

Development, Relief Aid, and Creating Peace: Humanitarian Aid in Liberia's War of the 1990s¹

Deborah Maresko

War brings a sense of urgency. When humanitarian aid workers operate in conflict-torn countries, they too feel the need to act as quickly as possible. This sense of urgency, however, often leads to hastily organized aid programs that may or may not have a positive impact. Just as quickly as relief workers enter a conflict, development workers seem to disappear, taking with them their knowledge of the country in conflict. Instead of cooperating in relief efforts these two communities have become notorious for their lack of communication, with each community clinging to its separate arena; relief aid in times of war, development in times of peace. There is growing consent that integrating development with relief aid can simultaneously relieve immediate suffering while strengthening societal capacities, perhaps leading to a swifter resolution to the conflict and the creation of sustainable peace. Today the separation between relief aid and sustainable development is apparent. This study seeks to understand the relationship between these two fields to eventually answer the question; can relief aid be combined with sustainable development?

The future of development and relief aid can be better understood by examining past attempts at providing development based relief aid, or "development-relief." With knowledge gained from the past, guidelines could be made for a new development-relief aid strategy in times of crisis. Such integration would be precedent-setting for the humanitarian community and promote much needed cooperation in a field riddled with miscommunication and competition for funds.

The Liberian civil war of 1989 to 1997 was a long complex emergency that saw some of the worst war-time atrocities of the twentieth century and arguably one of the international community's poorest performances in preventing conflict. The only peacekeeping force deployed was a regional West African force which eventually participated in the war as another fighting faction. Because the international response to the conflict was mainly limited to pumping supplies into existing humanitarian operations, it provides a unique opportunity to study non-governmental organizations' (NGO) operations during war. Therefore, Liberia's civil war provides an arena to study NGO activity that is relatively free from outside interference that might influence research results (i.e. security forces).

This study will identify NGOs operating in Liberia during the civil war of the 1990s and classify each NGO's programming according to the programs that the organization attempted, with possible classifications of "relief aid," "development," or "development-relief." Comparing the number of relief aid, development, and development-relief programs will provide a foundation to measure the humanitarian community's progress in integrating the two fields, bringing humanitarians one step closer to a more effective and universally accepted development-relief strategy for the future.

¹ This research study would not have been possible without the support and guidance of Dr. Lori Handrahan, Assistant Professor at American University's School of International Service. I am also indebted to George Kun, a Liberian friend who provided invaluable contacts and insight throughout the course of my research. Many thanks to Philippa Atkinson for her expertise in the Liberian civil war. I also thank all NGO personnel that helped me acquire original documents. Without the support of all these people, this research would not have been possible.

Part I: Case Study—Humanitarian Aid and the Liberian Civil War

The Liberian civil war of the 1990s is a unique war in recent history because it saw relatively little interference by the international community outside of foreign humanitarian organizations. In contrast with other emergencies of the 1990s, such as Ethiopia's famine, the Gulf War, and the Former Yugoslavia conflicts, Liberia saw no foreign peacekeeping forces except West Africa's regional monitoring group, ECOMOG. Therefore, the influence of outside actors on research results is greatly reduced, making this an ideal arena to study NGO operations during war. First, an overview of the Liberian civil war will be provided, followed by the case rationale.

The Liberian civil war began in 1989 as a guerrilla war with a few hundred insurgents loosely launching an invasion from Cote d'Ivoire. These insurgents pertained to a group called the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and although lacking organization, more soldiers were recruited and a formidable force was formed to combat the current government under President Samuel Doe. Brutal fighting tactics characterized by civilian slaughter were apparent from the beginning, both by the NPFL and the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), President Doe's fighters. The war unfolded for seven years, from 1990 until 1997, and is divided into three phases.²

The first phase was the year-long revolutionary campaign that took place in 1990, resulting in a bloody sweep across the nation led by Charles Taylor's NPFL. The second phase of the war spans from 1990 to 1992 and saw the world's first regional military intervention sponsored by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This peacekeeping force was called the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group, referred to as ECOMOG. Although ECOMOG was intended to be a neutral peacekeeping mission, in effect it was just as enveloped in the ardent politics of the region as the warring factions. ECOMOG was led by the armed forces of Nigeria, whose president openly supported Doe's presidency and was preferential to the AFL's cause. ECOMOG's political ties eventually led it to enter the war as another military faction against Taylor's NPFL. ECOMOG did, however, attain a ceasefire at the end of 1992, with all of Liberia controlled by Taylor's NPFL except the capital city of Monrovia.³

Phase three of the war began with the breaking of this ceasefire with what is known as "Operation Octopus." This operation began in October 1992 and was one of the most destructive periods of the war. It was a surprise attack, meant to be Charles Taylor's final attempt to solidify control of Monrovia from ECOMOG. ECOMOG ultimately held its ground in Monrovia and the mission resulted as a great failure for the NPFL as it fostered unity among opposition groups and gained Taylor a poor international reputation as the cause of excessive human casualties.⁴ ECOMOG then launched an attack on the NPFL while re-supplying the AFL, embarking on a period of sporadic fighting amongst all factions with interludes of ceasefires until 1996. The end of the war was embodied by a controversial national election held on the 19th of July, 1997, in which Charles Taylor emerged as the new president of a frail and battered Liberia.

² Abiodun Alao, *The Burden of Collective Goodwill: The International Involvement in the Liberian Civil War* (Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing, 1998), 23-25.

³ Atkinson, "The War Economy in Liberia: A Political Analysis," 4.

⁴ Alao, *The Burden of Collective Goodwill*, 27.

Looking back, one can truthfully conclude that the Liberian civil war of the 1990s was one of the most atrocious periods of human rights violations of the twentieth century. Kenneth Cain was the United Nations human rights officer assigned to the region in 1995 and highlighted some of the worst violations as ethnic killing, political assassinations, systematic and violent rape, recruitment of child soldiers, torture, looting, and even cannibalism. He reports 200,000 casualties during the seven years, with 85% of Liberia's population either killed or displaced, internally or externally.⁵ Although these numbers match some of the most publicized atrocities during the 1990s, such as the conflict in Former Yugoslavia, the Liberian civil war received relatively little international attention, some say because of its lack of strategic importance to the Western powers. In the end the international involvement can be summed up as a lackluster effort at peace through provision of funds to aid agencies and ECOMOG forces, which was demonstrated to be politically involved in the conflict.

The United Nations (UN) avoided the Liberian civil war of the 1990s. Not only were more pertinent problems were happening in other parts of the world, but Africa itself already had crisis situations in Somalia and Rwanda which were taking the international limelight. The UN's delayed reaction to the outbreak of war in Liberia prompted ECOWAS's regional leadership in peacekeeping efforts, to which the UN reacted with delight and immediate support for ECOWAS. This was partly because the burden of peacekeeping was lifted from the UN's shoulders. In effect, a policy of blind support was put in place and the UN continually financed ECOMOG despite the organization's documented human rights violations. Liberian residents were offended and disheartened by the UN's lack of interest in Liberia's exceptionally brutal war.⁶

Non-governmental organizations in Liberia were immersed in chaos. With ECOMOG as the only peacekeeping operation in Liberia, security of persons and supplies was constantly threatened. Valuable food and equipment that aid agencies were pouring into Liberia became coveted by warring factions, and there was little to stop the theft of supplies. In 1994 more than \$5 million U.S. dollars worth of materials was confiscated by rebels, including entire vehicles, trucks, motorcycles, communication equipment, computers, and food.⁷ In 1996 a staggering \$20 million in aid is estimated to be lost to rebels during the last battles in Monrovia.⁸ Fiona Terry, an aid worker there in 1995, recalls from personal experience the methods of diverting aid supplies that different warring factions used. She recalls Charles Taylor's tax of 15 percent on aid entering his territory. In zones controlled by ECOMOG authorities exaggerated the number of displaced persons, causing the World Food Programme and Catholic Relief Services to over-distribute food in the region. When the over-distribution arrived, ECOMOG soldiers were waiting with empty trucks to gather excess food and sell it on the markets in Monrovia.⁹

As the conflict worsened, international actors, such as the United States, UN, and European Community, shied away from military help and increased humanitarian aid. As an

⁵ Kenneth L. Cain, "The Rape of Dinah: Human Rights, Civil War in Liberia, and Evil Triumphant," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 21 no. 2 (1999): 267.

