has had an ongoing capacity building impact at federal and local levels during this process of building structures, laws and procedures.

Conclusions: Summary and Needs for Capacity Building

One way to characterize the North Caucasus region is that of a war of control. Control over territories, military might, resources – monetary and influence, over international standards, rights versus state sovereignty, and over social and cultural meanings. Given the framework of humanitarian planning for the coming year, and within this complex context, the humanitarian community is faced with great challenge in the months ahead. There are several levels and thematic issues of capacity building that should be well thought out in advance.

"Community Based?"

Community based programming is differently interpreted, theoretically and in practical application, by academic thinkers, humanitarian institutions, and by field workers. It should be stated that the academic resource base contains a significantly richer range of interpretations of such programming than are actually developed and implemented in fieldwork. It is necessary, however, to well consider some purposes and methods of community based programming.

At a minimum, community based means programs that function to support overall community needs and well-being; social services, economic and social development, public health and education rehabilitation fall within this range. An important constituent element is assumed within this paradigm: that as these programs are targeted to assist collective communities, these communities must be directly involved in the development and implementation of projects targeted for their benefit. This involvement is contingent on the understanding that community members have knowledge of their conditions and needs, are motivated to address those needs, that humanitarian organizations are dedicated to working as partners with communities in this effort, and without the active input and involvement of these community members, projects will fail or be irrelevant to those needs.

From this point on the interpretation in purpose and method of implementing community based programming varies widely, ranging from passive participation in community programs, active participation in program decision-making, ownership of programming structures, processes and outcomes, and to emancipation from oppressive conditions through the utilization of programming. Following is a brief diagram

outlining this range of purposes, from which one can extrapolate methodology according to the specific field context.

Passive Participation in Identification of Needs *Organizations solicit community opinions as to needs and then deliver services and materials*
Mutual Learning About Opportunities, Constraints, Resources, and Options *Surveys, focus groups, meetings and evaluations are partnered with beneficiary community groups*
Beneficiary Empowerment and Development *Community groups are active decision-makers in program design, implementation, evaluation and overall program direction*
Change and Advocacy Individual, Group and Systemic *Organizations support community groups' efforts and advocate on their behalf to make real improvements on several levels*
Emancipation *Community groups are fully empowered to self-organize, to develop humanitarian programming that is initiated by and for, all community members, with particular attention to ameliorating constraints and conditions of oppressed groups*

At a minimum, humanitarian organizations should formulate a coherent purpose and direction for this type of work in the coming year, together with local groups and donors.

Capacity Building of Humanitarian Organizations and Local Communities

Local communities in Chechnya and Ingushetia are faced with many obstacles in actively participating in the humanitarian effort. Aside from general environmental hurdles such as political conditions and social constraints, local humanitarian communities require a range of support from the general humanitarian community.

International humanitarian organizations themselves currently operating in the field in North Caucasus are skilled at crisis management and emergency program implementation. Many expatriate fieldworkers, however, are not prepared or equipped to develop genuine community based work. The following sections, therefore, provide outlines of capacity building needs of local organizations, but many of the principles and recommendations outlined may also be applied to the needs of international organizations.

Humanitarian Principles and Law

First, a more comprehensive dissemination of humanitarian principles and laws is needed. Humanitarian organizations function for the purposes of humanitarianism, but this purpose is little understood in the North Caucasus. Dissemination of these principles and laws will also boost the ability of these organizations to assert themselves authoritatively in both the local and international communities.

Participatory Principles and Approaches

Knowledge and dedication to participatory principles and approaches with beneficiaries are particularly essential to constructing valid community based programming. General training on participatory methods of work with beneficiary groups will also help to avoid and diffuse some of the social conflict inherent in humanitarian work in the region.

Field conditions, however, necessitate a realistic approach to the dissemination of participatory principles and methodology. Academic and humanitarian resource bases are resplendent with information on such theories, case studies, and guidelines, but time, language and technology are often obstacles to field staff accessing them. Importantly, the information is most often written according to the ideologies of highly educated western, northern academics, and may seem either utopian or unworkable to many field workers, both expatriate and local, and certainly is difficult to decipher and dilute in useable form for local communities. For this reason participatory language and understanding will gain utility and commonality by beginning with instruction on essential basic participatory principles, and by incorporating understandings of field-based conditions and constraints.

Donor Relations

Local organizations face real constraints in interacting in the humanitarian community. These constraints are both attitudinal and technical. Many international donors are reluctant to support local organizations, due to fears of misuse of donor funds,

local organizations' lack of organizational experience and structure, along with their lack of technical knowledge that donors deem to be imperative.

