Aid: supporting or undermining recovery? Lessons from the

Better Programming Initiative

Acknowledgements

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We are very grateful to the many people that have provided invaluable assistance to the BPI since its inception and their support and inputs have created the project and brought it to its current state where as many as 40 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the world are learning about it, using it or teaching it to sister societies, and to other aid organizations.

A group of hard-core BPI believers facilitated training and dissemination workshops for the project, including training-of-trainer workshops, conference and seminars; some of their workshop reports and case studies provided the core material for the country reports in this book. Their important contributions are deeply appreciated.

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Introduction

In 1999, when the Better Programming Initiative (BPI) was starting its testing phase, the International Federation spent 67 per cent of its budget – or 360 million Swiss francs – on operations in countries affected by or recovering from violent conflict. There are enormous difficulties in implementing effective programmes among people whose basic capacity to relate to one another, never mind construct a cohesive narrative of their own future, has been destroyed by the horrors of war. The propensity for mistakes is frightening.

Aid cannot reverse or compensate for the suffering and trauma that has occurred during conflict. It cannot prevent conflict from continuing or restarting. But it can be the first opportunity for war-affected communities to experience an alternative to conflict as the sole basis for their relationship with opposing groups.

BPI analysis in six countries has demonstrated that the beneficiaries we target, the staff we hire, the sources we use to inform needs assessments, the type of programmes we implement and the way we deliver assistance can add to tension and increase conflict.

The experience also suggests that thorough context analysis and programme planning can help to avoid such negative impacts and, critically, help identify alternative options for better programming that strengthen people's links with each other and promote recovery.

The main aim of the BPI is to develop the International Federation's capacity to plan and implement relief and rehabilitation programming which encourages longer-term, sustainable recovery. It does this by providing a tool that supports systematic context analysis to help ensure that programmes strengthen local capacities for recovery and avoid reinforcing systems of inequality. It also aims to consolidate opportunities for peace through better analysis and understanding of relationships between people in conflict-affected communities.

During 2002, BPI has been successfully introduced in other, non-conflict-related contexts and has been integrated with other planning and assessment tools in the project management cycle to promote a more holistic approach to programming.

Didier J. Cherpitel
Secretary General

The International Federation in post-conflict situations

1. Mandate for recovery

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (the International Federation) is an institution born of the global need for post-conflict rehabilitation in the aftermath of the First World War. When the institution was founded in 1919, Europe was in turmoil, national economies were destroyed, epidemics ran out of control and hundreds of thousands of refugees were spread out across the continent. The federated body combining the strengths of National Red Cross Societies was created to implement large-scale international rehabilitation campaigns to improve health and prevent sickness and suffering. Its traditional mandate for post-war rehabilitation complemented the wartime role of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), working throughout the world to protect and assist victims of war.

In recent years, the unprecedented increase in the number of civil conflicts in the immediate post-cold war period, and the numbers of people directly affected by these conflicts, has resulted in a marked rise in the International Federation's level of engagement in post-war rehabilitation programming. This increase was recognized when the Movement adopted the Agreement on the International Activities of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement at the Council of Delegates in Seville in November 1997. The Seville Agreement assigned the Movement's lead role in post-conflict relief and reconstruction to the International Federation.

During the 1990s, the International Federation had built up a wealth of experience in post-conflict programming, but there was no formal policy, strategy or programming methodology to guide interventions. In 1999, the Plan of Action 2000-2003 adopted by the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent requested the International Federation to develop its strategy to guide post-conflict relief and rehabilitation programming based on National Societies' capacity for social mobilization and service provision.[1] The Better Programming Initiative (BPI) was embraced as a methodology that would help improve the International Federation's post-conflict programming. It was created using the findings and approach of the Local Capacities for Peace Project.

2. The Local Capacities for Peace Project

Experiences in the early 1990s in Liberia, Somalia and Sudan fed a growing unease among aid practitioners and donors that their efforts and resources were being exploited. For several years, there had been increasing reports of aid being misused for political and military purposes. The Local Capacities for Peace Project (LCPP) was launched in 1994 when a number of international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) formed a collaborative association to learn more about the secondary impacts of aid provided in conflict settings. Several National Societies, including the Danish and Swedish Red Cross, contributed to the LCPP in its early years. The project set out to answer the question: "How can humanitarian or development assistance be given in conflict

1. Section 2, Final Goal 2.2.6.

situations in ways that, rather than feeding into and exacerbating the conflict, help local people to disengage and establish alternative systems for dealing with the problems that underlie the conflict?"[2] After conducting 15 field-based case studies with a number of different NGOs in conflict situations around the world, the LCPP revealed clear patterns in how aid interacts with local tensions in both negative and positive ways. The findings were published in 1999.[3] The International Federation, supported by the British Red Cross, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and the Norwegian Red Cross, joined the LCPP network in 1999. An International Federation LCPP coordinator was appointed and began testing the relevance of these findings to International Federation and National Society programmes in post-conflict settings and documenting experience and lessons learned.

3.   From LCPP to BPI

The first year of testing the methodology generated a number of lessons that helped inform the development of the BPI in 2000. The initiative adopted the LCPP approach and methodology for NGOs working in conflict situations to International Federation operations in situations characterized by tension, instability and post-conflict recovery, and began documenting lessons from its use in a number of countries. There are four main differences between the BPI and the LCPP:

- BPI was developed as a programme planning and impact assessment tool specifically for National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and International Federation delegations. LCPP was developed as a programming tool for NGOs. These agencies have a different legal and organizational character from National Societies. For example, they are neither bound by nor endowed with the auxiliary status enjoyed by National Societies. As such they have completely different parameters that imply different operational mandates and approaches.

- BPI is a tool for post-conflict recovery programming. LCPP was designed for and used by organizations in live-conflict situations. The International Federation operates in post-conflict rather than live-conflict situations, based mainly on its role as defined by the 1997 Seville Agreement.

- BPI has a narrower focus than LCPP in that it does not set out to help establish alternative systems for dealing with the problems that underlie the conflict. It focuses instead on improving the analytical capacities of delegation and National Society staff, providing them with the ability to analyse the context in which they are operating. In this way, it seeks to ensure that programmes do not deepen divisions and prejudice or delay recovery. The International Federation's aim is also to integrate BPI with other planning and assessment tools used in the project management cycle and thus promote a more holistic approach to programming.

- During 2002, BPI was successfully introduced in other, non-conflict-related contexts and integrated with other planning and assessment tools in the project management cycle to promote a more holistic approach to programming.

In order to dispel confusion, the terminology and analytical framework were adapted to reflect the International Federation and National Society mandates and the name was changed to "Better Programming Initiative". The philosophy, approach and methodology remain largely the same and the BPI is essentially an International Federation version of the LCPP, using key LCPP material supplemented by International Federation lessons, and LCPP tools redesigned to suit the mandate and legal and organizational culture of both the International Federation and National Societies.

Over the past three years, the International Federation has introduced the BPI to Red Cross and Red Crescent Society programmes in communities recovering from conflict in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Kosovo, Liberia and Tajikistan. BPI was also introduced to National Societies in countries recovering from high levels of social conflict such as Colombia and Nigeria. During a series of training workshops, the BPI sought to raise awareness among programming staff in the respective

2. Anderson, M.B. *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – or War* Boulder, Co.: Rienner, 1999.

3. ibid.

National Societies and International Federation delegations on the impact of their aid programmes on the dynamics of conflict and on relationships within and between communities. The workshops also provided staff with a tool to analyse this impact and to redesign programmes to avoid negative impacts on inter-group relations. In many of these situations, analysis of ongoing programmes identified areas where aid was reinforcing barriers to reconciliation and recovery. Programme staff used the BPI methodology to identify alternative options to avoid these negative impacts. Analysis from six of these BPI interventions is documented in this report.

The need for better analysis

1.   Conflict, competition for resources and identity

In recent years the frequency, causes and structure of conflict appear to have changed dramatically. Disputes linked to control over resources have combined with weak governance and exclusion to produce an increase in violent conflict around the world.

Resource-related disputes cause conflict

Evidence from the BPI analyses suggests that many conflicts are rooted in and perpetuated by competition for control over natural resources, such as land and the wealth it contains or generates. In some cases conflict has been incited, promoted and fuelled as part of a strategy that allows conflict parties to undermine and weaken potential competitors for access to and control over natural resources.

Conflict is used to divide ordinary people

Civilians are invariably the victims of these resource-related conflicts, driven out of their homes and villages or maimed and killed, often with impunity. Those who remain are exploited to create constituencies of support and legitimacy for warring parties: dispensable populations of young people drawn directly into the conflict as a consequence of the lack of alternative opportunities available to them, or ordinary communities whose fear and confusion are exploited by demonizing the "other side".

Dividers sustain conflict

This demonization takes place through the manipulation of identities. Our experience, in the countries where BPI has been tested and used, indicates that differences in identity, language and culture are manipulated by warring parties to divide groups, communities and nations, and sustain conflicts. In an increasingly globalized world, national and ideological distinctions are being eroded daily. In some developing countries where livelihoods are already threatened by disease, hunger and natural disaster, this identity crisis has increased people's sense of vulnerability, making them ripe for exploitation by warring factions.

> "People define themselves in terms of ancestry, religion, language, history, values, customs and institutions. They identify with cultural groups: tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations and at the broadest level, civilizations. People use politics not just to advance their interest, but also to define their identity. We know who we are only when we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are against."[1]

These characteristics represent the fault lines along which the conflicting groups are divided. Identities are manipulated to emphasize differences, and this differentiation allows a conflict to be prosecuted, dividing former nations and even communities into "them" and "us".

Aid can either reinforce or weaken dividers

If these characteristics represent the dividers within conflict-affected communities, they also represent the connectors between people: the lines along which conflict will be perpetuated – or peace will be built. Against this background, it becomes clear that post-conflict rehabilitation

1. Huntington, S.P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.* New York: Touchstone, 1997.

programming must be systematically informed by the dividers and connectors between groups affected by conflict. Aid brings resources into environments riven by conflicts over resources and allocates them to people and communities. Each aid intervention will either reinforce or undermine the dividers and connectors, and if aid organizations don't know what or where they are, the chances are that they will strengthen dividers and undermine connectors, fuelling conflict and delaying peace and recovery.

2.   The impact of conflict

The humanitarian impact of conflict can be seen in its consequences for the health and welfare of the population, and in the deprivation through socio-economic destruction, displacement and dislocation. Impacts vary widely from one conflict situation to the next. Two of the most common problems encountered during the BPI testing phase have been the loss of trust between former neighbours and communities, and the destruction of the National Society.

Loss of trust

Civil war in particular deepens existing divisions and creates new cleavages between social and ethnic groups. In communities affected by internal conflict, it has been observed that severe trauma as a result of violent conflict destroys the individual and collective capacity to create a normal communal life of relatively peaceful co-existence with other groups. As a result of abuse, killings, displacement and destruction, normal social interaction is replaced by distrust, demonization and apprehension. Reconciliation is therefore a critical element in the rehabilitation process, without which long-term recovery will be undermined and delayed.

Aid programming is often one of the first post-conflict activities in which war-affected communities are engaged. Their experience of aid, and its impact on inter-group relations, will either entrench conflict behaviour or provide early opportunities for alternative types of interaction that may contribute to reconciliation. A negative experience of aid will reinforce their distrust of other groups and their apprehension about prospects for a better future. On the other hand, well-planned and -implemented aid programmes can demonstrate that cooperation and broad-based involvement in community recovery and development are possible. Consequently, communities can begin to reverse the processes of social disengagement that took place as a result of conflict.

The impact of war and violent conflict on the National Society

Evidence from BPI analysis in the six countries indicates that the effect of the war on the National Society may take the form of any or all of the following elements:

- **Destruction of the National Society resource base**.
  - Personnel – killings, injury, flight and mobilization all contribute to the destruction of the professional and volunteer base of the National Society.
  - Physical resources – buildings, offices, vehicles and equipment usually suffer loss, damage and destruction through shelling, bombardment, commandeering and looting.
  - Stocks and assets – theft, looting and commandeering of relief and disaster preparedness stocks often take place in today's deregulated wars.
  - Collapse of support from traditional sources – National Societies rely on a combination of government funding, public donations and government-sponsored funding initiatives. During war and in the post-war period, these sources of funding are drastically reduced or completely cut.
- **Fragmentation of the regional network.** Occupation of territories, destruction of the infra-structure, reduced mobility and insecurity, combined with local alliances at branch and regional office level invariably result in extensive fragmentation of the National Society's network of

branches. Their ability to function effectively, both during and after the war, is severely impaired.