⁶ Alao, *The Burden of Collective Goodwill*, 102-108.

⁷ Fabrice Weissman, *L'aide humanitaire dans la dynamique du conflit libérien*, (Paris:Foundation Médecins sans Frontières, May 1996), 48. As cited in Fiona Terry, *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 39.

⁸ Philippa Atkinson, "The War Economy in Liberia: a Political Analysis," 21.

⁹ Terry, Fiona. *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), 39-40.

average of \$100 million per year in relief aid poured in, the bulk of it food aid, NGOs had to rely on negotiation and creativity to defend themselves from warring factions.¹⁰ For security reasons most aid agencies clung to ECOMOG controlled areas, which consisted of Monrovia and its surroundings. Although strategically important, this was a physically tiny section of Liberia. The greatest humanitarian need was in rebel-controlled, upcountry areas of Lofa, Margibi, Bong, and Nimba counties.

During the first phase of the war, from 1990 to 1992, NGOs and ECOMOG worked in harmony to provide relief convoys to areas outside of Monrovia. This amiable relationship began to sour in the second phase of the war, after ‘Operation Octopus.’ By this time NGOs began to criticize ECOMOG’s aggressive “peace enforcing” tactics against the NPFL, especially since some agencies had established working relationships with the NPFL. As ECOMOG slid deeper into the conflict, NGOs received less protection in relief distribution and experienced looting from ECOMOG forces. ECOMOG’s deteriorating reputation meant aid agencies that used ECOMOG escorts for protection were not always welcome in NPFL areas, which were the places aid was needed the most.¹¹

During the second phase of the war ECOMOG also grew wary of NGO activities. An atmosphere of distrust was formed and resulted in limited access to NPFL controlled regions. Each convoy had to be approved by ECOMOG before it could cross the Liberia-Cote d’Ivoire border. This arrangement caused problems between ECOMOG and the Belgian-run section of Medicins Sans Frontieres (MSF), which consistently disregarded ECOMOG’s authority and crossed the border freely. This so upset ECOMOG that in April 1993 an MSF convoy was attacked by ECOMOG planes as it was traveling between Gbanga and Kakata. This phase of the war, from October 1992 until 1995, was a period of tension and mistrust between NGOs, ECOMOG, and the NPFL. Tensions eventually eased by 1995 and relief operations ran more smoothly.¹²

The second phase of the war also saw deteriorating inter-NGO cooperation. The fragmentation of the humanitarian community was partly due to competition for funds and partly due to ideological conflicts. Gaining access to rebel controlled areas was a top priority, but these areas were the least secure in Liberia. Some NGOs, such as Catholic Relief Services and Lutheran World Service, depended on ECOMOG escorts to ensure safety to aid efforts. Other agencies, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and MSF, vocally opposed the use of armed escorts, calling such behavior a violation of neutrality.¹³ After widespread looting in the city of Phebe in 1994, the ICRC withdrew its aid upcountry. Other agencies, such as Save the Children Fund, insisted that humanitarian need upcountry was too great to suspend operations. Some NGOs began “buying access” when harassed at checkpoints by giving food directly to rebel groups, causing problems for NGOs that refused to pay. According to Philippa Atkinson, a scholar on the Liberian civil war, paying for access with food was common practice by almost all aid agencies in Liberia, except for the ICRC which gave calendars instead of food.¹⁴

¹⁰ Atkinson, “The War Economy in Liberia: a Political Analysis,” 20.

¹¹ Alao, *The Burden of Collective Goodwill*, 160-161.

¹² Alao, *The Burden of Collective Goodwill*, 161-164.

¹³ Philippa Atkinson and Nicholas Leader, “The ‘Joint Policy of Operation’ and the ‘Principles and Protocols of Humanitarian Operation’ in Liberia,” Study 2, Humanitarian Policy Group (London: Overseas Development Institute, March 2000), 18.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

By 1995 NGOs had banded together to create two inter-agency agreements in response to the rampant abuse of aid in Liberia; the Principles and Protocols of Humanitarian Operation (PPHO) and the Joint Policy of Operation (JPO). Some aid agencies, like Catholic Relief Services (CRS) wanted to suspend all activities until a series of demands were met. The ICRC and MSF wanted to run only minimal operations in Liberia that targeted only the populations most in need. Other NGOs, such as Oxfam, Save the Children Fund, Lutheran World Service, and World Vision agreed more or less with the minimalist plan, but to varying degrees. In the end, the JPO implemented a slightly less restrictive plan than proposed by ICRC and MSF. Activities were restricted to life-saving operations only, with certain situational exceptions.¹⁵

The JPO was meant to pressure combatants into respecting humanitarian principles, but in reality NGOs had no way to enforce the JPO and the agreement did not significantly decrease looting. Nevertheless, the JPO was a landmark document in NGO policy and is a testament to the extreme insecurity that Liberians and foreign aid workers faced during this time.

Case rationale

This study will consider international humanitarian aid operations in Liberia during the year 1993. The time period of study was chosen principally because this year saw the fewest peacekeeping forces in Liberia, the effects of which would impose unwanted variables on this study of humanitarian programming during war. The year 1993 had the fewest peacekeeping entities because of several factors, the first being that this year falls into the third phase of the war, from October 1992 until 1996, which is considered the “height” of the war and was consequently the most difficult time for NGOs. Referring to this time period, Atkinson and Leader state, “Following the Octopus offensive and intensification of the conflict from late 1992 it became increasingly difficult to implement effective humanitarian operations, and manipulation of the humanitarian community by the factions greatly increased.”¹⁶ Secondly, this was also the phase that saw the most military involvement by ECOMOG. After Operation Octopus ECOMOG forces went from peacekeeping to peace enforcing, meaning ECOMOG made offensive strikes against Taylor’s army instead of limiting itself to defensive strikes only.¹⁷

The year 1993 was also chosen because the NGOs that were in Liberia in 1993 had come in the first “wave” of humanitarian workers in 1991 or 1992, and no new NGOs arrived until the intense fighting of the third stage of the war subsided, between 1995 and 1996. Therefore, during 1993 the sample size of NGOs is smaller than in later years and contains only NGOs that had been present for the full year. Table 1 is adapted from the “Chronology” section of “The Liberian Peace Process: 1990-1996” as published by Conciliation Resources’ Accord Programme.¹⁸ The Table provides an outline of major occurrences during 1993.

¹⁵ Ibid., 23.

¹⁶ Ibid., 12.

¹⁷ Adebajo, *Liberia’s Civil War: Nigeria, ECOMOG, and Regional Security in West Africa*, 79.