On their part, local organizations and communities often maintain a rational emotional block when conceiving of encounters with international donors, as the donor system maintains a culture and set of structures and processes that is alien to local communities. Most often, donors and expatriates in general think in terms of "They do not know," and local groups claim that expatriates "Do not understand." There is an overall communication gap between expatriates and local communities; on the part of expatriates, paths into the international community have not been made accessible, but on the other hand, local groups and organizations do not have a solid understanding of donor cultures and inner-workings and therefore find it difficult to even begin the process. There are several areas of knowledge that can be shared with local groups so that donors and communities may come together to a better mutual understanding and confidence.

*Donor Cultures***.** Success in the world of international humanitarian work hinges to a great extent on meeting and influencing donor preferences, priorities, and imperatives. Donor preferences, in terms of sectors and types of programming, are devised through a combination of field assessment and interaction, institutional mission and mandate, social and political feasibility, and monetary resource affluence. Donors also adhere to strict financial rules that are more or less standardized worldwide and across a range of international donors in regard to financial accountability and reporting. Local communities by and large are not familiar with the donor world, with these preferences, processes, or rules.

*Proposal Writing***.** Donors like to see a well-stated argument in proposals, proof that accurate needs assessments have been undertaken, that implementation procedures are sound and will meet program goals and objectives, and that evaluation of the program will be carried out and will provide valid measurement of program achievements and impact. Few local groups and individuals have had opportunity to learn how to construct objectives, how to measure results, and how to prove to donors that needs are assessed accurately. Moreover, local groups are constrained by language: where donors require English language proposals, the proposal-writing task is increasingly complicated, particularly where terminology utilized by the international humanitarian community does not easily equate in local vocabulary.

*Evaluation and Report Writing***.** Evaluation is actually a set of procedures and methodologies, and good report writing relies on both solid evaluation and sound writing skills. Yet, evaluation is neglected by international humanitarian organizations, and few of those organizations maintain field staff who have working knowledge of evaluation techniques. Few international field staff members write truly comprehensive and

illustrative program reports. So local communities are not alone in their constraints in this aspect of donor relations. Evaluation and report writing are very important for several reasons. Sound evaluation measures results, provides guidance as to upcoming projects to meet beneficiary needs, and demonstrates programming competence to donors.

*A Capacity-Building Sector***.** Each large donor in the region maintains a field person who is responsible for interacting with field organizations and providing guidance in the development of programming and funding. In addition, every so often one agency or donor will hold an open workshop on proposal writing, etc. However, these efforts are not adequate to the focused goal of capacity building of local organizations and communities. Time constraints of agency staff, local confidence and language constraints, and the general unfocused and dispersed nature of thus far capacity building efforts reveal that a more targeted effort is required. It is advisable, therefore, to assign a particular U.N. or other agency with the task of setting of a special capacity-building sector and personnel. This sector would be responsible for identifying local organizations and community group leaders, soliciting their needs, providing training, and interacting with local organizations in all aspects of program development on an ongoing basis.

A capacity-building sector could also serve as advocate and protection of local organizations. If the humanitarian community is prepared to support local communities, it should also anticipate the political and social constraints against this type of work, and be prepared to actively assist with these constraints.

The U.N. might also consider ways to better protect and advocate on behalf of international humanitarian organizations and expatriates in the region. Without this protection the risks for organizations that work closely with communities will be high. The work ahead with local communities will require stronger partnerships between local authorities, the U.N., and all non-governmental organizations.

Re-thinking Costs versus Impact

The humanitarian community might re-consider the impact and type of financial input into the North Caucasus. During the past years, one cannot say that humanitarian funding has been sizeable, but the input has certainly made impact, as described in sections above. Has this impact, however, achieved desirable results, and could more positive and long-lasting results be accomplished with equal or less economic input?

On the one hand, monetary input has served to stabilize the humanitarian presence, as local communities and authorities see economic advantages to this presence.

On the other hand, there are a variety of types of programming that might make a greater impact in terms of community needs, and can be implemented with fewer costs. For example, social and community development projects, widely interpreted, cultural projects, and more widely interpreted educational projects, have been largely neglected in the North Caucuses, are greatly needed, are not costly, but can produce strong impact in terms of current needs and future development. Many of these projects can provide "social capital," via knowledge growth and dissemination, which in turn will produce gains for entire communities in the long run. Importantly, such programming boosts communities' social and intellectual capacities to determine their own future paths.