- **Polarization of professional staff and volunteer base.** The auxiliary nature of the National Society and its close links with national and local government often lead to a real or perceived association with one side or the other. In the post-war period following a general restoration of peace, the extent of this polarization will have significant implications for the re-establishment of a unified National Society and the programmes that contribute to it.

- **Distortion of the National Society's role and functions.** Destruction, fragmentation and polarization during conflict have a long-term impact on the National Society's capacity. During the conflict it may find itself at the centre of a number of major relief programmes with assistance being provided by a variety of different international organizations happy to have a local partner with an existing network. Their main functions usually centre on relief distribution and tracing. However, there is rarely any significant investment in capacity enhancement or long-term sustainability. The loss of experienced personnel and the heavy concentration on relief assistance can result in a National Society assuming and internalizing the institutional identity of an emergency relief organization. In the post-war period when international donors and partners no longer require its services for emergency relief distribution, the National Society must begin a slow process of rehabilitation, usually with very limited capacity and little external support, and a non-existent resource base.

3. BPI: from analytical tool to participatory planning process

During the past three years, the BPI has mainly been used as a tool to assess the positive and negative impacts of International Federation and National Society programming in post-conflict contexts. Its value as a participatory planning process was quickly and widely recognized. In most cases it began as an analytical tool and then became a platform for engaging staff, community members and gatekeepers to provide information and to participate in the revision of existing programmes and the planning of new ones.

The methodology was used primarily to analyse existing programmes in order to test its usefulness in International Federation and National Society programming. This has also helped to generate examples and lessons to illustrate these impacts. In each of the six countries where the methodology was introduced, BPI analysis uncovered a series of negative and positive consequences of aid programming and helped to identify options to avoid or reduce negative impacts.

In **Tajikistan**, the analysis carried out in 1999 to assess the impact of the International Federation/Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan's (RCST) food security programme on relationships within the assisted communities exposed a series of negative effects that were actually increasing tension. This facilitated the improvement of RCST/International Federation programming capacity in two important ways:

- It allowed the introduction of important changes to the way the programme was being implemented which resulted in the targeting of more vulnerable groups, and identified a less political and hence less conflictive basis for the implementation of the programme.
- It also gave the National Society and the International Federation a better awareness of the sensitivity and complexity of food security programming in the context of transition from a communist, centrally planned agricultural sector based on collectively owned property, to a liberal economic system based on privatization and profit. As a direct consequence, the RCST/International Federation team was able to draw up a much more effective implementation plan for the 2000-2001 drought relief programme which largely avoided aggravating con-

flict within and between the assisted communities over land ownership, feudal labour systems and inequality. The application of the BPI methodology resulted in a more successful programme and, critically, more sustainable capacity within the RCST itself through the training and experience of the programming staff.

In **Bangladesh**, the BPI was used both as an analytical tool to identify ways that Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) aid could inadvertently contribute to conflict, and subsequently as a participatory programme planning tool to engage both sides in the former conflict in the design of a development programme. After analysing the role of the BDRCS in the repatriation of the Chittagong Hills Tract tribal refugees from India in 1998, the BPI became a platform for the National Society to design a participatory three-year community development programme in a highly sensitive post-war context. The planning process used the BPI methodology to bring together representatives of the different groups that had been in conflict to identify common needs and concerns and elaborate a development programme to address them. The use of the BPI philosophy from the outset ensured that the programme was planned in a manner that would help to avoid increasing inter-group tension and competition over humanitarian assistance, but instead use aid and service provision as a basis for promoting long-term recovery.

In **Colombia**, the BPI tool was used for pre-implementation evaluation. BPI was introduced to the Cali branch during a training and analysis workshop at a moment when the branch was about to begin implementing a new programme. The intervention had already been designed and approved by the donor. However, branch staff were anxious to determine the potential effect of the programme on the high levels of social tension in the community being assisted. Through the BPI analysis, volunteers responsible for the programme were able to identify minor changes to their plan of action that would add quality to their intervention aimed at reducing domestic violence.

In **Liberia**, the BPI was used as a platform for open discussion about structural, membership and programming problems within the National Society. Staff knew that these problems were causing poor programming decisions with subsequent negative effects on communities. However, the problems were so wide-ranging and the issues so sensitive that people were reluctant to discuss them openly, some fearing retribution and others aware that there were no easy answers. BPI provided a space for open discussion, and analysis helped identify a number of ways in which aid programming was inadvertently contributing to tension and conflict between groups on opposing sides of the former conflict. It also helped to identify some initial options to improve the situation.

In **Kosovo**, delegates' interest in BPI began with the need for an analytical tool, and developed further when they realized that BPI could also provide a platform for discussion between the two local Red Cross organizations representing the ethnic Albanian and Serb communities. National Societies had already experienced conflict between groups over aid resources and the BPI methodology was introduced as a tool to help delegates to plan programmes that would not provoke further tension. It became clear that the divisions between groups in different communities were complex, multidimensional and frequently invisible to the poorly informed outsider. Delegates recognized that without a tool to analyse these divisions systematically, aid programmes may end up emphasizing differences and exacerbating divisions and conflict. Analysis using BPI helped uncover a series of difficulties with National Society rehabilitation in divided or contested states.

In **Nigeria**, BPI was used to conduct an assessment to support the planning of a joint British and German Red Cross water and sanitation (WatSan) project. Delegation and National Society staff were trained to use the BPI analytical tool to identify the potential impact of a planned project on the dividers and connectors that exist in the Nigerian context. BPI was a rational choice because the National Society had been informed that the donor for the proposed project – ECHO – might require a peace and conflict impact assessment in support of the funding application. Nonetheless,

both delegates and National Society staff were impressed by the amount of information that the analysis helped to uncover, and by the unseen potentially negative impacts of the WatSan project. Once again, the BPI also provided a useful platform for discussions between National Society and delegation staff about the context of the conflict, and again expatriate staff were surprised to learn how much their local counterparts knew and understood about the divisions and connectors within and between communities.

Key lessons from the use of BPI

BPI analyses in the six country reports presented here demonstrate that International Federation delegations and National Societies can fuel conflict and compromise reconciliation by reinforcing dividers or undermining connectors between people in conflict-affected communities in the way that they assess needs, design programmes, target beneficiaries, hire and manage staff, and deliver assistance.

1.   Assessing needs

Well-planned aid programmes can ease suffering and reduce vulnerability, providing a genuine foundation for recovery. However, experience in all six countries has shown that a thorough needs assessment is not enough unless it is accompanied by an in-depth analysis and understanding of the violent or potentially violent context, at the level of the intervention.

1.1   Absence of key sources
Inadvertently or intentionally excluding key sources of information and influence on community members increases the possibility that an intervention will be a source of suspicion or tension.

Involving as many representatives as possible from the different groups in the assessment and planning phases is critical. Transparent, open decision-making processes to determine who benefits from the intervention, what is to be provided and how, help to improve programming effectiveness and reduce the risk that some groups will be excluded from the assessment and, consequently, from the programme.

In Colombia, BPI analysis helped National Society staff understand that by excluding schoolteachers from a human rights and international humanitarian law dissemination programme for teenagers they would undermine a significant community connector. Schoolteachers are an important source of advice and wisdom in some Colombian communities and they can validate or undermine the messages and values promulgated by the programme. It was also noted that developing teachers' knowledge of human rights and international humanitarian law would strengthen their capacity to reduce dividers in the community.

1.2   Use of unrepresentative sources
Accepting second-hand beneficiary selection or ascribing excessive importance to one source of information when conducting assessments is likely to result in accusations of discrimination and partiality. Genuinely vulnerable groups may be overlooked, deepening divisions and increasing conflict.

In a resource-scarce environment, prejudices, partiality or personal gain will have some influence on people's selection of communities to be assisted or the composition of beneficiary groups. To some extent, every institution in a conflict-affected country will be penetrated by the divisions within society. It is important to diversify the sources of information and crosscheck them against each other. In all six cases programming staff were generally aware of these weaknesses and discussed them openly, yet managers were sometimes either unaware of problems or felt restricted by political or cultural circumstances in taking action to neutralize influential sources of biased or prejudiced assessments or information sources.

In Tajikistan, beneficiary selection through local authorities resulted in assistance being given to leasehold farmers who were not among the most vulnerable. Their selection fuelled tensions with genuinely vulnerable peasants who had neither been allocated land nor received humanitarian assistance. They interpreted this action as another case of partiality towards certain groups who benefited from the privatization process. The manipulation of the programme by the local authorities reinforced feelings of inequality and division between the communities.

1.3   Fear of offence

Failure to question partial or biased statements, assessments or behaviour by staff, implementing partners or interlocutors may be interpreted as either ignorance of or, worse still, acquiescence in partial, discriminatory or unfair programming. Either way it promotes inequitable treatment of conflict-affected people, reinforcing suspicion and feelings of injustice among members of communities who may be entitled to assistance but receive nothing, and presents a strong incentive for conflict.

One of the key lessons that emerged in Liberia and in a number of other BPI interventions was that the often-quoted excuse for not conducting a complete analysis of the context because an issue is "too political" to raise, question or discuss, is incorrect. National Society staff are often aware of the injustices of a poorly assessed and planned, and politically skewed, aid programme and are only too anxious to have an opportunity to discuss this and look for solutions to address the inequity. For example, Liberian Red Cross staff acknowledged that the National Society suffered to some extent as a result of the perception that it only served some sections of the population. However, they needed technical advice and support to conduct an objective analysis of the reasons for this and to identify alternative options for more balanced programming. Use of a displaced family's home as a Red Cross branch office presents an informative experience of the difficulties faced by National Societies in providing assisting in highly polarized contexts.

This lesson was repeated in Kosovo, where even in the context of a recent experience of a particularly vicious and brutal conflict affecting almost every member of a society, it was still possible to discuss dividers and connectors and the impact of aid on the dynamics of war and peace. This is vitally important since, as we note from the experience of planning and implementing a simple soup kitchen project, aid programming can have inadvertent negative impacts at various levels involving both internal and external actors.

2.   Designing programming

Rehabilitation programming by humanitarian aid organizations including the International Federation is increasingly used to support recovery and transition plans which form part of an overall political settlement. Evidence from several of the countries in which the BPI was piloted suggests that when the International Federation supports National Societies engaged in rehabilitation programmes linked to political settlements, it needs to examine carefully the conditions under which it will be expected to work. Inevitably, there are groups who may oppose the settlement and the recovery plan that provide aid and resources to their former enemies. Inevitably also, the general population remains sensitive to the type of assistance provided and the proportion in which it is allocated.

2.1   Return, resettlement and reintegration

National Society aid programming in support of a political settlement to end a conflict – such as resettlement assistance – can provoke conflict between opposing groups if the programme only benefits vulnerable groups on one former side.

During the BPI analysis, it was noted that forced displacement or changes to the structure of the population contributed to conflicts in Bangladesh, Tajikistan, Liberia and Yugoslavia/Kosovo, and

were a source of tension in Nigeria and Colombia. It is critical that the benefits of programming in these contexts are not restricted to one group to the exclusion of the other. Such limited projects reinforce divisions between groups and fuel resentment and animosity towards the "other side".

For example, in the Chittagong Hills Tract in Bangladesh, the 1997 Peace Accord stipulated a major role for the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society in supporting the repatriation and resettlement of the tribal refugees. One of the consequences for the National Society was violent confrontation with Bengali settlers who were strongly opposed to the accord and any return by the tribals. The exclusive focus of the resettlement assistance fuelled the Bengali perception that the BDRCS was partial to the tribals and that the programme was politically driven.

2.2   Agricultural rehabilitation – food security

National Society or International Federation delegation rehabilitation programming that involves access to or allocation of scarce resources or assets such as land, housing or water, risks provoking conflict between groups over entitlement.

A similar dilemma arises in situations where political settlements result in reform or redistribution of particular assets such as land, housing or water, and where any engagement is likely to have political implications. An example of the conflictive potential of agricultural rehabilitation programming in the context of land reform and redistribution is provided in the chapter detailing the International Federation's experience with the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan. Competition between groups seeking to secure access to small plots of land for private cultivation, and disputes over water between cotton and wheat farmers along identity-related fault lines made agricultural rehabilitation programming a very sensitive activity. Here we see the contradiction that confronts the International Federation in its role as lead agency within the Movement for post-conflict relief and reconstruction: how to address the structural inequalities at the centre of hunger, vulnerability and suffering, while maintaining its traditional neutral stance?

BPI analysis concluded that national-level political and economic structures at the heart of poverty, hunger and other vulnerability are beyond the scope of Red Cross Red Crescent programming. The RCST is not equipped to deal with macro-level recovery and structural reform. It lacks the institutional expertise and resources required to engage meaningfully in this area. Its strength lies in its access to and knowledge of disaster-affected communities, its ability to assess needs effectively, and its capacity to deliver assistance to individuals, families and communities. Through systematic analysis and well-designed aid programming, the RCST can provide a support network for vulnerable groups during the transition period while appropriate intergovernmental organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations deal with macro-level recovery and structural reform.