¹⁸ Dr. Charles Abiodun Alao, Jeremy Armon, Andy Carl, Max Ahmadu Sesay, and Samuel Kofi Woods, II, “The Liberian Peace Process: 1990-1996,” Accord Programme, *Conciliation Resources* (1996), “Chronology” section. <<http://www.c-r.org/accord>>

**Table 1. Chronology of Events in Liberia in 1993,
adapted from the Accord Programme's Liberia Project**

January-March

Arms flow continues despite UN embargo. ECOMOG troops increased to 15,000, but Senegalese withdraw. ECOMOG, AFL and ULIMO achieve strategic military gains, including the port of Buchanan, the supply point of Kakata on the Monrovia- Gbarnga road, the Robertsfield Airport, and the Firestone rubber plantation at Harbel. NPFL's military and commercial interests severely undermined. First reports of substantial corruption and commercial adventurism by ECOMOG personnel. Security Council reiterates backing for ECOMOG and offers increased UN support to ailing peace process.

April-May

ECOMOG imposes economic sanctions on NPFL-held areas. Cross-border convoy of MSF attacked by aircraft.

June

600 civilians, mainly displaced Liberians, killed in an armed attack on the Firestone plantation near Harbel. A panel of inquiry appointed by the UN Secretary General attributes the attack to units of the AFL. Nigerian elections held and annulled.

July

At the invitation of the UN, the Beninois Chairman of ECOWAS and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), all warring parties are invited to Geneva for peace talks. Geneva Ceasefire signed between the NPFL, ULIMO and IGNU. Cotonou Accord formally signed, which re-schedules disarmament and encampment, and calls for tripartite Liberia National transitional government (LNTG). Implementation of the Accord to be supervised and monitored by ECOMOG, with support of newly-formed United Nations Observer Mission In Liberia (UNOMIL). Nigerian dominance of ECOMOG to be reduced.

August

President Babangida of Nigeria resigns.

September

The mis-named Liberia Peace Council (LPC) gains support of AFL and engages the NPFL around rubber and timber exporting zones in south-eastern Liberia. Refugee flows increase to Cote d'Ivoire. UNOMIL established, the first UN peacekeeping operation undertaken in co-operation with a regional organization. ECOMOG has primary responsibility for ensuring implementation of Cotonou Accord, but UNOMIL authorized to monitor and verify the ceasefire, the arms embargo, and the encampment, disarmament and demobilization of combatants. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) protests UN support for embargo on NPFL-held areas.

October

Governments of Egypt, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe announce troop contribution to ECOMOG. Egypt and Zimbabwe later fail to meet their commitments due to financial constraints.

November

General Sani Abacha assumes Nigerian presidency. ECOWAS calls a consultative meeting of Cotonou signatories to determine allocation of LNTG posts.

December

President Houphouet-Boigny of Cote d'Ivoire dies. Emergence of NPFL-sponsored Lofa Defense Force (LDF) in Western Liberia. Two weeks of negotiations fail to decide the allocation of four remaining cabinet portfolios, or a date for the start of encampment, disarmament and demobilization.

This chronology outlines a tumultuous year in Liberia. In 1993 ECOMOG increased its military power in the early months and took the offensive against the NPFL to acquire more territory. ECOMOG was also noted for administrative corruption and looting during this time, yet was still supported by the United Nations as an acceptable peacekeeping force. This was also the year that the MSF convoy of relief supplies was attacked by ECOMOG for refusing to seek ECOMOG's approval before providing aid. In general, the need for humanitarian assistance was great for many reasons: there were 1.2 million internally displaced persons, numerous attacks on civilians, and lack of political order.¹⁹ Although a peace accord was signed this year there were relatively few periods of ceasefire, tensions still ran high between warring factions, and civilians were still living in an insecure environment. Productive peace talks and disarmament would not occur until later years.

The case study includes any NGO operations inside of the borders of Liberia. Although a specific region of study within Liberia would ideally be chosen, a smaller area proved impossible to thoroughly research as the body of academic work and original documents from the war are few. It is for the same reason that the whole year of 1993, and not just a portion of this year, was chosen. In order to avoid choosing a narrow case study based on insufficient information, the case study was left open to NGOs operating in the entire country of Liberia in 1993.

These NGOs had taken on the formidable task of providing relief to thousands of victims in the midst of a war—the equivalent of attempting to provide hurricane relief before the storm has even passed. But Liberia's tragedy was a civil war, not a natural disaster, and in the chaotic environment of 1993 aid agencies were risking more than disappointment if their programs failed. Theft of supplies strengthened soldiers and warring factions on both sides of the conflict, meaning aid was simultaneously feeding both the war and its victims. Clearly no humanitarian organization desires such an outcome for its programs. But what, then, is the best way to disseminate aid in times of war?

To define what the essential components of effective relief aid are and to better understand the different kinds of humanitarian aid, two principal theoretical structures will be used and explained in detail in the following section. Using these standards of programming, NGO programming in Liberia in 1993 will be classified accordingly.

¹⁹ Cain, "The Rape of Dinah: Human Rights, Civil War in Liberia, and Evil Triumphant," 268.

Part II: Theory, Definitions, and Practice

This study will use Mary Anderson's Framework for Analyzing Capacities and Vulnerabilities as a theoretical basis to define relief aid, development, and humanitarian aid's role in conflict. The following is a summary of Anderson's framework, which is described in full in her book *Rising from the Ashes: Development Strategies in Times of Disaster*.²⁰ Anderson's book provides recommendations to NGOs on how to design relief projects that maximize developmental impact, targeting foreign aid organizations because as outsiders they are less knowledgeable about the development of the country in crisis and should be especially concerned with minimizing negative consequences of aid.²¹ Anderson's framework is applicable to both natural and human disasters.

Anderson calls this framework the "Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis" and it delineates factors that NGOs should consider when responding to disasters. Although every emergency is different, it is hoped that by using Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis NGOs will be able to "map" emergencies and provide more organized aid with positive long-term effects.

To understand the framework, it is necessary to understand how three terms are defined:

- Needs: "Needs, as used in a disaster context, refer to immediate requirements for survival or recovery from a calamity." "Needs...arise out of the crisis itself, and are relatively short-term."²²
- Vulnerabilities: "Vulnerabilities refer to the *long-term factors* which affect the ability of a community to respond to events or which make it susceptible to calamities." "Vulnerabilities precede disasters, contribute to their severity, impede effective disaster response and continue afterwards."²³
- Capacities: "To avoid increasing vulnerabilities, it is necessary to identify capacities in order to know what strengths exist within a society—even among disaster victims—on which future development can be built."²⁴

The framework is based on the dual concepts of *vulnerabilities* and *capacities*. Every society has its own capacities (strengths) and vulnerabilities (weaknesses). When a crisis turns into a disaster, it is a sign that the society's vulnerabilities have overwhelmed its capacities to deal with the crisis.²⁵

Differentiating between needs and vulnerabilities is imperative. By Anderson's definition, *needs* are immediate and are usually products of the disaster. *Vulnerabilities* existed before the disaster and are only more prominent during the disaster. To help explain, Anderson uses the following scenario: a group of people in an urban area have recently experienced mudslides. Their *needs* might be temporary shelter or medical attention, whereas their

²⁰ For a full explanation of the framework, see Chapter 1, entitled "A Framework For Analyzing Capacities and Vulnerabilities" in Mary Anderson, *Rising From the Ashes: Development Strategies in Times of Disaster*, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989)

²¹ Anderson, *Rising From the Ashes*, 1.

²² *Ibid.*, 10.

²³ *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

vulnerabilities might include overcrowding or building homes on unstable land. Vulnerabilities can also include factors that indirectly contribute to the disaster. In the previous scenario, indirect vulnerabilities might be rural-urban migration or lack of government building codes.