Protection and Vulnerability

The idea of "protection projects" is certainly versatile enough to encompass a range of events that may transpire over the next months, and the variety of programming that may be required to respond to those events. On the most basic level, there is a shared understanding that the principle role of the humanitarian community is to protect IDPs' well being, as IDPs are disadvantaged in this war environment in their abilities to protect themselves. Hostilities, and the variety of consequences of these acts, render humanitarian providers the most viable of protectors. Certainly war violence harms the well being of whole communities, and IDP living conditions are not conducive to maintaining or rebuilding welfare of individuals or communities. On another level, changes in events can worsen conditions for IDPs, and the humanitarian community must adapt to these changes to continue best protection efforts.

Prioritizing "vulnerability" can be a matter of pre-set standards, region, site, preference, interest, and capacity. Even should current conditions remain prolonged, and unchanging to any large degree, there is also a recognition that despite best efforts, individuals and groups of decidedly "vulnerable" predicament remain even now un- and under-assisted throughout the local communities. The conditions of these persons are precipitated by several factors, including preexisting social and economic histories, which become exacerbated by current situations.

Given the fact that a range of choices is not within the grasp of many IDPs, however, humanitarian agencies are tasked with responsibility to assist those for whom conditions are the worst, and for whom choices to ameliorate those conditions, is least existent. Given the understanding that local community groups are not equal in choice and conditions, the humanitarian community should acknowledge those social factors that create inequality, lack of access, and vulnerability, and work towards supporting groups and objectives that are specifically appropriate to the humanitarian mandate and objectives.

Social and Cultural Projects

It is a monumental catastrophe that war events have driven Chechens against one another. While one might cite that vendettas and blood feuds have always been a feature of Chechen social and cultural context, many Chechens today say that prior to the recent wars in Chechnya, conflicts did not occur on a large scale and were more easily resolvable. These Chechens also say that had Chechens stood together as a community, utilizing traditional conflict resolution methods amongst themselves, a different response to Russia might have been formulated which could have helped to avoid this great loss of life. It would seem that the cycle of war conditions and effects on Chechen communities should be difficult to reverse, even in the event of cessation of hostilities.

A hallmark of Chechen culture, however, is its claim to communal norms that demand mediation of conflicts by elders and other respected community members, and guided by strict standards of honor and fairness that function to bound claims and grievances. These norms in the past have aided the Chechens in communal self-determination, in maintaining a social and community equilibrium. Despite war tragedies, there remain in Chechen society core constructive elements of deeply rooted traditions, and professionals who extol cultural preservation and national rights in parallel with constructive Chechen community building. In this time of community disintegration, social and cultural projects, built on the foundations of indigenous principles, would greatly aid Chechen community rebuilding. The Chechen and international communities must not remain passive to the devastating spiral that is threatening the uniqueness, strength, and perpetuity of the Chechen nation and cultural norms.

Direction: Forward

The very long-term unstable and uncertain nature of the North Caucasus region has necessitated that the humanitarian effort remain in "emergency" mode for so long now, it is the case that many humanitarian agencies have built in abilities to adapt to change when needed in this specific area of the world. One may wonder, however, whether constantly planning in "emergency phase" renders the humanitarian system bankrupt to anticipate a time when donor fatigue sets in, when political events squeeze the humanitarian effort into an impotent act. It is a welcome move forward that this humanitarian team, instead of evermore reacting to events, has determined to be proactive in building the capacities of beneficiaries and local partners to prepare to support themselves.

Amongst the populations in Chechnya and Ingushetia, there are a sizeable number of those who long for "something" that entails a means to make a life instead of mere existence. Over a decade now the populations there have shown remarkable fortitude against an ongoing onslaught of profound and violent tribulations. Of course safety does not exist, and that is the greatest of all obstacles at the present time - one that no one can envision becoming more comfortable any time soon. But despite the cynicism, the disbelief in motives, the certainty that sincerity and security is lacking, many look forward to having a future.

At the very least, the direction of humanitarian work, be it mainly in Chechnya or in Ingushetia, should encompass a greater emphasis on integrated contingencies, i.e., assistance that provides for basic and emergency needs such as food, shelter, and schooling, but that concurrently incorporates developmental components such as training, community services and development, and cultural support. Despite the tragedies occurring daily in the North Caucasus republics, one can find amongst the communities there, substantial positive attributes upon which to build and sustain such programming. In the struggle for planning amidst the myriad of conflicting injunctions that influence programming direction, it is evermore necessary not to remain oblivious to a future for those the humanitarian community is dedicated to assist.

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