2.3   National Society rehabilitation

When questions of state formation, legitimacy and secession have not been conclusively resolved, rehabilitation of the National Society presents very specific challenges to the International Federation. It can set an example for communities demonstrating how it is possible to work together to address the needs of vulnerable groups regardless of language, identity or culture. It can also become a focal point for tension and conflict between communities deepening divisions and undermining prospects for reconciliation.

In the aftermath of civil conflict challenging the legitimacy of the state or aimed at secession, National Society institutional development programming presents very specific challenges to the International Federation when questions of statehood and legitimacy have not been conclusively resolved. As we shall see in the Kosovo chapter, institutional development support to a Red Cross or Red Crescent organization linked to one side of the conflict, but not enjoying recognition from a broad section of the population, can be interpreted as legitimization of one or the other conflict

parties and can deepen divisions between communities. We also see how the choice of language used in official Red Cross Red Crescent dissemination and information material and publications can fuel tension and conflict between groups when self-determination is at the heart of war and violent conflict.

3. Selecting and accessing beneficiaries

Throughout the BPI testing phase, National Society and delegation staff repeatedly encountered the most common way in which we inadvertently set ourselves up to fuel tension and conflict between groups: by selecting beneficiaries without undertaking a thorough analysis of the needs of all groups affected by the conflict.

3.1 Beneficiary selection criteria

When we design post-conflict rehabilitation programmes, we frequently use beneficiary targeting criteria that – vulnerability notwithstanding – favour one sub-group over another (for example, returnees, internally displaced people, those with damaged houses, etc.). This can play into competition for resources and increase tension. It may even cause inter-group conflict when the sub-group exists only on one side of the former conflict.

When this happens within a homogenous community (i.e., a community containing only people who have fought on the same side during the conflict), the result can be resentment. When it happens in a divided community (i.e., containing groups who have fought against each other during the conflict), it can worsen tension and fuel conflict. An example is the winterization programme for returnees to Kosovo, which was intended to facilitate the reintegration of the returnees, but actually increased the resentment felt towards them by people within their own community who saw them as having "run away" to safety and comfort during the conflict.

3.2 Staffing

When a National Society or International Federation delegation staff base is not broadly representative of all the groups in the conflict-affected communities, its impartiality may be threatened. As a result, certain groups may be inadvertently or intentionally excluded during the processes of needs assessment and programme implementation. This deepens divisions and exacerbates conflict between groups who receive assistance and those who do not.

Staffing decisions by National Societies and International Federation delegations were seen as a major source of division in three of the six cases presented here. As we will see, the effects of unrepresentative staffing practices are cumulative: when a National Society does not ensure its staff base is broadly representative of the different groups in its constituency, it is often perceived as partial by the groups that are not represented. This becomes an obstacle to the assessment of vulnerability among these groups, and subsequent programming either does not address the needs of these groups, effectively excluding them from National Society support, or is inadequate for their needs. Either way, their suspicion that the National Society is partial to their former enemies, or discriminates against them, is strengthened and the National Society reinforces the divisions between communities, undermining prospects for reconciliation and delaying recovery. National Society staff using BPI analysis in Liberia provided some important examples as to how this can prejudice the impartiality of National Society programming and undermine its efforts to reach and assist the most vulnerable.

On the other hand, evidence from the Nigeria analysis suggests that when staffing is proactively managed to provide as representative a workforce as possible, trust from different groups in the community is increased. During widespread communal violence in Kaduna in which over 500

people were killed – ostensibly because of their religious and ethnic background – Red Cross staff from five Nigerian Red Cross branches came to the assistance of the Kaduna branch. Although they represented a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds, they were able to form a single emergency relief team and could gain access to assist the conflict-affected communities.

4. Delivering assistance

Post-conflict rehabilitation programming provides humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups during a highly sensitive period and the loss of trust as a direct result of civil conflict is one of the greatest threats to recovery. Nowhere is this more evident than in people's suspicion of any aid organization or project that appears to provide disproportionate or exclusive assistance to their former enemies.

4.1 Structure
By adopting an organizational configuration based on a country's administrative structure, a National Society may reinforce the political, ethnic, cultural and language divisions along which conflict between groups is incited and perpetuated.

Increasingly, identity-based violence and campaigns of ethnic cleansing result in people living in ethnically homogenous settlements. In some countries, administrative boundaries are even drawn to group populations from similar backgrounds, dividing them on the same ethnic and cultural lines along which conflicts are fought. By adopting the same structure, the National Society reinforces these divisions between groups and misses the opportunity to create a separate, conflict-free space for people to work together. The Nigeria analysis highlights this negative impact, giving valuable lessons from Nigerian Red Cross experience in the field.

In the Kosovo analysis, we see how the existence of two local Red Cross organizations, representing opposing sides in the former conflict, reinforced ethnic divisions between the two communities each time one of the organizations was used to channel aid to one community and not both. The lack of cooperation between the two organizations reinforces divisions between the two populations, sending out wider messages of non-cooperation between them. In these situations, issues around recognition and support for Red Cross organizations and structures can also send messages about political control and legitimacy.

4.2 Transparency
When groups are not made aware of decisions about allocation or the rationale for the distribution of assistance, the proportions of aid provided to different groups in post-conflict contexts can deepen divisions and contribute to conflict over aid.

Even though one side may be disproportionately affected by hunger, displacement or damage to housing, failure to involve both sides in a participatory assessment and planning process will fuel tension and may even provoke renewed conflict.

In the Kosovo analysis, we see how the minority Serb population interpreted the concentration of international aid presence and assistance in ethnic Albanian areas. In the absence of a fully transparent, participatory assessment process, they were free to consider this as proof of the international community's bias towards their former enemies. As a result, aid programming served to consolidate the divisions and provide another focus for tension and conflict between the two groups.

In the Nigeria chapter, National Society staff using BPI analysis identified a number of potential causes of conflict in the way that they were allocating their assistance to communities following

conflict. Incidences of disproportionate assistance and failure to inform communities about assistance to the "other side" that they would discover, were seen to be flash points for future tension and conflict between the communities.

5. Conclusion

In the context of post-conflict recovery, where resources are scarce and violence is endemic, the selective allocation of aid can be a powerful reason for disagreement and conflict between those who receive assistance and those who don't. How National Society and International Federation programmes use and distribute resources will have an impact (positive or negative; direct or indirect) on the context in which they are working. Even if their approach is totally neutral and impartial, the perception of those who are excluded from assistance may be completely different.

Where aid organizations, and particularly local Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations, can make a difference is in the planning and implementation of their own aid programmes. Humanitarian aid can and should promote long-term recovery and reconciliation within and between communities; at a very minimum, it should never become a pretext for or cause of conflict or tension between groups.

Evidence from six country analyses demonstrates that thorough and systematic context analysis using the BPI can help ensure that aid programming supports reconciliation and recovery, not division and conflict.

Bangladesh

Jalpaiguri
Koch Bihar
Brahmaputra
Guwanhati
Dispur
Dimapur
Haldibari
Tista
Bhurungamari
Dhuburi
Goalpara
I N D I A
Kapili
Thakurgaon
Niphamari
Lalmanirhat
Khri
Khasi Hills
Shillong
Haripur
Saidpur
Kaunia
Kurigram
Tista
Sunamganj
Sylhet
Silchar
Rangpur
Parbatipur
Chilmari
Dinajpur
Gaibandha
Bahadurabad Ghat
Sherpur
Netrakona
SYLHET
Karimganj
Jaipurhat
Jamalpur
Bibiyana
Atrai
Bogra
Mymensingh
Maulvi Bazar
Ingraj Bazar
Naogaon
Bangali
Jamuna
Brahmaputra
Ajmirigan j
Nawabganj
Sirajganj
Kishorganj
Habiganj
Kalni
RAJSHAHI
Nator
Tangail
Bajitpur
Rajshahi
Pabna
DHAKA
Brahmanbaria
Aizawl
Kushtia
Manikganj
Tejgaon
Narsingdi
Agartala
Dhaleswari
Tropic of Cancer
Meherpur
DHAKA DACCA
Narayanganj
Mizo
Chuadanga
Rajbari
Padma Ganges
Munshiganj
Comilla
Lunglei
Navadwip
Jhenida
Faridpur
Chandpur
Kagrachari
Hills
Magura
Madaripur
Barddhaman
Narail
Gopalganj
Noakhali
Feni
CHITTAGONG
Karnafuli Res.
Boinu
Bhatpara
Jessore
Barisal
Bhola
Rangamati
Haora
Calcutta
Khulna
Satkhira
Pirojpur
Jhalakati
Bandarban
Kharagpur
KHULNA
Mungla
Patuakhali
South Hatia Island
957
Syamnagar
Barguna
Char Fession
Kutubdia Island
Paletwa
Sundarbans
Haringhat
Dakhin Shahbazpur Island
Kaladan
Rabnabad Islands
Maiskhal Island
Cox's Bazar
Bawli Bāzār
Hugli
Matla
Kanga
Raimangal
Teknaf
Buthidaung
0 km   30   60   90 km
Bay of Bengal
Rathetaung

1. Introduction[1]

1.1 Why Bangladesh?

On 2 December 1997, the Bangladeshi government's National Committee for the Chittagong Hills Tract and the Parbatta Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS) signed the Chittagong Hills Tract Peace Accord, ending 22 years of violent conflict which had claimed the lives of over 25,000 people.

The BPI has been used in Banglasdesh to analyse the impact of aid provided to communities recovering from conflict.

In March 1999, it was decided to test the implementation of the Better Programming Initiative (BPI) concept in the relief and development activities of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) and the International Federation in the Chittagong Hills Tract (CHT). A number of workshops were held to introduce the concept to Red Crescent staff in Dhaka and the CHT. Feedback from initial workshop participants indicated that they were stimulated and motivated by the use and findings of the BPI analysis and that they found it to be extremely useful in identifying how relief programming was aggravating tensions between settler and returnee communities and dissipating their efforts.

Subsequently, the methodology was adopted by the BDRCS and provided a critical framework for the planning of a five-year development programme. The BDRCS was able to identify how its assistance could be used to build local communities' capacities to work together across former lines of conflict and promote long-term recovery and reconciliation.

The BDRCS were among the first National Societies to propose that BPI would be a valuable analytical tool not only in conflict-prone and post-conflict situations, but in planning for programmes in other areas in Bangladesh where tensions and dividers exist between and within communities.

1.2 BPI objectives and activities

Bangladesh was the first country where the International Federation introduced the BPI methodology. The intervention there was prompted by the difficulties the BDRCS encountered during the planning phase of the CHT post-conflict rehabilitation programme. It was felt that the use of the BPI methodology for analysing the impact of aid provided to communities recovering from conflict would help improve programming. Hence the following goal was set for the intervention: "To assist International Federation and National Societies plan and implement Red Cross Red Crescent activities in a manner that positively addresses tensions or divisions within beneficiary communities using the LCPP [Local Capacities for Peace Project] methodology."

During 1999 and 2000, four BPI interventions were undertaken in Bangladesh, introducing the concept to BDRCS headquarters staff in Dhaka and to the national programme coordination team, and branch management and programming staff in the CHT. The CHT rehabilitation programme was analysed and findings were documented. Subsequently, the BPI methodology was used to inform and plan the longer-term development programme for the CHT. It was also used as a vehicle to bring together former warring parties to illustrate in practical terms how aid could have either negative or positive impacts on prospects for long-term recovery and reconciliation and to discuss how the development programme could be planned and implemented in order to avoid exacerbating tensions between groups and, instead, promote cooperation and understanding.

1. This country report is based on the final report of the Better Programming Initiative mission to Bangladesh's Chittagong Hills Tract from 13 to 21 September 2000.

2. BPI analysis

2.1 Conflict context

The Chittagong Hills Tract was first inhabited by the Mru and other tribes. It was under Arakanese (Burmese) control before being taken over by the Moguls in 1666. The Moguls introduced a system of revenue and administration in the area that continued up to 1760 when the British East India Company took control. The Chakmas, the largest of its 14 tribes, entered the hills from neighbouring Chittagong during the 18th century. The British, through the Hill Tracts Regulation Act of 1900, gave special administrative status to the region.

When British rule ended in India in 1947, the eastern part of Bengal became part of Muslim Pakistan. East Pakistan had an uneasy relationship with the richer and more powerful West Pakistan. Growing discontent culminated in a nine-month war of independence which led to the creation of the state of Bangladesh in December 1971.