Capacities can be seen as the opposite of vulnerabilities. A society's capacities are strengths in the society and are resources that can be drawn upon in times of crisis. Indeed, using capacities to combat vulnerabilities is often the most effective way to provide disaster relief. According to Anderson, acknowledging both capacities and vulnerabilities is an essential component to development based relief.

Anderson's framework provides this study's theoretical basis for understanding relief aid, development, and the relationship between the two. Anderson's programming suggestions will be used as standards for categorizing NGO programming in Liberia as "relief aid," "development," or "development-relief." Further definition of these variables will be provided in the next sections.

Defining Relief Aid and Development

The term "humanitarian aid" has outgrown its traditional Red Cross definition of providing swift emergency assistance to people in disaster or emergency situations. Today humanitarian action is commonly defined in a broader sense; according to Larry Minear and Thomas Weiss it is "activities undertaken to improve the human condition."²⁶ This study has adopted the contemporary definition of humanitarian aid according to Minear and Weiss, and named the traditional definition of humanitarian aid "relief aid" to remove ambiguity. Also known as emergency aid, relief aid refers to any provision of aid during an emergency that is meant to attend to the immediate needs of people. Appendix 1 provides a summary of all definitions established in this section.

Mary Anderson's framework for analyzing capacities and vulnerabilities will be used to further define what the "immediate needs" of people are. Relief aid meets people's needs, or their "immediate requirements for survival or recovery" as defined by Anderson. A definition of human requirements for survival is provided in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25, which states, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."²⁷ In sum, a comprehensive definition of "relief aid" is any provision of aid during an emergency that is meant to attend to a person's immediate requirements for survival or recovery, which include food, clothing, housing, medical care, necessary social services, and security when a person is faced with circumstances beyond her or his control.

In contrast to relief aid, development consists of long-term projects that aim to better the welfare of society as a whole. Development in conflict situations is often labeled as "reconstruction" or "rehabilitation." Although post-conflict reconstruction is important work,

²⁶ Larry Minear and Thomas G. Weiss, *Mercy Under Fire: War and the Global Humanitarian Community* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), 18.

²⁷ United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948 (Geneva, United Nations, 1948). <<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>>

these terms reaffirm the stereotype that development is a peacetime-only activity. This study adopts Mary Anderson's definition of "development" as "the process by which vulnerabilities are reduced and capacities increased."²⁸ This means that improving a society is to reduce that society's vulnerabilities, thereby making the population less susceptible to disasters. The most efficient way to remove vulnerabilities is to use that society's pre-existing capacities. This definition of development requires the project to improve both the autonomy and strength of the society.

The Future of Aid: Development Relief?

The gap between development and relief aid is as old as humanitarianism. NGOs are categorized as one or the other and shape programs accordingly, which leads to segregation between the two fields. When development organizations operate in conflict situations they often compete with relief organizations for the same funds or operating space, which creates animosity, loss of communication, and culture of secrecy between agencies.²⁹ Such behavior discredits any altruistic mandate that humanitarian action is based on and makes meeting the needs of victims more difficult. It is the responsibility of all aid agencies to bridge the relief-development gap to ensure that internal problems in the humanitarian aid community do not compromise the quality of aid received. According to Jonathan Moore, editor of *Hard Choices—Moral dilemmas in humanitarian intervention*, there are three main reasons for the relief-development gap: the inherent differences between the two fields, the complexity of complex emergencies, and the behavior of donor governments.

First, relief aid and development seem to be opposites. Relief aid is fast-paced and associated with relief of human suffering in the physical sense: food, medical supplies, and camps. This kind of aid is popular, relatively well-financed, and frequently catches media attention.³⁰ Development is a broad field that is ambiguous in definition, tedious, difficult to measure, and generally occurs during peacetime. Development work easily goes unnoticed as it occurs "behind the scenes" and produces no instant gratification, if it produces any desired results at all. The complicated, slow work of a development worker seems particularly drab when compared with the cutting-edge career of a relief worker.

Despite the differences, relief aid and development are undertaken for the same philanthropic reasons and would both benefit from unified action. Kimberly Maynard states in her book, *Healing Communities in Conflict*, "Humanitarian agencies generally need assistance in locating, counting, and supplying vulnerable members of the community, many of whom cannot make their own needs known. Since they are unfamiliar with local particularities, international organizations are less able to determine specific shortfalls, appropriate priorities of assistance, nearby resources, gender-specific requirements, and other issues pertinent to the locale."³¹ Development workers seem to be the perfect candidates to fill this void in relief work; they are typically either natives to the country or have been in the country for years, are well connected locally, and are familiar with the society's vulnerabilities and capacities. Indeed, times of crisis

²⁸ Anderson, *Rising From the Ashes*, 12.

²⁹ Jonathan Moore, "The Humanitarian-Development Gap," *International Review of the Red Cross*, no. 833 (March 1999):103-107.

³⁰ Moore, "The Humanitarian-Development Gap"

³¹ Kimberly A. Maynard, *Healing Communities in Conflict: International Assistance in Complex Emergencies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 122.

are the times when development workers are needed the most, and are unfortunately the time when most disappear.

Moore's second reason for the relief-development gap is the difficulties that complex emergencies pose to aid agencies. During a disaster, communication lines are strained and field coordination is difficult. Usually human lives are on the line and small failures can have a large impact, which leads to frustration and inter-agency finger pointing. To relief agencies it seems unrealistic to patiently plan development strategy in the midst of a suffering community, and to development agencies it seems frivolous to provide short-term solutions that have no lasting impact and can prolong conflict.³² Both viewpoints are valid, and choosing one as the "correct" response to complex emergencies is taking a narrow approach to crisis management.

Thirdly, Moore states that the relief-development gap is exacerbated by the international community's bias towards relief aid. Most funds are given to relief aid agencies in the name of humanitarianism but are tailored to political motives and rarely address the causes of the emergency. Even well-intentioned national governments suffer from impatience and provide ineffective "band-aid" measures formed without consultation with workers in the field. When national governments do get involved in rehabilitation their aid is foremost tied to economic issues, with the unrealistic goal of creating an instant democracy as a second priority.³³

Donald Brandt, a humanitarian aid specialist, places more responsibility for the development-relief gap on the shoulders of developers, claiming that development staff tend to avoid civil conflicts. He asserts that development agencies continue following a linear model of humanitarian aid in the face of conflict, where development activities cease at the outbreak of war, relief agencies are expected to come bring band-aid funds, and rehabilitators move back in when the coast is clear. Brandt recognizes that practitioners from both fields tend to categorize operations as either development or relief aid and consequently avoid mixing turf. He also recognizes government and private donors' partiality for traditional humanitarian aid schemes.³⁴ Although discrepancy exists as to who should take the blame for the development-relief gap (whether it is the developers or relief workers), it is important to note that these two diverse authors concur on their basic explanations for the development-relief gap.

Returning to Anderson's framework, she asserts that when a crisis turns into a disaster, it is a sign that the society's vulnerabilities have overwhelmed its capacities to deal with the crisis.³⁵ Therefore, NGOs that only address the *needs* of the society are taking care of immediate problems, but are not providing long-term solutions by decreasing vulnerabilities or increasing capacities. In fact, needs-based relief aid often does more harm than good. Without focus on future development goals, relief aid can fall into a "get things back to normal" ideology, a detrimental goal because the original state of society had large vulnerabilities that caused the disaster.³⁶ Anderson states, "Acknowledging the capacities of the affected population is essential for designing and implementing disaster responses that have developmental impacts."³⁷ In sum, long-term insight is a precursor to effective relief aid. Bridging the relief-development gap is not

³² Moore, "The Humanitarian-Development Gap"

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Donald P. Brandt, "Relief as Development, but Development as Relief?" *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, (July: 1997) <http://www.jha.ac/articles/a024.htm#N_1_>

³⁵ Anderson, *Rising From the Ashes*, 10.

³⁶ Ibid., 11.

³⁷ Ibid., 11.

simply a matter of improving humanitarian responses to emergencies—it is an essential change for the aid community to provide a positive impact.

Drawing on this paper’s previous definition of “relief aid” and “development,” the term “development-relief” can be defined as the provision of emergency aid that simultaneously attends to peoples’ immediate requirements for survival or recovery, while attempting to reduce societal vulnerabilities and increase societal capacities.

Part III: Methodology, Procedures, and Results

Definition of variables, details of research design, and data analysis techniques were carried out with a purely qualitative research design in one phase of research: exploratory data collection from the sample population. The researcher is a pragmatist and considers the research question to be the study’s principle guide, with research methods molded to best answer the research question.³⁸ The qualitative model of research chosen seeks only to establish a typology of NGO programming in Liberia in the year 1993.

It should be noted that because the number of NGOs operating in Liberia in 1993 is relatively small, no sampling procedures were needed. To the researcher’s knowledge, all NGOs in Liberia in 1993 were included in this study. Also noteworthy is that this study has naturally limited itself to international non-governmental organizations (INGOs). Two well-known Liberian NGOs operating in 1993, Special Emergency Life Fund (SELF) and Liberians United to Save Humanity (LUSH), were not accessible for original documents and are likely no longer in existence. It is possible that some smaller Liberian NGOs were operating in 1993 and remain unknown to the researcher, but this possibility was not thoroughly explored due to time and resource restraints.

Procedures

The research in this study takes a qualitative model and does not seek to establish relationships between variables.³⁹ The investigative stage of research consisted of exploratory data collection, which was used to produce a typology of NGOs in Liberia in 1993 that identifies the purpose, place, and manner of implementation of each NGO’s programs. Little material has been published describing specific NGO programming during this time, therefore most data was collected by soliciting individual NGOs for original documents. Common documents provided by NGOs include annual reports, program budgets, press releases, and public relations materials. A narrative description of data collected for each NGO has been provided, followed by a justification for the NGO’s classification.

NGOs are classified in one of three categories: relief aid, development, or development-relief aid. To be classified under any of these categories, the NGO’s programs must meet one of the definitions of “relief aid,” “development,” or “development-relief aid” as previously defined.⁴⁰ The nature of these definitions does not allow an NGO to be classified under more than one category, unless there are differences within the programming of one organization. In

³⁸ Abbas Tashakkori and Charles Teddlie, *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998), 17-18.

³⁹ Tashakkori and Teddlie, *Mixed Methodology*, 61.

⁴⁰ A review of definitions is provided in Appendix 1

such case, the NGO's programs will be classified individually, with an explanation attached explaining why the organization is included under more than one category.

Data Analysis Techniques

Information from the documents received from each NGO was scrutinized for the following characteristics:

- Attempt to provide food, clothing, housing, medical care, necessary social services, increased security, or any other good or service meant to attend to people's immediate needs. If this was the sole purpose of the NGO's programming, the NGO will be categorized as providing "relief aid."
- Attempts to identify and diminish societal vulnerabilities *accompanied with* attempts to identify and augment societal capacities. If this was the purpose of the NGO's programming, the NGO will be categorized as "development."
- Attempt to provide any form of "relief aid" as previously defined in this paper *while* attempting to identify and diminish societal vulnerabilities *accompanied with* attempts to augment societal capacities. If the NGO performed both of these activities, it will be categorized as "development-relief."

The following is a narrative description of information acquired from each NGO. After each program summary, a justification is given for each NGOs classification.

Action Contre le Faim (ACF)

ACF is the French division of the organization Action Against Hunger. Several requests for information yielded no response. The organization did not have an archives division and seemed to have no policies regarding public access to original documents.

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

CRS provided the "Proposal for Emergency Assistance to Liberia Operational Plan: October 1, 1992—September 30, 1993." This document was meant for internal purposes and was sent to "the Offices of Food for Peace and Foreign Disaster Assistance/AID/Washington." Because this document is a proposal, discrepancies may exist between the proposed course of action and the course of action realized on the field. Useful conclusions may still be made though, as CRS had already begun many of the proposed programs and was merely seeking additional funding.

CRS states the overriding goal of operations in Liberia as "to contribute to the rehabilitation of Liberia and to meet the immediate needs of its most vulnerable groups." To do this, the following programs are planned:

1) "Provide food to up to 2,500 former and certifiably disarmed soldiers who are involved in training and rehabilitation programs." The program provides vocational training and literacy classes.

2) “Assist in resettlement of 105,000 displaced and repatriated people.” To do this, CRS will provide short-term food rations to former refugees and internally displaced persons, and assist in reconstruction of homes. The program description is rather ambiguous, stating “shelters will provide emergency health care and food to these repatriated persons. The repatriated will then be transported by UNHCR to over 30 drop-off points scattered throughout Liberia.” No further explanation is provided, leaving one to wonder what will become of the Liberians “dropped-off” at these points.

3) “Address the food needs of 40,000 vulnerable persons in Liberia.” The program will target the disadvantaged and malnourished in the Monrovia area, with “vulnerable groups” considered to be children, pregnant or lactating women, elderly, disabled, and hospital patients. The proposal states, “With regard to geographical focus, for all programs, CRS will give special attention to Cape Mount, Bomi, and Lower Lofa counties since they have been particularly affected by recent armed conflict between the NPFL and ULIMO, and Grand Gedeh and Nimba which were particularly affected during the war.”

4) “Increase agriculture production in selected counties of Liberia.” This program will provide farming tools, seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides to community groups that will then develop their own plan of action to benefit their communities. This proposed program is significantly more detailed than any other program proposed in this document, and it describes exactly how CRS plans to rehabilitate farmlands, rice fields, and orchards. No mention is made of the negative aspects to subsistence living and dependency on agriculture, and the program seems to harbor a “get things back to normal” attitude.

5) “Create 6,000 temporary jobs through the reconstruction of urban and rural infrastructure.” This is a Food For Work program, where Liberians are paid in food rations for reconstruction work entailing repair of wells, roadways, clinics, and schools. The program will operate in Monrovia, Lofa, Nimba, and Bong counties.

6) “Facilitate the maintenance of health and education services for Liberians” in Grand Bassa, River Cess, Margibi, and Montserrado counties. This is an extension of the Food For Work program, but funds only healthcare workers and teachers.

7) The last program is a proposal for an internal management assessment to assure accountability of funds.

Analysis of CRS

CRS begins the proposal by declaring the overarching goal of providing for the “immediate needs” of vulnerable populations. Program One shows potential to be a development-based program as it is a disarmament program that provides vocational training and literacy classes to ex-combatants, but no assurance is given that the program will address the reasons why soldiers chose to arm themselves and fight. Similarly, the repatriation and agricultural programs make no mention of addressing the issues that caused the refugees to flee in the first place or of ending Liberians’ dependence on agricultural production. In sum, all programs were short-term and focused on food distribution, shelter, and medical care, and can generally be categorized into the “get thing back to normal” ideology which characterizes relief aid.

CRS is therefore classified as Relief Aid.