During the war of independence, the Chakma King Tribid Roy and their leader Aung Shu Choudhury supported West Pakistan, which made relations with Dhaka very problematic after the new state was established. Following the assassination in 1975 of the founder of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the new regime headed by General Ziaur Rahman decided on a military approach to resolving the CHT problem, and increased Bangladeshi army presence in the region. A strategy of changing the racial balance by settling Bengalis in the tribal areas was initiated in 1979: the Bengali population of the region increased sharply, reaching 27.5 per cent in 1981 and 38 per cent in 1991. By 1996, 44 per cent of the population were Bengalis.

For over 20 years, the Hills have been an arena for sporadic fighting between the Bangladeshi army, brought in to maintain order and defend the increasing Bengali settler population, and indigenous Chakma rebels. In 1986, some 50,000 tribal people fled to the neighbouring Indian state of Tripura. The Chakmas spent the following 13 to 14 years living in refugee camps there, from which militant Shanti Bahini fighters mounted armed raids against the police, army and Bengali settlers in the CHT. The tribes demanded regional autonomy, the withdrawal of government troops and the resettlement of 50,000 Bengali settlers living in the area.

In December 1997, the Chittagong Hills Tract Peace Accord was signed, providing for a 22-member regional council – the chair and 14 members of which must be tribal people – with responsibility for maintaining law and order, levying taxes and overseeing development projects in the CHT. The national parliament must now consult the council on matters affecting tribal members living in the CHT region. In 1998, a ministry for CHT affairs was created and a tribal leader, Kalpa Ranjan Chakma, was appointed minister. In May 1999, Jotirindriyo Bodhipriyo, alias Shantu Larma (who led the insurgency movement), was appointed chair of the interim regional council. Long-term prospects for peace in the area are uncertain – in the past the Bangladeshi National Party has described the CHT peace accord as unconstitutional and a threat to sovereignty.

2.2 The relationship between aid and conflict

Since Bangladesh is extremely vulnerable to sudden-onset, hydro-meteorological disasters, aid is an important factor in the national economy. Between 1987 and 1996, disasters caused an annual average of 44,014 deaths. In 1998, Bangladesh experienced record flooding which engulfed two-thirds of the country and affected over 31 million people in 52 of the country's 64 districts. A total of 1,414 deaths were registered while over 900,000 houses and crops on 1.56 million hectares of land were destroyed. As larger numbers of people become affected by worsening disasters, relief becomes an increasingly important political issue. Consequently, the BDRCS and its internationally supported relief operations become more attractive as a political platform and resource. This is a constant threat to the integrity of the National Society both at central and district level.

In the CHT, aid has been an essential component of the government's strategy. Food and other relief has been used to attract Bengali settlers to the region. It has also been used to support the resettlement of tribals returning from India, in particular following the 1997 peace accord. As a result, aid has become heavily politicized. In a politically contested, resource-scarce context, entitlement to aid is not only of critical importance for subsistence, it also seen as bestowing legitimacy on those claiming ownership and control in the CHT.

2.3   Dividers and connectors
Dividers

- **Ethnicity** is one of the main dividers. The original inhabitants of the CHT are from 14 different tribes, the largest of which is the Chakma. The increasing population of settlers are Bengali. The Bangladeshi government's policy of settling Bengalis in the CHT to alter the ethnic balance and weaken tribal claims to autonomy has created a very sensitive demographic balance.
- **Political control.** Bengalis now account for 44 per cent of the population, and might become the majority if they continue to settle in the area. However, if the refugees of tribal origin returned from India, *they* would be in the majority. Under these circumstances, political control – and any act that might seriously influence it, such as the peace accord providing for the return of tribal refugees – represents a dangerous divider between the affected communities. Some legislation (including the 1997 accord) reserves top political positions for the population of tribal origin. Bengalis maintain they are being discriminated against by the government.
- **Access to land.** Agricultural production is the main source of income for the vast majority of the CHT's population. When the tribal people fled to India more than 20 years ago, Bengalis took over their lands. During the 1990s, many refugees returned and now demand that their lands be given back to them. They consider the Bengalis as "foreign migrants" who unjustly receive food supplies and security from the government. The tribal people feel this encourages more Bengalis to come to CHT, occupying tribal lands and depriving the tribal population of necessary resources. The Bengali settlers – some of whom have lived in the CHT for decades and worked the land or even inherited it – do not wish to give up what they see as rightfully theirs.
- **Religion** is another divider between the communities, where the tribal people are mainly Buddhist and the Bengalis, Muslim.
- **Inequality**, in a variety of forms and at different levels is a major divider. It divides tribal people from Bengalis, Bengalis from Bengalis, and tribes from other tribes in competition for control over land or businesses. With a per capita gross national product (GNP) of US$ 283, Bangladesh ranks 132nd in the world on the UN's *Human Development Index 2001*. Sixty per cent of children experience moderate to severe malnutrition. Although most people rely on agriculture for their livelihood, the CHT does not produce enough food for its own consumption. What little trade and commerce exists is perceived to be controlled by the Bengali community. Some tribal people say they believe that the Bengalis prevent the tribal communities from participating in trade.
- **Culture.** Some government institutions have been set up to promote tribal culture and traditions, which is seen as discrimination by the Bengalis.

Connectors

- **Health, education and other social service institutions.** The CHT is poorly served and disease, illness and malnutrition are major problems. A strong connector between the tribal and Bengali communities is their shared belief in the need for adequate social services. Both population groups use the same services and facilities (schools, hospitals, markets, roads, etc.).
- **Shared need for public utilities.** Both Bengalis and tribal people have equal access to water, electricity and other public utilities and a common need to develop, maintain and increase their access.

- **Shared belief in democratic process.** Both groups have renounced violence and invested in a democratic solution to the violence in the CHT. They participate together in local administration and political parties.
- **Mutual respect for tradition.** Another very strong connector is the mutual respect that exists among both groups for the other's traditions, language, religious ceremonies and institutions. It is not uncommon that members of one group will participate in the traditional and religious feasts and ceremonies of the other.
- **Shared desire for peace.** After 22 years of violent conflict that killed some 25,000 people and left neither side better off, both the tribal people and Bengalis alike claim they have a desire to live in peace with each other.
- **Sports events** sometimes bring together members of both the Bengali and the tribal communities.

2.4   National Society programming

As an auxiliary of the government, the BDRCS has been involved in all the major relief activities in the CHT. The BDRCS and the International Federation carried out both relief and development activities in the area.

In 1994, the BDRCS provided food rations to some 1,000 tribal families who returned to the CHT from India. During 1997, the Red Crescent was actively involved in the relief operations to support a further 3,000 tribal refugee returnees.

After the signing of the December 1997 peace accord, the remaining 10,427 refugee families in India were repatriated. Under the terms of the accord, all returning families received food, cash, building material and land from the government. BDRCS assistance to returnees includes supplementary food rations.

In February 1998, a team of BDRCS staff conducting an assessment mission in the CHT was abducted by a group of armed Bengali settlers. The settlers accused them of partiality towards the tribal population, and supporting the return and resettlement of tribal people. They were taken from their vehicle, beaten and threatened with execution. It was only after several hours and extensive explanations about the role of the BDRCS and the principles within which it operated that the settlers released the Red Crescent staff, but not before blowing up their vehicle.

The experience illustrated to the BDRCS the perception held by the Bengali settlers in the CHT and the consequences of the BDRCS role in supporting only one side of the former conflict whom they had been assigned to assist with resettlement and reintegration. They were convinced of the need to analyse the impact of their programming on all communities in the CHT. They continued with the rehabilitation programming but engaged with the BPI programme to undertake a peace and conflict impact assessment of their role and assistance to the population of the CHT.

2.5   Impact of National Society programming
on dividers and connectors
Political control and beneficiary targeting

The initial BDRCS intervention directly fuelled the divider that existed between the Bengali settler population and the returnee tribal communities over political control in the CHT. The Bengali communities, who have settled in the CHT over the past 20 years, perceived a major threat from the returnee tribals, whose homes and land they occupy in many cases. They opposed such a return and interpreted the BDRCS's role in directly supporting the return of the tribal people as taking sides.

The suspicion of the settlers was seriously aggravated by the fact that the peace accord also stipulated that the BDRCS was to provide food aid to former members of the Shanti Bahini "freedom fighters" and their families as part of the demobilization process. The Bengali settler population felt this

would help strengthen this group, which was not known to have abandoned the option of violence.

Ethnicity and beneficiary targeting

The initial intervention also exacerbated the divider of ethnicity. The terms of the 1997 CHT peace accord mandated the BDRCS – as an auxiliary to the Bangladeshi government – to provide assistance to the returnee tribals *only*. No role was identified for the National Society in assisting Bengali settlers in CHT. The government had been helping Bengali settlers with incentives such as cash, land and other assistance since their arrival in the CHT and as such they were not seen to require assistance from the Red Crescent. However, for the Bengali settler community, already suspicious of the BDRCS's role in the resettlement process, the delivery of aid to the opposing ethnic group in the former conflict confirmed their suspicions that the BDRCS was also biased in favour of the tribal communities. This directly fuelled the ethnic division, further adding to the division that existed over the right to return.

Political control and staffing

The chairmen of the local district councils set up by the government automatically become chairmen of the Red Crescent's unit (district) executive committees. In accordance with government policy, district council chairmen in the CHT are selected only from the tribal population. BPI workshop participants noted that in one district, the chairman and a few of the executive committee members base their decisions (which include choosing which volunteers will receive training, appointing new staff, selecting villages for BDRCS assistance, etc.) on the interests of tribal people. The majority of committee members are Bengalis, and some of them claim that such pro-tribal decisions are not taken at regular meetings, but are merely imposed on them. They feel that the automatic appointment of a political figure to the position of BDRCS district chairman undermines the independence of the society and creates a situation where aid can be manipulated towards promoting ethnic interests. "The best assurance of autonomy for the society is in the democratic structure of its organization and freedom of recruiting."[2]

Inequality and use of aid resources

The use of BDRCS programme assets by some staff members was also perceived as fuelling inter-group divisions based on feelings of inequality. For example, the BDRCS received new motorcycles to help coordinate disaster preparedness (DP) programmes. However, they were not used by officers (employed by the Red Crescent) who are responsible for coordination and support work. These employees have to use poorer-quality motorcycles which are unsuitable for field work. Elected, executive secretaries of district committees – Red Crescent volunteers who are not responsible for field work and who rarely venture into the field – use them for both personal and official business. Not only does this have a negative impact on the quality of the Red Crescent's DP work, it also gives the implicit message that those who control humanitarian resources may use them as they like.

2.6   Options
Ethnicity and beneficiary targeting

In 1999, a number of workshops were held in each of the three CHT districts. They brought together different ethnic, political and social interest groups to decide on the sort of development activities that would encourage post-conflict rehabilitation and the peace and development process in the CHT. Along with the BDRCS, representatives from the tribal returnees and the Bengali settler communities were invited to plan a development programme that would benefit both communities.

Participants, including both men and women who had fought for one community or the other, were introduced to the BPI concept. The workshop focused on the need for aid programming to reinforce inter-group relations in conflict-affected communities and to avoid undermining capacities for reconciliation. The use of the BPI concept, and the sharing of some of the experiences of the Local Capacities for Peace Project,[3] created an atmosphere in which the representatives of the two

2. Pictet, J. 1979

3. Anderson, M.B. *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War*. Boulder, Co.: Rienner, 1999

opposing communities, who each perceived the other as a threat to their welfare, felt able to speak freely and to discuss the conflict between the CHT's tribal and non-tribal populations.

The BPI framework was then used to analyse needs, potential sources of division, and connecting or conciliatory prospects and to guide the elaboration of a development programme for both sections of the CHT community. The planning process for the CHT development programme helped design eight programmes which were clearly focused on the most vulnerable members of the population – regardless of origin, ethnicity or political belief. Programming components were designed to tackle:

- poverty;
- low level of education;
- poor health conditions;
- poor water and sanitation;
- vulnerability of women;
- environmental degradation;
- social and religious conflicts; and
- rehabilitation of the returnees and internally displaced people.

It was agreed that programmes would be based on shared needs and a common desire for local development. They would build on connectors such as the shared desire for adequate social services. Supported by the BDRCS, both the tribal and Bengali populations agreed on how they could work together for the benefit of their own and each other's communities.

The BDRCS was then able to set up the CHT development programme 2000-2002 with the support of the International Federation.

The development component of the BDRCS/International Federation programme includes community services for 120,000 beneficiaries, disaster preparedness and health programmes for three districts in the CHT and institutional development of the BDRCS units in these districts.