Cooperative for American Relief to Everywhere (CARE)

The researcher remains unclear whether CARE was operating in Liberia in 1993. Requests for information were repeatedly ignored, both by individuals within the organization and by CARE's archives staff. Eventually the archives staff responded to a request for information stating that the last time CARE was operating in Liberia was in 1983. This information is contradictory to an article on the Liberian civil war written by Philippa Atkinson, where CARE is mentioned as an NGO that was present in 1996.⁴¹ CARE was therefore not included in the research study.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

ICRC provided its Annual Program Report for 1993, a report which is published for the general public and highlights all programs undertaken during the year. The report divides activities into 5 groups:

- 1) *Activities for detainees.* Activities included visits, supervision of the release of detainees, and provision of "basic non-food assistance and health care wherever needed."
- 2) *Assistance for the civilian population.* Activities took place in Monrovia, with rural areas declared inaccessible at the time. The report states that displaced populations were provided with basic necessities, such as "clothes, blankets, soap and buckets." As well as non-food supplies.
- 3) *Medical and sanitation activities.* Activities are listed as supplying infirmaries and hospitals with medical supplies, repair of old wells, digging of new wells, installation of water pumps, and construction of latrines.
- 4) *Tracing activities.* This program enabled displaced and resident Liberians to contact family members abroad.
- 5) *Dissemination.* This included an "extensive radio, newspaper and poster campaign, to promote respect for international humanitarian law, with special effort to reach combatants manning checkpoints."

Analysis of ICRC

From the brief descriptions provided, all activities described are short-term based, dependent on funding from the ICRC, unlikely to continue when the organization has left the country, and do not utilize a societal capacity or attempt to mend a societal vulnerability. Mary Anderson states that programs that do not use a nation's capacities cannot have a long-term impact, and the unsustainability of these ICRC programs seems to be a testament to this postulation. Also, as a publication meant for the general public and international donors, the program descriptions seem especially focused on relief efforts with rapid results. This reinforces some of Jonathan Moore's stated reasons for the development-relief gap, namely the attractiveness of quick results to potential donors and the international community's bias towards relief aid.

All ICRC activities are classified as Relief Aid.

⁴¹ Atkinson, "The War Economy in Liberia," 23.

Lutheran World Service (LWS)

LWS provided the *Lutheran World Federation, Department of World Service: Liberia Programme 1993 Annual Report*, published by Sabanoh Printing Press in Monrovia, Liberia, 1993.

This report is a 20 page booklet that includes basic information on Liberia, maps, photos, as well as detailed descriptions of LWS's programs, its objectives, budgets, and administrative staff. The report was likely published to inform overseas donors and LWS administrative staff on the Liberia Programme's status, and to promote good relations with local populations by demonstrating transparency. LWS divides its activities into two categories: "Rehabilitation Programme" and "Emergency Programme"

The Rehabilitation Programme was made up of four sub-programmes:

1) *School Feeding Programme*—The goal of this program was to "encourage schools in LWS service areas to restart their educational activities." This program was created because "the civil war severely debilitated the educational sector. Schools in rural Liberia were particularly high hit." Under this program, students are provided with a hot meal a day if they attend school, and teachers receive a monthly salary in food rations. The report does not mention what kind of curriculum was used, the effects of increased education, the effects of a debilitated school system, or what the student demographics were (i.e. gender). The program was implemented in Bomi, Cape Mount, and Lower Lofa counties.

2) *Food-For-Work Programme*—This program was created in response to the large number of immigrants into Monrovia from outlying suburbs following Operation Octopus in October, 1992. The problem is stated: "About 200,000 persons were forced into the city center from the suburbs. Returning to their communities after the fighting had subsided, they needed help to clean the debris of the war and reconstruct damaged homes and facilities." The project took place in the suburbs of Monrovia. LWS's exact role in this program was not clearly stated, but the report mentions that LWS "supported" short-term community projects that focused on community clean-up and maintenance. LWS "played a management and monitoring role" in these projects, which were mostly planned and implemented by local residents.

3) *Agriculture Programme*—The problem is stated, "With the majority of Liberians (70% before the war) relying on agriculture for livelihood, the devastation to this sector remains a serious concern for Liberia." The report relates a need for "long-term rehabilitation" in this sector, with the program to support groups and individuals by providing seeds, tools, fertilizers, chemicals, baby chicks, and technical advice. Special care was taken to include women's agricultural groups and to provide women with training in basic agricultural skills. The program was implemented in Lower Lofa, Montserrado, Bomi, Cape Mount, Bong, and Nimba Counties. No mention is made of negative consequences of an agriculturally-dependent lifestyle, and no solutions are offered to improve the economic condition of Liberians living subsistence lifestyles.

4) *Income Generation Programme*—This program is meant to increase employment opportunities in the stagnated Liberian war economy, and plans on doing so by providing training and interest-free loans to small-scale businesses. Training was provided in workshops throughout the country and was meant to prepare income-generating groups in managing their enterprises and loans. Ten groups qualified for loans, the majority of them women's groups that

sold livestock and other items in the markets. The report does not specifically state where the program was run, but it can be safely assumed it took place in Monrovia because this was the location of LWS's main office, and Monrovia was the most secure area of Liberia during this time.

LWS's "Emergency Programme" was also made up of four programmes:

1) *Upper Lofa Operation*—This program was designed to address the following humanitarian crisis: By mid-1993, 100,000 Sierra Leonean refugees arrived in Upper Lofa. These refugees were in addition to the 50,000 internally displaced Liberians already living in the county. Also, Upper Lofa was caught up in fighting between ULIMO and LDF forces, and was not considered a secure area. Throughout the course of this aid operation, LWS distributed food rations, medical supplies, clothing, soap, kitchen utensils, roofing, and blankets. No mention is made of the manner in which the food was disseminated.

2) *Upper Lofa Education, Agriculture Project*—Toward the end of 1993, LWS introduced an agricultural program in Upper Lofa that was meant to assist refugees and residents to begin farming their own food and learn agricultural skills. The report describes donations of seeds, equipment, and training, but does not provide any further details on the program. The education project consisted of renovating destroyed school buildings and refurbishing educational materials for the classroom.

3) *Southern-Western Refugees Programme*—This was another Sierra Leonean refugee program run in Montserrado, Bomi, Cape Mount, and Lower Lofa Counties. LWS's activities included food distribution, construction of shelters, refugee registration and repatriation programs.

4) *Cross Border, Cross Line Operations*—Despite heavy monitoring by ECOMOG, LWS was allowed to bring some supplies into NPFL controlled areas through cross-border convoys. These convoys brought food rations only.

Analysis of LWS

LWS divides its programs into two categories: "Emergency" and "Rehabilitation", which at first glance appear to coincide with Relief Aid and Development programs respectively. However, according to the parameters of this study, only two programs have been identified as Development-Relief: The *School Feeding Programme* and the *Income Generation Programme*

The *School Feeding Programme* seeks to better Liberia's basic education system while providing for the immediate needs of Liberians (food rations). Although the report does not mention why LWS felt improving the education system was necessary during violent times, it is known that increased education is a long-term investment in schoolchildren and creates a positive long-term impact on the society as a whole. Lack of education can be seen as a vulnerability in Liberian society at this time, and LWS attempted to diminish this vulnerability. Therefore, this program provided for the immediate needs of people (food rations) while decreasing a societal vulnerability (lack of education) and augmented a societal capacity (children's cognitive abilities). This program can be classified as Development-Relief.

The *Income Generation Programme* provided training and loans to entrepreneurs that wanted to run their own businesses. This program identified a vulnerability in the Liberian society (poor economic conditions) and attempted to boost Liberia's economy by providing

credit to small groups. Also, these groups utilized the societal capacity of women, many of whom were acting as the only provider for their family since males were heavily recruited to participate in the war. Because this program met the immediate needs of people (by providing income), attempted to decrease a societal vulnerability (poor economy), by using a societal capacity (women's entrepreneurial ability) it can also be considered Development-Relief.

All other programs were short-term, agricultural, clean-up, or designed only to satisfy people's basic needs and lacked mention of any long-term change that could result from the programs. Also falling under the "back to normal" ideology, these 6 LWS programs have been classified as Relief Aid.

Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)

MSF provided a one page summary of operations in Liberia from the *Medecins Sans Frontieres Activity Report: 1993-1994*. Although more detailed documents most likely exist, acquiring them from MSF proved difficult as it has neither an archives division nor a clear policy regarding access to original documents.

The page provides a basic outline of the war in Liberia, a map of Liberia, and contains little information describing MSF's activities. The target audience of this report is clearly international donors with little knowledge of the situation in Liberia. Therefore, the page speaks in very general terms and is generally not useful for this research study.

The report states, "Since the beginning of the present conflict, MSF has been providing emergency medical care and re-launching basic health care services in Liberia." Activities listed are water projects, shelters for orphans and abandoned children, literacy classes, vocational training, support of clinics, hospitals, and feeding centers, and an immunization program. The report mentions operations in Monrovia, Nimba, Grand Bassa, and Buchanan.

Analysis of MSF

From the little information provided, MSF states that it provided "emergency medical care" and attempted to rehabilitate basic care facilities in Liberia. Although the report lists literacy classes and vocational training as activities, without any context given it is impossible to know if these programs were short-term, if they integrated elements of relief aid, or if the training addressed societal vulnerabilities. Also, as a publication meant for the general public the material focuses on activities undertaken to relieve immediate needs, again demonstrating an unstated bias by donors and the public to see immediate results in the form of relief aid. Therefore, it appears that MSF provided Relief Aid.

Oxfam

Oxfam provided detailed budgets, grants lists, and program reports from the years 1991, 1995, and 1996. It is not known why these documents were provided in response to a request for information from the year 1993. With further communication, information from 1993 might have been attained, but time restraints did not allow the researcher to pursue this possibility. Oxfam has therefore not been included in this research study.

Save the Children Fund, United Kingdom (SCF-UK)

Save the Children is divided into regional organizations, with the United Kingdom division handling operations in Liberia in the 1990s. SCF-UK provided two documents:

1) “Project Report Greater Liberia”

This report is an internal document not designed for the public. It details one three-month project that took place in Eastern Liberia, the “East Liberia Emergency Programme” which took place from July to September, 1993. The project’s stated objective was “Provision of Essential Relief Support to areas controlled by the NPFL in Greater Liberia in the form of Basic Non-Food, Non-medical Relief Inputs.” Project achievements are listed as the following: “Assignment of one relief coordinator based in Greater Liberia,” “establishment of Operational base in Gbarnga to provide administrative and logistical support to SCF Personnel,” and “Distribution of Social Welfare Inputs.” Social Welfare Inputs are defined as: Blankets, flip-flops, used clothing, plastic sheeting, water containers, and T-shirts.

2) “Annual Project Report, Dec-Jan, 1993”

Although the document was requested in its entirety, for an unknown reason only odd numbered pages (1-9) were provided. This report is a summary of a program that SCF ran in Bomi and Lower Lofa counties in Western Liberia, called the “Primary Healthcare Project.” This project’s objectives are stated as, “to support the reactivation of the county health services in a comprehensive approach (hospital and outreach clinics),” “continue the reactivation of EPI services,” “provide logistic support to hospital,” “provide technical assistance in reactivating and developing the county health information systems,” “to provide essential drugs,” “to support the reactivation of other hospital based healthcare services,” “to improve water supply and sanitation,” “to provide training to county health staff,” and “to support the delivery of health education messages to hospital attenders.” The report then provides statistics on problems that the healthcare system in Liberia faces, including the ways that SCF was helping to correct these problems—all in the form of donations and training.

Analysis of SCF

The first program mentioned consists of distribution of blankets, flip-flops, used clothing, plastic sheeting, water containers, and T-shirts—all items clearly meant to address people’s immediate needs and is therefore considered a relief aid program. The second program is more comprehensive, but still targets only the rehabilitation of Liberia’s healthcare system, which can be considered a societal vulnerability. However, no capacity is identified to improve the situation with support instead coming from donations and trained staff. Therefore, the program cannot be considered “development” or “development-relief” and seems to be destined for a short-term impact. Again, Anderson’s theory that programs that don’t utilize societal capacities will not have long-term impacts seems to apply. SCF’s activities can be categorized as Relief Aid.

World Relief

Staff at World Relief confirmed that they were operating in Liberia in 1993, but the organization has no archives division and declared it impossible to provide original documents.

Table 2 is a typology of all information acquired from NGOs in this research study.

Table 2. NGOs in Liberia in 1993

Organization	Location of Operations	Activities	Classification
Action Contre le Faim (ACF)	---no response---	-----	-----
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	Bomi, Bong, Cape Mount, Gedeh, Grand Bassa, Lofa, Margibi, Monrovia, Montserrado, Nimba, River Cess	Disarmament and rehabilitation, resettlement and repatriation, provision of food rations, agricultural production, Food For Work program	Relief Aid
Cooperative for American Relief to Everywhere (CARE)	---no response---	-----	-----
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Monrovia After November, 1993, also Gbarnga, Kakata, Lofa	Visits to detainees, food and non-food supply assistance, water assistance, provision of medical supplies, promotion of human rights	Relief Aid
Lutheran World Service (LWS)	Bomi, Bong, Cape Mount, Lower Lofa, Upper Lofa, Monrovia, Montserrado, Nimba	School Feeding Program, Food For Work Program, Agricultural production, microcredit programs, refugee registration, provision of food rations and medical supplies	2 programs Development-Relief 6 programs Relief Aid
Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)	Buchanan, Grand Bassa, Monrovia, and Nimba	Medical assistance, water projects, shelters for orphans and abandoned children, literacy classes, vocational training, "support" of clinics, hospitals, and feeding centers, and an immunization program	Relief Aid
Oxfam	---no response---	-----	-----
Save the Children Fund (SCF)	Eastern Liberia (based in Gbarnga), Bomi and Lower Lofa	Provision of clothing, water, and shelter. Provided training and financial support to hospitals and clinics.	Relief Aid
World Relief (WR)	---no response---	-----	-----

Part III: Results and Conclusions

For various reasons, four out of nine NGOs in the sample population did not respond to solicitations for information. Funding issues was the reason most commonly cited; either the NGO was understaffed, too busy to respond, the NGO did not keep dated documents in an accessible library, or was not willing to dig into storage to provide documents. Whatever the reasons, it remains apparent that international aid organizations suffer from a lack of transparency. Yet access to such documents is *necessary* to process information and improve humanitarian aid. Ian Smillie, author of a chapter of the book *Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post-Cold War World*, says regarding NGO accountability, “Failure should be regarded as a bad thing only if the same mistake is made over and over. But when evaluations are rare and secretive, when lessons are not shared, not learned, and not remembered, repetitive mistakes are almost guaranteed.”⁴² This is a chilling prospect as Liberia has already faced a second civil war in 2003.