The programme assists economically and socially vulnerable communities and families from within the three CHT districts with Red Crescent development assistance through agricultural rehabilitation and income-generating programmes. It also plans to train Red Crescent volunteers from the selected communities in first aid, primary health care (PHC), Red Crescent principles and dissemination of humanitarian values. In 2000, 600 volunteers were trained. A number of selected volunteers underwent further training as community motivators for water sanitation, PHC and preventable diseases education, demonstration planting of fruit trees and vegetables, literacy, income-generating activities and first aid in their communities. They became paid employees of the Red Crescent. These motivators are also responsible for supervising the activities of other trained volunteers in their communities.

Political control and beneficiary targeting

The BDRCS's headquarters was asked to consider phasing out food assistance to the Shanti Bahini (a group of "former" fighters). The argument was that helping this group might further strengthen a divider. Assistance should rather be focused on mixed groups/communities that are assessed as vulnerable.

It was agreed that regular review of the communities assisted and the resources allocated to them was necessary. This would prevent other villages – not benefiting from any assistance – from questioning the impartiality of a programme that seemed to provide continuous support to some villages, but none to other areas where the needs may be as great, if not greater. To avoid any accusations of discrimination, it is of the utmost importance that aid be provided impartially, based on objective assessment and proportionate to the identified need.

Political control and staffing

At national policy level, the BDRCS was asked to review the system whereby government district council chairmen, appointed from one ethnic group, are also automatically appointed as BDRCS unit (district) committee chairmen.

Inequality and use of aid resources

The use of BDRCS assets by some staff for their personal affairs raised fundamental questions of accountability. In resource-scarce environments, National Society staff must be highly disciplined in their use of aid. Local people – for whom the aid is intended – are not blind and often realize that aid workers are using either the aid itself or the money received for their personal use. They make the connection with ruling warlords who, in their experience, often act in the same manner.

This can destroy the society's image and with it, any prospect of a genuine role in building reconciliation and long-term recovery. The BDRCS agreed that it needs to ensure that existing rules are correctly enforced. In addition, all staff will receive refresher training on the Fundamental Principles.

3. Conclusion

3.1 Lessons learned

Independence

Initially, the BDRCS did not understand that the Bengali settler population in the CHT might think that they were not neutral or impartial. Their programme was undertaken to deal with the needs of the returning tribal families from refugee camps in neighbouring India, where they had been living for up to 22 years. Their resettlement needs were therefore significant.

However, for the Bengali settler communities who watched BDRCS aid going exclusively to returnee populations year after year, the conclusion was a simple one: the BDRCS was interested only in tribal people; and some tribal groups had engaged in a 22-year insurgency against the government of Bangladesh and the Bengalis in the CHT. Here they were, coming back to the CHT to repossess tribal lands at the expense of the Bengali settlers, with the BDRCS helping them as much as they could.

The actions of the BDRCS correspond to the Fundamental Principle of impartiality, which incorporates the principle of proportionality: "...for the Red Cross there are proper and even obligatory distinctions that may be made – specifically, those which are based on need..."[4] However, to be seen as impartial, it is important that National Societies are perceived as assessing the needs of different groups, particularly those in conflict with each other. If this is not possible, National Societies should question the value of engaging in such activities, and should consider how the negative image of a politicized society might impact their other activities.

After civil wars and/or peace agreements, National Societies should examine carefully the tasks they agree to undertake to ensure that their nature or design does not affect the society's independence:

> "...the National Society, before accepting a specific task will be well advised to examine carefully the conditions under which it will work, in order to make sure that it will be able to accept the assignment without compromising the application of these principles."[5]

4. op.cit.

5. op.cit.

Impartiality

The BDRCS realized that its one-sided role was fuelling conflict and perpetuating divisions in society. Its practical use of the BPI helped demonstrate that it was anxious to be – and be seen to be – an impartial organization. However, feelings of marginalization and exclusion are deep-rooted and need to be addressed constantly.

During BPI missions, people repeated a number of times that the Bengalis feel that international humanitarian organizations operating in CHT are only interested in helping the tribal people. While this perceived imbalance arises partly because returnee tribals are considered the more needy of the two groups, in some cases it is also related to the tribal-dominated local government's greater interest in their welfare.

BPI is a useful vehicle for inter-community consultation. For example, participants at the BDRCS development programme's planning workshop (November 1999) were chosen by civil society groups and represented the various ethnic, political, social and economic groups from each of the three CHT districts. The BDRCS units are considering forming local advisory committees (of five or six people) from among these civil society representatives for future review and implementation of development activities. Red Crescent staff or members should not sit on these advisory committees. They would be made up of representatives from each group, widely known and respected in their communities as impartial and knowledgeable on local customs and development. Their mandate could include providing ideas and guidance to the BDCRS units' executive committees on how development programmes can help support connectors and reduce tension and divisions.

Identifying dividers and connectors

Some of the dividers mentioned above cannot be solved by the CHT development programme, as some divisions, such as land disputes, fall outside the Movement's mandate. However it is essential that National Society and delegation programme managers are trained in systematically recognizing such divisions and analysing how they interact with relief, rehabilitation and recovery programming.

Systematic analysis using the BPI framework helps avoid playing into these divisions and increasing inter-group tension. Instead, programming staff can bring groups together by identifying and building on common concerns, shared interests, mutual beliefs and confidence in certain systems, institutions and traditions.
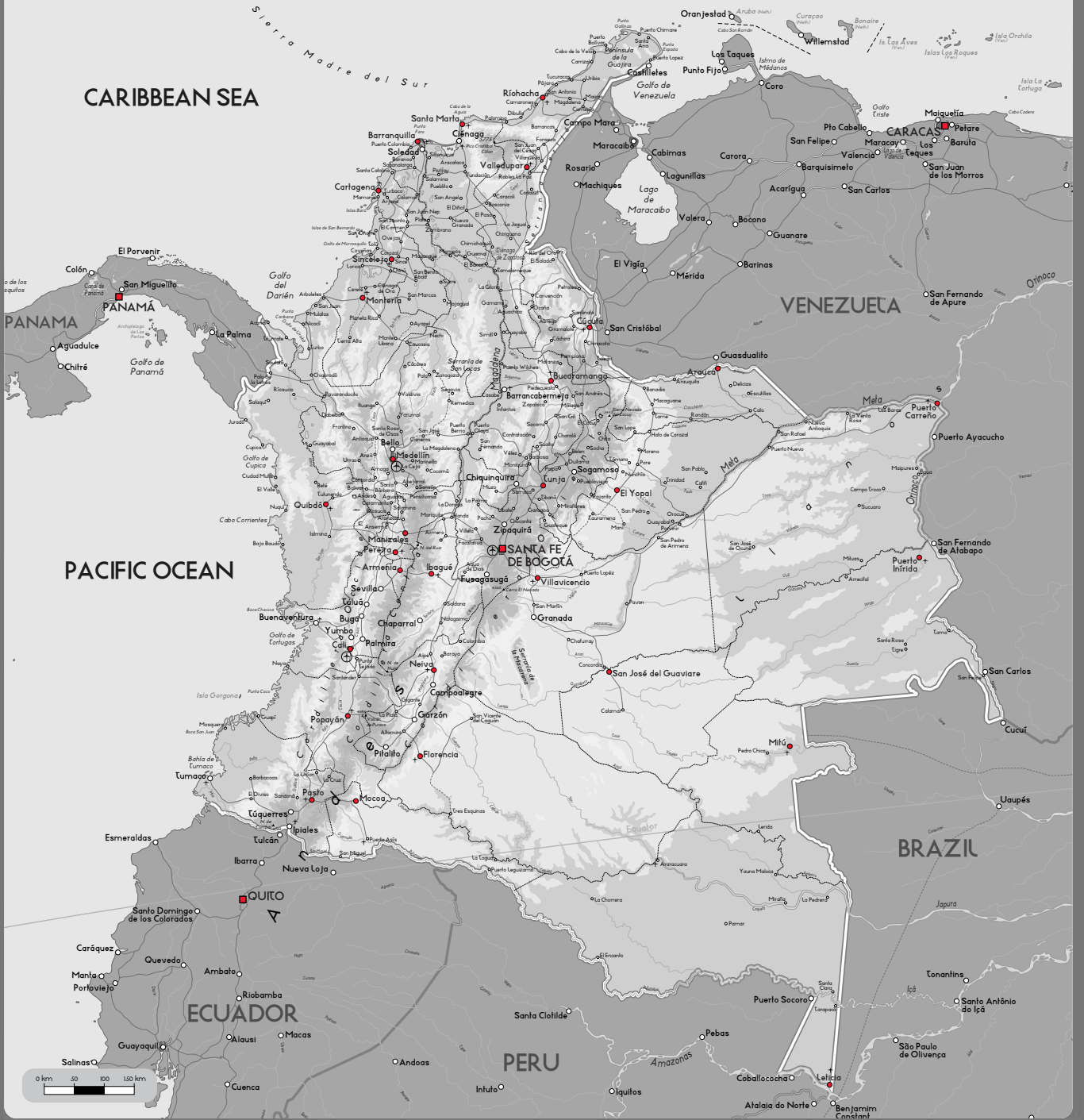
By creating an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, BDRCS programming supports relationships that promote reconciliation and resolution rather than conflict and intransigence. Dissemination of Red Cross Red Crescent messages that promote humanitarian values is also a means by which trained BDRCS volunteers and staff in the CHT programme are helping to reduce tensions.

3.2   Follow-up

BPI is now used systematically by the BDRCS to plan and implement aid programmes at local and national level. The experience of the BPI in Bangladesh is also one of the key elements of the South Asia Regional Mainstreaming Strategy. The Bangladesh lessons will be promoted to all National Societies from the South Asia region and a number of these will participate in the regionalization strategy in 2002-2003. The strategy will begin with the introduction of the BPI to National Societies from the region early in 2002 and a training-of-trainers workshop will be conducted during the summer, where staff from five or six National Societies will be trained as trainers. These trainers will subsequently implement a National Society mainstreaming plan introducing the BPI in their respective society and training programming staff in its use for programme planning, implementation and evaluation. BDRCS is one of the key National Societies to be involved in the regional mainstreaming plan.

Colombia

1.   Introduction[1]

1.1   Why Colombia?

One death in six in Colombia today occurs as a result of violence, making it one of the most violent countries in the world. The Colombian Red Cross (CRC) has long been active throughout the country, running programmes to help those affected by violence. It is the only organization allowed to work in some areas of Colombia.

Violence in Colombia is sometimes mistakenly perceived as emanating solely from the ongoing civil war in which the army and paramilitary groups oppose a number of armed guerrilla movements. In fact, most deaths in Colombia are caused by either social and domestic violence related to petty crime, marginalization, displacement and poverty, or organized, mafia-style violence related to drug dealing and criminal syndicates. Of 27,000 people killed in 2000, 19,000 died as a result of domestic violence and crime. The remaining 8,000 were killed in organized armed conflict.

The lines between the different forms of violence and the agenda of groups engaged in violent conflict are far from clear, and often overlap, but the reality for CRC is that most deaths are not caused by armed conflict in support of predetermined objectives related to political or ideological agenda.

In 1997, the Swedish Red Cross organized a workshop in Bogota to introduce the Local Capacities for Peace (LCP) project, with the support of the Boston-based Collaborative for Development Action (CDA) who had created the project in 1994. Participants included representatives of the CRC. The CRC later requested that the International Federation introduce the BPI and, as a result, it was decided to make Colombia the first Latin American country to take part in the BPI.

1.2   BPI objectives and activities

A BPI mission took place in Colombia from 15 September to 3 October 2000, including field visits to Isla Casucá and Comuna XX, where the CRC operates programmes aimed at reducing social violence.

BPI analysis helps to ensure that the siting of a health centre, for example, does not exacerbate divisions already existing between vulnerable communities.

The objectives of the BPI mission were to:
- stage three workshops (two training workshops in Bogota and Cali, and a dissemination workshop in Bogota);
- analyse the programmes that the Colombian Red Cross is carrying out in areas particularly prone to social violence in the vicinity of Bogota (Soacha, Isla Casucá and Arauquita) and Cali (Comuna XX);
- evaluate how useful the BPI methodology might be in Colombia, taking into account the local reality and the activities carried out by the CRC; and
- develop a plan of action to disseminate further the BPI methodology in CRC branches.

Implementing BPI in Colombia was also intended to complement and strengthen a campaign to reduce violence in the community, *Adiós Violencia*, which began in 1998 with the support of Norwegian Red Cross.

Three workshops were held in Colombia as part of the BPI mission: two training workshops for staff and volunteers from the CRC's headquarters, and from the Cundinamarca (Bogota) and Valle del Cauca (Cali) branches; and an information workshop at the Bogota headquarters.

1. This country report is based on the final report of the Better Programming Initiative mission to Colombia from 15 September to 3 October 2000.

In Bogota the majority of participants attending this training workshop were programme support staff who coordinate programmes countrywide, but who are not directly involved in implementing the programmes analysed. The workshop therefore mainly discussed issues related to the general organization and coordination of CRC programmes and those of other organizations. Four programmes were analysed using the BPI framework. A number of options to improve these programmes were identified and participants agreed to share them with staff and volunteers directly involved in the field.

In Cali BPI workshop participants were staff and volunteers who work on the one programme analysed. They discussed the CRC's programme in Comuna XX, which aims at reducing domestic violence by promoting humanitarian values among young children. Comuna XX has expanded rapidly in the last few decades, following massive population movements due mainly to the armed conflict. Participants were able to identify specific ways to improve the programme and immediately agreed to include them in all activities.

A BPI information workshop was held in Bogota. This workshop brought together CRC governance and management, as well as representatives from participating National Societies and the ICRC, and aimed at raising awareness about the BPI methodology and concept and at reviewing the results of the two training workshops.

2. BPI analysis

2.1 Conflict context

Armed rebellion against the central government, crimes associated with drug trafficking, poverty, social marginalization and displacement have made Colombia one of the most violent countries in the world. In 2000, organized and non-organized violence reached alarming levels, with some 27,000 people killed and 2.2 million people displaced within the country.

For most of its recent history Colombia has suffered from widespread violence and conflict. The country became independent from Spain in 1819, but more than 50 armed conflicts were recorded during the 19th century, creating the contradictory framework that characterizes Colombia today: institutional stability coupled with endemic social and political violence. Between 1948 and 1958 the country experienced one of its worst periods of violent conflict. *La Violencia* took the lives of 300,000 Colombians, sparked a military coup in 1953 and gave birth to the autonomous guerrilla movement. Relative peace was restored through a power-sharing arrangement known as the *Frente Nacional* (National Front) in which the two main political parties (the *Partido Liberal* (Liberal Party) and the *Partido Social Conservador* (Conservative Social Party)) agreed to alternate the office of president and guaranteed each other a share of government posts. In 1974 this pact expired with the introduction of a competitive electoral system.

Since the 1960s, there have been two main guerrilla groups: *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) and the *Ejercito de Liberación Nacional* (ELN). Guerrilla groups have targeted members of the armed forces, government staff, and military and industrial installations. The origins of FARC can be traced back to the peasant self-defence groups organized by the Colombian Communist Party during *La Violencia*. ELN's origins are linked to the 1959 Cuban revolution.

Paramilitary groups have been active in Colombia for almost as long. Currently operating under the umbrella organization, *Autodefensas Unidades de Colombia* (AUC), these right-wing groups multiplied in the 1990s and are said to be responsible for up to 80 per cent of deaths in the civilian massacres.

Increasing violence from both paramilitaries and guerrillas in the second half of the 1990s caused massive displacement. Over 2 million people are believed to be internally displaced in Colombia today, with as many as 250,000 people leaving the country every year.

The conflict is sustained through drug production and trafficking, kidnapping, the extortion of "war tax" or protection money on wealthy individuals and industrialists, and the exploitation of civilians for food, shelter and other material support in areas controlled by armed groups. Drug production is significant. Colombia is one of the world's main producers of coca and estimates of the value of illegal drug production range up to US$ 5 billion a year. War "taxing" is estimated to produce a further US$ 500 million per year.

Efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement of the conflict have been attempted since the early 1980s. In the mid-1980s, the FARC pulled out of negotiations to engage its political wing UP (*Union Patriotica*) in government after more than 1,000 UP activists were executed by paramilitary death squads. In May 1999, the government and FARC started the current round of peace talks after the withdrawal of the army from five municipalities in the south-west by the newly elected President Pastrana. In 1996 the United States approved a US$ 1.6 billion aid package entitled Plan Colombia, most of which would fund "train-and-equip" programmes to reinforce the Colombian military's capacity to combat drug production.

Colombia also produces oil, natural gas and coal. It is an important producer of gold and platinum, and the world's leading producer of emeralds. It also produces significant quantities of coffee and bananas and has a highly developed textile and clothing production sector.

2.2   The relationship between aid and conflict

Civilians are the main victims of the conflict. Territorial control is essential for the different armed factions to carry on their recruitment and training, and income-generating activities such as drug production and trafficking, and to mount attacks on opposition forces. As a result, the exploitation of civilians for food, shelter and other material support in areas they control is one of the main strategies of both the paramilitary and the guerrilla groups. Consequently, the counterstrategy of the opposing group consists of terrorizing, displacing, abducting, torturing and killing civilians in the contested areas in order to deprive their opponents of a sympathetic environment.

In such a situation the provision of relief aid, basic health care and other social services to the targeted population is perceived as an unambiguously political act. Any assistance to communities in disputed areas inevitably draws accusations of partiality and results in targeting of aid organizations and personnel. The results can be seen in Colombia's public health standards: one person in five has no access to health care, one in six does not have access to safe water and a further one in six is without sanitation. In rural areas these figures worsen to one person in four without access to safe water, and one in three without sanitation.

Maintaining a neutral space for humanitarian actors has become all but impossible and security conditions for aid workers are appalling. Both expatriate and national humanitarian workers have been threatened, abducted, beaten and killed.

Assistance to victims of conflict is further complicated by the multiplication of guerrilla and paramilitary groups controlling specific areas and the need to negotiate access with all of them.

As a result of the growing violence and displacement, the ICRC increased its relief activities in 1999, working with the CRC to provide food, hygiene parcels and other non-food relief, as well as rehabilitation projects, and displacement support.

2.3 Dividers and connectors

The main analysis of dividers and connectors was focused on the community level in areas where the CRC was implementing programmes to address social or domestic problems. As such, the dividers and connectors that emerged from discussions with workshop participants were mainly proximate or secondary causes of violence or prospects for peace. However for the CRC, these sources of tension or reconciliation have a critical influence on their programmes. Because they arise at the level of the CRC intervention, they are the immediate dynamics of conflict and peace in the assisted communities and as such represent the pitfalls and potentials that the CRC must come to terms with in designing and implementing programmes.

Dividers

- **Ethnicity** is a divider which is growing in significance in Colombia. Sixty per cent of the population is categorized as *mestizo* (mixed race); 20 per cent are classed as European; 18 per cent are of African origin; and 2 per cent are indigenous. Political activism is growing in black and indigenous communities and has been met with a brutally violent response, including the murder of a number of community leaders.

- **Political ideology.** Political cohabitation over the past 40 years has erased any real ideological difference between the two main parties and disillusioned ordinary people. Over 60 per cent of voters abstained in the 1998 election. However, increasing pressure by both paramilitary and guerilla groups on young people, who often have little or no access to education or employment, is forcing them to enlist with one or the other warring faction. As a result, communities are increasingly divided over right- and left-wing agenda.

- **Inequality.** People's experience of inequality, marginalization or poverty is a divider in Colombian society, pitting those who have access to some form of economic livelihood against those who do not, those who don't have jobs against those who do, those who have some entitlement to welfare against those who have none, and so on. Some 54 per cent of the population live below the poverty line. In areas with high numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs) this inequality extends to those who are entitled to live in a certain area and those who are not, with legalized and illegal invasion neighbourhoods, frequently pitting the displaced against the original inhabitants.

- **The social service system** is a major divider in many places in Colombia today. Displacement, usually as a result of violent conflict in rural areas, is intensifying urbanization (currently estimated at 75 per cent) and compounding associated problems of overcrowding, inadequate water, sanitation and health services, poverty, unemployment and marginalization. Competition for access to health and education services is a common source of conflict between communities. In 1993, Law 100 introduced user-payment for health services, and a large part of the population remains excluded from the system.

Connectors

- **Religion.** About 95 per cent of the population is Catholic and religious belief connects across almost all other divisions. The CRC has worked extensively with the Catholic Church to organize relief programmes and distributions. The church is highly respected and has also been involved in attempts to reduce violence by challenging the widespread abuse of human rights by military groups. As a consequence, church officials have themselves been victims of threats, kidnapping and assassination.

- **Schoolteachers** are highly respected members of every Colombian community and are held in esteem for their wisdom and guidance. In many cases their role is comparable to that of the traditional elder in other countries.

- **Shared experience of displacement.** In many communities, displacement is a connector. The displacement of whole communities in areas suspected of being sympathetic to one side or the other has become commonplace as each group attempts to deprive the other of support. Shared experience of displacement can be a strong connector particularly when an established

community of displaced people – having been forced out of their town or village years ago – is affected by a new influx of displaced. With over 2 million people displaced in different phases over the past 30 years, this is an increasing phenomenon.

■ **Sport,** especially football, is a great connector between Colombians of all backgrounds, ideologies and ages. It represents a powerful basis for youth programming, a valuable forum for dissemination of humanitarian values, and the occasions when the national team is playing present valuable opportunities to forget about violent conflict and focus on shared identity.

2.4   National Society programming

The BPI mission was not intended to deal with programme design for areas of violent conflict relating to the civil war in Colombia. Instead the BPI team looked at how the tool could help develop the CRC's capacity to plan and implement programmes in situations of high social and domestic violence.

The mission analysed a series of CRC programmes in Cali and Bogota. In the Cali workshop, participants studied the Colombian Red Cross's youth education programme. In Bogota, four CRC programmes in Soacha, Isla Casucá and Arauquita were analysed. These are violent neighbourhoods near Bogota, whose populations grew rapidly with the influx of people displaced either by conflict or for economic reasons.

Cali youth education programme

This programme is being carried out in two schools in Comuna XX and encompasses the following activities:

■ first-aid training;
■ dissemination of human rights law (HHRR) and international humanitarian law (IHL) for teenagers; and
■ youth recreation activities (based on the CRC's youth programme *Paz, Acción y Convivencia*) which promote dialogue and peaceful attitudes among children as well as respect for the environment. The targeted group is children aged 8 to 10 years.

Soacha displaced families support programme

The CRC is mandated by *Red de Solidaridad* (the Colombian government agency in charge of assistance to IDPs) to implement an assistance programme for vulnerable families in Soacha, who are given food and non-food items, and financial support for house rental. Psychological and occupational therapies are also available. A national law sets a time limit of three months for programmes assisting IDPs.

The *Red de Solidaridad* selects the families who will benefit from the programme; in some cases they are newcomers to the area or may have already lived there for several months.

Arauquita programme: *Paz, Acción y Convivencia*

This programme provides health assistance (basic health care in a local clinic and provision of medicines) and youth recreation activities for families living in a "non-legalized", "invasion" neighbourhood. Most families are displaced. Next to Arauquita is Santa Cecilia, an older invasion neighbourhood that has become "legalized". The health-care clinic is situated in Santa Cecilia and provides services to both communities. The youth programme also targets children from both neighbourhoods.

Isla Casucá health assistance programme

Isla Casucá is also a non-legalized, invasion neighbourhood. The Colombian Red Cross health team in the community organized activities such as basic health care, provision of medicines and training of community health promoters, in collaboration with an existing *Médecins sans Frontières* (MSF) facility.

2.5   Impact of National Society programming on dividers and connectors

Undermining community connectors

BPI analysis during the workshop revealed that the Cali youth education programme had excluded schoolteachers – an important community connector – from the programme. Schoolteachers are an accepted source of wisdom and they have the power to legitimize or undermine the messages and values the CRC are trying to disseminate throughout the community. They interact with a broad section of the population and are actively sought out for their advice and mediation skills. Not only had the National Society overlooked the benefit the schoolteachers would bring as multipliers of the messages the CRC were attempting to disseminate to schoolchildren, it had also missed the opportunity to strengthen an important community connector.

Also, helping teachers to learn more about critical issues such as human rights and international humanitarian law might have a positive effect on dividers in the community.

Reinforcing feelings of inequality?

The issue of including parents in activities aimed at their children was discussed. On the one hand, children might return home to their mostly extremely poor households, and recount what they have learned about; for example, about human rights and the importance of the environment. These messages may not be well received by parents who are likely to be unemployed, frustrated by their lives and unable to see any glimmer of hope. In some cases, it may even provoke violence between family members. On the other hand, by encouraging parents to take an interest in recreation and training activities, the programme might be able to capitalize on connectors (schools as an area where the community can gather together, the shared desire to improve parents' lives and that of their children, etc.).

The problem of targeting specific age-groups of children for programme activities and thus potentially increasing discrimination of children not part of these age-groups was also discussed. However, as the programme does not have the capacity to work with all the children, volunteers looked at different possibilities to train some of the children as "multipliers", who would be tasked with working with other schoolchildren.