One of these “repetitive mistakes” that Smillie refers to seems to be the failure of the humanitarian community to integrate development with relief aid. In the data collected from NGOs in this report, 4 out of 5 NGOs in the sample population provided only relief aid. No NGO attempted development programs, and one NGO provided development-relief, in 2 of 8 programs. The overwhelming concentration on short-term relief aid is apparent in the Liberian civil war of the 1990s, and congruent with patterns of humanitarian relief for decades. The trend is clear—NGOs repeatedly demonstrated a “get things back to normal” ideology, which is an extension of a larger problem within humanitarian aid: lack of innovation. Afraid to deviate from what is expected of them, NGOs might feel pressure to jump into conflicts as soon as they can, “armed” with medical supplies and food rations and devoid of any clear plan of action, at the same time feeling pressure to hide failures because sizeable funding requires a good reputation.⁴³

Anderson states, “...aid must support systemic change toward justice rather than simply keep people alive to continue to live in situations of injustice.”⁴⁴ If Mary Anderson is correct, and including development is a precursor to effective relief aid, humanitarians have been providing ineffective relief aid for over 100 years. And indeed it seems that the programs in this case study with the shortest duration and the least sustainability are the programs that did not seek out any societal capacities to carry out the program, as Anderson suggests. Five out of seven programs of Catholic Relief Services focused on straightforward donations of goods to the needy. The same is true of Three out of five ICRC programs, five out of eight LWS programs, all MSF programs, and apparently all of SCF-UK’s programs. There is no question that instead of identifying societal capacities to draw from in dissemination of aid, agencies preferred to directly transfer basic goods and supplies into the country.

What answers, then, does this study have to offer? *Can* relief aid be combined with sustainable development? The answer is yes it can and it has been, as demonstrated in the two noteworthy programs run by Lutheran World Service. Closing the gap has been hailed by

⁴² Ian Smillie, “Painting Canadian Roses Red,” in Michael Edwards and David Hulme (ed.), *Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post-Cold War World* (West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1996), 189..

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁴⁴ Anderson, *Do No Harm*, 7.

countless academics in the humanitarian community, with Anderson, Moore, and Brandt included. So, with such widely-supported evidence maintaining development-relief models, how is the humanitarian community truly measuring up in terms of progress? The answer is poorly, at least in Liberia in 1993. But here it is prudent to remind readers of the reaches of this study, especially in regards to time. The case study chosen is now more than ten years old, and most sources available regarding the development-relief gap are more current. Although development-relief theory predates Liberia's emergency by years, the subject's popularity seems to be a recent trend.

At the same time, Jonathan Moore's speculations about the status of the development-relief gap hold true in organizations today and in 1993. One of Moore's correct predictions is that relief programs are often designed to quench the donor community's thirst to see quick results in the form of relief aid. Almost all original documents that were promotional materials meant for the public were written in a manner that celebrated relief aid triumphs as the ultimate measure of success. Such documents were provided by ICRC, MSF, and to a lesser degree LWS. Given this fact, another challenge set before today's humanitarian worker is striking a better balance between delivering what donors want to see and what is truly needed.

In the end, there are many questions that this study touches upon but cannot answer: Are development-relief programs really more effective in conflict situations? How can the development-relief gap be closed? How effective would Mary Anderson's model be in designing relief efforts for conflicts today? In the rapidly changing world of humanitarian assistance, it seems each question answered gives rise to yet more questions. But improving humanitarian aid is a topic that can never be too exhausted. Although this study has provided a strong critique of humanitarian aid policy, the purpose is not to create a sense of hopelessness. Instead, the humanitarian community must meet the challenge set before it. NGOs must not lose sight of long term goals, even in times of emergency. Humanitarian action must go deeper than simply meeting people's physical needs. It must address the issues that have caused them to remain vulnerable, marginalized, and trapped in a disadvantaged position. A well thought out path lies before the humanitarian community—one that takes a holistic approach, promotes cooperation, and integrates knowledge from all sectors of humanitarian action. It is up to individuals within the humanitarian community to choose transparency, to learn from mistakes, and to provide the most effective aid possible. To do any less would be compromising the foundations of humanitarian action.

Appendix 1

Definitions

Development: “The process by which vulnerabilities are reduced and capacities increased.”⁴⁵

Development-relief: The provision of emergency aid that simultaneously attends to peoples’ immediate requirements for survival or recovery, while attempting to reduce societal vulnerabilities and increase societal capacities.

Relief aid: Any provision of aid during an emergency that is meant to attend to a person’s immediate requirements for survival or recovery, which include food, clothing, housing, medical care, necessary social services, and security when a person is faced with circumstances beyond her or his control.

Sustainable Development: Reducing societal vulnerabilities and increasing societal capacities in a way that does not compromise resources for future generations and promotes the achievement of human rights before any other goal.

⁴⁵ Anderson, *Rising From the Ashes*, 12.

Appendix 2

Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre le Faim
AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
CARE	Cooperative for American Relief to Everywhere
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INGO	International non-governmental organization
JPO	Joint Policy of Operation
LWS	Lutheran World Service
MSF	Medicins Sans Frontieres
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
PPHO	Principles and Protocols of Humanitarian Operation
SCF	Save the Children Fund
UN	United Nations
UNOMIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia

References

- Adebajo, Adekeye. *Liberia's Civil War: Nigeria, ECOMOG, and Regional Security in West Africa*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002.
- Alao, Charles Abiodun. *The Burden of Collective Goodwill: The International Involvement in the Liberian Civil War*. Brookfield: Ashgate Publishing, 1998.
- Alao, Charles Abiodun, Jeremy Armon, Andy Carl, Max Ahmadu Sesay, and Samuel Kofi Woods, II, "The Liberian Peace Process: 1990-1996," Accord Programme, *Conciliation Resources*. 1996, "Chronology" section, available at <<http://www.c-r.org/accord>>
- Anderson, Mary. *Rising From the Ashes: Development Strategies in Times of Disaster*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1989.
- Atkinson, Philippa and Nicholas Leader. "The 'Joint Policy of Operation' and the 'Principles and Protocols of Humanitarian Operation' in Liberia," Study 2, Humanitarian Policy Group. London: Overseas Development Institute, March 2000.
- Atkinson, Philippa. "The War Economy in Liberia: A Political Analysis." Paper 22, Relief and Rehabilitation Network, *Overseas Development Institute*. May 1997.
- Brandt, Donald P. "Relief as Development, but Development as Relief?" *The Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*. July 1997, available at <http://www.jha.ac/articles/a024.htm#N_1_>
- Cain, Kenneth L. Cain. "The Rape of Dinah: Human Rights, Civil War in Liberia, and Evil Triumphant," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 21 no. 2. 1999.
- Maynard, Kimberly A. *Healing Communities in Conflict: International Assistance in Complex Emergencies*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Minear, Larry and Thomas G. Weiss, *Mercy Under Fire: War and the Global Humanitarian Community*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1995.
- Moore, Jonathan. "The Humanitarian-Development Gap," *International Review of the Red Cross*, no. 833. March 1999.
- Smilie, Ian. "Painting Canadian Roses Red," in Michael Edwards and David Hulme (ed.). *Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post-Cold War World*. West Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press, 1996.
- Tashakkori, Abbas and Charles Teddlie. *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998.

Terry, Fiona. *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002.

United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948. Geneva, United Nations, 1948. available at <<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>>

Weissman, Fabrice. *L'aide humanitaire dans la dynamique du conflit libérien*. Paris: Foundation Médecins sans Frontières, May 1996. as cited in Fiona Terry, *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002.

Deborah J. Maresko is a graduate of American University's School of International Service in Washington, D.C. Specializing in development issues in Latin America, she currently works for a local non-profit organization in Santiago, Chile, which addresses urban development and housing issues in Chile.