Soacha displaced families support programme

Dividers/connectors
- Divisions exist between the displaced and the local populations, as well as between people displaced by conflict and those displaced for economic reasons.
- Connectors include traditional Colombian community organizations, the trauma of displacement shared by much of the population, and trading activities at the local Soacha market.

Impact
- In some instances, the way the programme was carried out and the process of selection of beneficiary families could exacerbate the differences already existing between the various components of Soacha's population.

Arauquita programme: *Paz, Acción y Convivencia*

Dividers/connectors
- Dividers between the two communities include the fact that the inhabitants of Santa Cecilia live in a legalized zone and have a strong sense of ownership towards activities and centres based in the area. Arauquita's population, on the other hand, are faced with the uncertainties of living in a non-legalized area.
- The youth programme, through its open-door activities for children from both communities, was seen as promoting connectors such as communal spaces and shared interest in, for exam-

ple, sports. The programme has been able to organize events involving parents from both neighbourhoods, thus capitalizing on people's shared interest in their children's well-being.

Impact

- The fact that the health centre is located in Santa Cecilia exacerbated the divisions between the two neighbourhoods, leading to a situation where people from Arauquita were afraid to venture into Santa Cecilia to visit the health centre, leaving Santa Cecilia's population to be the sole beneficiaries of the centre.

Isla Casucá health assistance programme

Dividers/connectors

- The lack of coordination between the two aid organizations present in the same neighbourhood and offering similar services seemed to increase certain dividers already existing between sectors of the population. MSF, for example, charged the population a symbolic amount of money for their health services, which led to a sentiment of inequality of treatment. Other dividers, such as mistrust and difficulties in accessing resources, were exacerbated.
- The training of health promoters in social security issues, and the possibility for all of those trained to access critical information on public social health services, was seen as helping to reduce dividers such as different political interests and economic inequality.
- The programme also encouraged the population to meet in community centres such as schools to discuss problems common to all, such as the desire for education facilities.

Impact

- The health team reported having stopped the service as soon as this was detected.

2.6 Options
General

- All the options identified by the workshop participants related to organizing meetings with teachers, seeking their involvement and commitment to attending the training sessions, training them to work more with children, etc.
- It was agreed, through existing parents' committees, to share information about plans for activities and search ways, with the parents, to encourage their participation not only in the activities that interest them, but also in any special events that could be organized.
- Workshop participants felt that it was critical to carry out a deeper analysis of the potential dividers and connectors existing in schools, and of the impact of the programmes. This information would be helpful to create a better-defined programme coordination unit which would allow for better management of activities.
- During discussions after the workshop, further recommendations were made such as: developing a training/orientation module to carry out in-depth conflict mapping; and using the BPI tool and workshop analysis to set up other interventions in Comuna XX as a prevention mechanism.

Soacha displaced families support programme

- The most important and feasible option identified by the group was to open the programme's psychological and orientation sessions to Soacha's population as a whole, rather than only to beneficiary families. This would potentially help beneficiary families to become better integrated and accepted within the community, and reinforce existing connectors.

Arauquita programme: *Paz, Acción y Convivencia*

- Although the group considered the option of moving the health centre to Arauquita, whose population is in much greater need, they also discussed the necessity of legalizing non-legalized areas. The group finally decided that the most practical option was to maintain the clinic in Santa Cecilia, but to hold meetings with leaders from both communities in order to

appoint, by consensus, two health clinic liaison persons (one from each neighbourhood) who would be in charge of organizing appointments to visit the clinic.

Isla Casucá health assistance programme
- For further interventions, the group considered it necessary for the CRC and other organizations active in the area to coordinate their actions closely.
- The CRC needed to carry out needs assessments of the different sectors of the population and integrate them into its programmes.

3. Conclusion

3.1 Lessons learned

After the two training workshops and the information workshop, participants agreed that the methodology could be of particular use in programmes in various parts of Colombia and made a number of suggestions for following up on the BPI intervention:
- There is a lack of real coordination between different CRC departments which may be running different activities in the same area. Programmes need to be more integrated and to encourage more participation from the community.
- It would be useful to apply the BPI methodology when planning assistance programmes for IDPs, in which the CRC is becoming increasingly involved. A case study on such a programme would be extremely interesting as it has the potential to influence existing conflicts, whether social or armed conflict.
- BPI workshops should be organized in CRC branches which are running programmes in complex neighbourhoods with high levels of criminality and domestic violence (for example, Caldas).
- It is important to train CRC volunteers and staff in BPI and to involve them directly in training others and to include a BPI training module in the training for the CRC's "Education for Development" programme.
- The participants of the information workshop felt that it was important to gather and share more examples and case studies on the application of BPI in Colombia and other Latin American countries, and that other Latin American National Societies be included in the Federation's BPI strategy. They also agreed that the BPI methodology needs to be:
  - adapted to the Colombian reality;
  - introduced into existing CRC training and capacity-building systems; and
  - taught correctly to staff members and volunteers, who would then be able to train others, disseminate the methodology and lead the institutionalization process.

3.2 Follow-up

The initiative was very well received and accepted as an extremely useful tool for programme design in the Colombian context of violence.

However, although the International Federation's support and interest of BPI analysis in Colombia concerned programmes carried out in areas with high levels of social violence, CRC management staff members discussed the possibility of using the tool in other regions of the country where armed groups are present and active.

In March 2002, the CRC participated in a regional mainstreaming strategy training of trainers workshop in Quito, Ecuador, where expatriate and national programming and training department staff from the Red Cross societies of Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Venezuela were trained as BPI trainers. A regional mainstreaming strategy was prepared, based on individual National Society training and mainstreaming plans and will be implemented during 2002-2003.

Kosovo

0 km   50 km

Čačak
Užice
Kraljevo
Zapadna Morava
Kruševak
Ibar
Niš
Pirot
SUVA
Prokuplje
1808 m
PLANINA
2017 m
Leskovac
Novi Pazar
Morava
S A N D Ž A K
Montenegro
Kosovska Mitrovica
2382 m
Priština
Peč
Gnjilane
Vranje
2448 m
K o s o v o
Kumanovo
Prizren
Skopje
Liq i
Fierzgs
Lac de
Shkodgr
Kukgs
Štip
Shkodgr
MACEDONIA
Pellg–i–
Drinit
Prilep
Kep i Rodonit
Kep i Palit
Tirana

1. Introduction

1.1 Why Kosovo?

After three years of low-level conflict between Yugoslav security forces and the Kosovo Liberation Army, a 78-day bombardment by NATO led to the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces and the establishment of a UN interim administration in Kosovo. Up to half the population – as many as 1 million people – was forced to flee during the bombing campaign. Damage, destruction and unhealed severe trauma of a brutal war has left a devastated population to rebuild a new life in a context of deep uncertainty. Within weeks of the end of the conflict as many as 200 humanitarian organizations were implementing post-conflict recovery programmes in Kosovo – among them many participating National Societies (PNS), together with the International Federation and the ICRC.

1.2 BPI objectives and activities

In July 2000, the Better Programming Initiative was introduced to Kosovo. The mission was organized in partnership with the Collaborative for Development Action (CDA), World Vision and the International Federation. The International Federation's BPI representative, Macarena Aguilar, and CDA's *Do No Harm* trainer, Stephen Jackson, jointly facilitated two introductory workshops: one planned and organized by CDA for World Vision staff in Kosovo, and the second organized by the International Federation's Kosovo sub-delegation for International Federation, PNS and local Red Cross programming staff in Kosovo.

The intervention had four main objectives:
- Introduce the BPI concept and methodology for programming assistance in conflict and post-conflict environments.
- Give participants an overview of how the International Federation's BPI is progressing, and how the methodology is being incorporated into this initiative.
- Enable participants to apply the BPI analytical tool and its philosophy to Red Cross Red Crescent post-conflict programming in Kosovo.
- Learn from the participants' experience of programming in Kosovo and document some lessons about how they encountered and dealt with the interaction between aid and conflict in the specific circumstances presented by post-conflict Kosovo.

On 22 July 2000, the International Federation's Kosovo sub-delegation hosted a BPI workshop. Representatives from the International Federation's Kosovo delegation, the ICRC, the American, Austrian, German, Norwegian and Spanish Red Cross Societies, and the Red Cross of Kosova (RCK) attended the workshop.

2. BPI analysis

2.1 Conflict context

The origins of the current conflict in the Balkans can be traced back to the many instances of lost political autonomy for the conflicting groups. Three periods in particular are instructive: Turkish rule from the 14th to 19th centuries; the Austro-Hungarian administration and annexation between 1878 and 1918; and the post-Second World War period under Marshall Tito.

During the 14th century, the Turkish conquest of the Serbian kingdom and the epic battle of Kosovo on 28 June 1389 became a critical point of reference for Serbian national identity. Five centuries of subsequent Ottoman rule resulted in the conversion of large sections of the population to Islam, particularly in Bosnia, while eastern areas of Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia remained Orthodox, and the northern regions of Croatia and Slovenia remained Roman Catholic.[1] Under the Ottoman system, Turkey rewarded Islamized nobles with land and privileges, at the expense of

1. Kurth S., Mincheva L. *Muslims, Croats and Serbs in Bosnia*, Updated 1999; http://www.bsos.umd.edu/cidcm/mar/bosnia.htm

Christian nobles and peasants who were oppressed and sometimes killed. This period represents a long history of lost political autonomy for both Serbs and Croat populations in the region.

Turkish rule lasted until their 1878 defeat at the hands of the Slav alliance made up of Serbia and Montenegro supported by Russia. Demands for autonomy and independence were awakening in Serbia and Croatia. The "Great Powers" of the time feared that the region's ethnic divisions, competing political jurisdictions and nationalist aspirations would lead to increased instability and war. Under the terms of the 1878 Treaty of Berlin between Britain and Austria, the region was placed under the administration of the latter, to prevent the expansion of Russian influence in the Balkans. In 1908, Austro-Hungarian plans for territorial expansion caused a major European crisis which was settled at the expense of Russia and Serbia with the annexing of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria in 1908. Serbian agitation for expansion continued, however, and on 28 June 1914, the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo provoked the Austro-Hungarian invasion of Serbia which led to the outbreak of the First World War.

In 1918, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (which became to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1928) was created under the Serbian Karadjordjevic dynasty. The new state was characterized by more or less permanent tension between the Serb and Croat nations against the backdrop of global instability during the inter-war years. Disagreements over alliances during the Second World War exacerbated ethnic divisions. Croat support for Germany clashed with Serbian opposition to the axis powers and the conduct and outcome of the internal fighting was at the heart of grievances expressed in the vicious and prolonged cycle of violence played out in the region in the 1990s. At the end of Second World War, Josip Broz Tito emerged the undisputed leader of Yugoslavia at the head of the highly popular Partisan movement. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, created in 1945, was made up of six

The support sometimes given to returning refugees to help them to rebuild their homes and their livelihoods risks compounding already existing tensions between returnees and their neighbours who remained during the war.

republics: Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH), Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. Two autonomous provinces were created within Serbia: Vojvodina and Kosovo.

The period between 1945 and 1974 drafted a new chapter in the history of lost political autonomy as Tito cracked down on religious and national groups. For almost 30 years, Muslims struggled for recognition as a constituent nation, until the new Yugoslav constitution established their national status in 1974.

After the Second World War, the Yugoslav republics laboured under what they saw as extractive Serbian fiscal policies imposed by the Yugoslav regime centred in Belgrade. Under Yugoslavia's central system, economic policy for the six republics was decided in Belgrade, and Croatia in particular grew increasingly aware of the disparity between its capacity to earn hard currency through the many internationally popular tourist resorts on its Adriatic coastline, as well as its exports of tobacco and oil. A distinct sense of economic and political discrimination was fostered by Croat politicians in the early 1990s, pushing Croat populations in BH and Croatia to the conclusion that continuing to live in a Belgrade-dominated federation would mean more of the same.

On 25 June 1992, Croatia and Slovenia proclaimed their independence from Yugoslavia. On 27 June fighting broke out between the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) and Slovenian forces as Belgrade made a show of opposing Slovenian independence. On 26 August, war followed in Croatia with Croatian Serbs attacking Croat army defences in the Krajina region, setting the scene for an

intense conflict which saw the razing of Vukovar, mass executions of its Croat population and the siege of Dubrovnik. The longest and most vicious chapter in the conflict, however, took place in BH between 1992 and 1995.

While conflict ripped through Croatia and BH in the mid-1990s, Kosovo pursued a non-violent strategy to restore its lost autonomy. Belgrade's withdrawal of Kosovo's autonomy in 1989 had been met with strikes and mass demonstrations in the province. Repression, coercion and the arrests of Albanian political and business leaders followed. Albanian culture was driven underground and parallel, informal systems were set up for social and political relationships for the Albanian population, including education in Albanian. This situation prevailed until 1996.

Following the 1995 Dayton Agreement and the settlement of the BH conflict without any reference to the fate of Kosovo's Albanian population, growing frustration took hold. In 1996, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) emerged, declaring its intention to fight for an independent Kosovo. Belgrade intensified its repression against the Albanian population, which led, in 1998, to large-scale internal displacement of Albanians and a refugee crisis against a background of human rights violations. International pressure grew and both the Yugoslav government and the KLA were forced to attend peace talks in Rambouillet, France. The threat of NATO strikes was carried out after Yugoslavia apparently refused to sign the resulting plan which would have allowed for a referendum on independence in Kosovo after a three-year interim period, the deployment of NATO forces in Kosovo and the unrestricted movement of NATO throughout Yugoslavia.

The bombing began on 24 March 1999 and lasted for 78 days, during which Serbian forces expelled up to 1 million ethnic Albanians, mainly into neighbouring Albania and Macedonia. As many as 200,000 Serbs fled Kosovo for Serbia, and perhaps 5,000 civilians were killed. The bombing ended in June after Yugoslavia accepted a G8 peace plan. Kosovo is currently governed by a UN Interim Administration Council and a Kosovo Transition Council. In local elections in October 2000, the Democratic League of Kosovo, headed by Ibrahim Rugova, won 58 per cent of the vote, ahead of parties associated with the former KLA, for whom 35 per cent of the population voted.

2.2   The relationship between aid and conflict

Yugoslavia in general and Kosovo in particular are heavily dependent on development and humanitarian aid to deal with the enormous needs arising from almost a decade of conflict, sanctions, international isolation and population displacement. Yugoslavia's economy had already disintegrated in the 1990s but much infrastructure was destroyed or damaged by the 1999 NATO bombing campaign. In Kosovo, the JNA campaign between 1996 and 1999, and the subsequent NATO-Yugoslavia war, left up to 100,000 homes and other buildings damaged or destroyed. A donor's conference in June 2001, organized by the European Union and the World Bank, launched an Economic Recovery and Transition Programme for Serbia and Montenegro, pledging over US$ 3.9 billion for the period from 2001 to 2004.

Population displacement has also resulted in significant and ongoing requirements for humanitarian aid. Serbia and Montenegro had already absorbed huge numbers of refugees during the wars in Croatia and BH. In January 2001, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) calculated that there were almost half a million refugees in Yugoslavia, with 472,000 of them in Serbia alone. During the Kosovo crisis, almost 193,000 Kosovo Serbs and Romas sought refuge in Serbia. An additional 30,000 have been registered in Montenegro. The World Food Programme (WFP) plans to continue its monthly food parcel distribution to refugees and other needy groups until at least December 2002.

In the last ten years, a massive amount of humanitarian aid has flowed into Yugoslavia. While the vast majority of this aid was an invaluable component of an enormous national and international

strategy to save lives and alleviate suffering, there have been several recent revelations about the diversion of food aid for economic and military purposes during this period.

The huge increase in humanitarian assistance to Kosovo in the immediate aftermath of the 1999 crisis increased concern among aid organizations as to the final destination of the significant amounts of money they were spending. In-kind assistance, such as food, non-food relief and medical services, is relatively easy to monitor. During the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, programming that supports local economic recovery through, for example, local purchase, needs to be informed by the end destination of their investment. The presence of hundreds of aid organizations, thousands of expatriate staff and tens of thousands of local staff, as well as thousands of vehicles, has had a significant multiplier effect on the post-war economy of a country. Spending associated with staff salaries, office and residence rental, subsistence and local purchase was a key concern for some participating National Societies (PNS) in Kosovo.

Experience in post-war recovery programming and a deeper knowledge of the ways in which aid can bolster structural vulnerability and inequality led to a more careful approach by some PNS. They questioned the potential impacts, both negative and positive, of their assistance during the transition period, during which representative forms of governance, accountable political systems and judiciaries were being rebuilt and until controls could be introduced to regulate the informal sector.

In 2000, this experience led to request for the introduction of the BPI as an International Federation tool to analyse the impact of aid programmes in situations of conflict and social violence.

2.3   Dividers and connectors
Dividers
Ethnicity and historical identity
The former Yugoslavia is a melting pot of different ethnic groups whose identity has been carved out of centuries of conflict, giving the notion of a chosen people, destined to suffer in defence of their unique identity and struggle for self-determination.

- Serbs were among a number of Slav groups that settled in the Balkan peninsula in the sixth and seventh centuries, adopting Orthodox Christianity and establishing their own patriarchate, with its seat in the Kosovan town of Pec. In the 11th century, the area was divided into the eastern and western Roman empires of Diocletian and Theodosius. This created a distinct division between the Roman Catholic western half, and the Eastern Orthodox eastern half.

- Croats meanwhile formed a more Western-centric identity based on geographical proximity to Vienna and Rome, combined with their Roman Catholic religion. Their links with Germany since the ninth century invasion by the Franks were reinforced during the period of rule by the Austro-Hungarian empire between 1878 and 1918, and subsequent close ties with Germany between 1918 and 1945. A long-established pattern of emigration to Germany and Austria helped reinforce these links and the separate Croat identity.

- From 1699 on, the Hapsburgs, rulers of the Austro-Hungarian empire, gained control over southern Croatia, northern Bosnia, Vojvodina and areas in northern Serbia. These lands were settled by Croat peasants, Serb refugees from Turkish-controlled Serbia and Germans. The reputation of these Serb settlers, particularly along the western Croatian belt known as the Krajina, as the defenders of the west against the invading Ottoman forces, was to leave a strong impression on Serb consciousness. This identity was symbolized by the Serbian flag, which proclaims the Serb belief that "only Serbs can save Serbs", highlighting the notion of a people with a special historical role and identity

Ethnicity and, subsequently, historical identity are, therefore, major dividers emphasizing, amplifying and perpetuating the distinctions between the different groups. In 1991, the population of today's Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) was mainly Slav, with 17 per cent ethnic Albanians (non-Slavs,

mainly resident in Kosovo where today they constitute 95 per cent of the population), and 3 per cent ethnic Hungarians (non-Slavs, mainly resident in the northern province of Vojvodina).

Self-determination

Balkan history has charted a cruel cycle of repression since its conquest by the Roman empire in the first century. Conquered in turn by Ukrainian Slavs, German Franks, Hungarians, Turks and Austrians, self-determination was an elusive concept.

- For Serbs, Ottoman rule was an age of occupation, dominated by an Islamized nobility as a peasant-nation. Five centuries of struggle against the Ottoman empire created a strong self-identity among the Serb population as the defenders of Western civilization. It helped establish today's Serb nationalist self-identity as the long-suffering victims, surrounded by enemies: a chosen people, claiming an ancestral land.

- This sense of repression was to be exacerbated by the Austro-Hungarian domination between 1878 and 1918. It was reinforced during the Second World War anti-Serb campaign of massacres, expulsions and forced conversions to Catholicism.[2] Religious and ethnic divisions were deepened by the drafting of Muslim units into the SS which were actively associated with anti-Serb repression.

- During Tito's reign, repression against all republics and peoples in turn was continuous and systematic.

- Serbs in Kosovo complained of repression by the Albanian majority in the years following Tito's death. This created the platform from which Slobodan Milosevic launched his populist campaign for Serbian nationalism in the late 1980s.

- For Kosovo's Albanian population, 1989 marked the beginning of a period of repression with the withdrawal of the province's special status as a federal unit within Yugoslavia and the subsequent re-establishment of control by Belgrade through a series of coercive measures that imprisoned Albanian business and political leaders and drove Albanian culture underground.

- Self-determination is one of the major dividers between the Albanian and Serb communities in Kosovo, with each denying the other's claim to rule the province.

Religion

During the 500 years following the Turkish conquest in the 14th century, many Turkish communities were established and existing communities were Islamized. This period cultivated a distinct Islamic culture among Muslim communities in what was to become Yugoslavia. However, it should be noted that by the time of Tito's death, Islam had lost much of its significance in the secular political culture. Nevertheless, regardless of their religious intransigence, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism following the Iranian revolution in 1979 was to mark Yugoslavia's Muslims for a horrible fate in the early 1990s. Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular stood out as the only Muslim nation in Western Europe.

"Remainees" and returnees

Early in the NATO bombing campaign in spring 1999, Kosovo suffered massive displacement in which 50 per cent of the population, or almost 1 million people, were forced to leave the country and seek refuge, mainly in neighbouring Albania and Macedonia. Most of them lived in very difficult conditions for periods of up to three months. A small section were given temporary settlement packages in European countries. Remainees often perceive returning refugees as having run away from the danger and suffering of the conflict to be hosted by international organizations in relatively good conditions. In some cases, returnees have been seen as aggressors and perpetrators of genocide. Support to return and reintegration often risks compounding already existing tensions between traumatized returnees and the war-affected community. Within the ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo, one obvious divider was that between those who remained in Kosovo during the fighting and those who left the province during the war (often referred to as "those who ran away" by Kosovans who stayed).

2. op.cit.

Connectors
Common experience of suffering

Connectors between the Albanian and Serb populations were difficult to establish, particularly in the immediate aftermath of such a brutal and prolonged conflict. This was compounded by the flight of most Serbs from Kosovo during the NATO bombing campaign and immediately after when the Albanian population returned. The Serb population of Kosovo fell from an estimated 10-15 per cent prior to March 1999 to less than 5 per cent a year later. Moreover, with frequent reprisal attacks on Serbs during the period in which the BPI intervention took place and the concentration of Serb communities in the northern Kosovo area around Mitrovica, there was almost no interaction between the two ethnic groups. Nevertheless one main connector that exists between the Kosovo Albanian and Serb populations is their common experience of suffering during the war. It is not known how many people were killed but over 3,000 bodies had been exhumed by September 2000. At least 900,000 people were displaced during the conflict and NATO air strikes reportedly killed 500 civilians during the bombing campaign.

2.4   National Society programming

The BPI workshop was used to examine and discuss some of the recent experiences of staff from the International Federation's sub-delegation, PNS and the ICRC in Kosovo. The objective was to look at these programming experiences in the light of the observations from countries where the BPI had been piloted and lessons learned by the Local Capacities for Peace Project during its pilot phase. A number of specific aid programmes were discussed.

Institutional development programmes

At the time of the BPI intervention, two Red Cross associations were active in Kosovo: the Red Cross of Kosova (RCK) which provided assistance to the Albanian population; and the Metohija/Kosmet Red Cross (KMRC) which was linked to the Yugoslav Red Cross Society and represented the remaining Serb population. The post-war needs were acute amongst the two communities and both organizations sought to maximize the aid they could raise and distribute to their respective constituencies. Given the deep divisions and very recent violent confrontations between elements within the ethnic Albanian and Serb populations and the brutal losses suffered on both sides during the conflict, there was still very little prospect for either joint programme planning and implementation, or discussion about institutional development that could bring together Red Cross members and staff from both sides and constitute a single Red Cross organization. Institutional support was therefore provided to both organizations separately.

The Giljian soup kitchen project

Participants in the workshop discussed the range of difficulties that could arise in the planning, staffing and implementation of a simple soup kitchen project. While the basic needs of vulnerable, elderly groups within both Albanian and Serb communities were recognized by everyone, it was noted that the intense tension that existed in the immediate aftermath of such brutal violence could easily be aggravated at a variety of levels:

- residual conflict between Serb and Albanian populations exacerbated by the insecure location of the distribution;
- intra-community competition between families over staffing and voluntary opportunities within international aid organizations; and
- tensions raised by the perceived lack of autonomy of local staff from international programme managers.

Participants gave as an example the experience of an ICRC soup kitchen in Giljian that was set up to serve both Kosovo Albanian and Serb populations. For security reasons, however, the Serbs stopped using the soup kitchen, leaving only the Albanian population to benefit from it. Workshop participants also discussed the problems that arose when staff employed at the soup kitchen were

supposed to be chosen as volunteers, while in fact many were family members of employees. The working group also highlighted how tensions could be raised by a simple relief programme when the local Red Cross staff had the impression that they were not being treated as co-workers but as subordinates by the expatriate staff.

Winterization support to returnees

A number of Kosovans who had sought refuge in a European country returned to the province after the war. Many of these refugees had been in contact with the host National Society when they were asylum seekers and as a result were selected for resettlement assistance. Those among them who were deemed vulnerable were able to benefit from a programme organized by their host Red Cross society, which aimed at preparing their houses to withstand the harsh winters or reconstructing them.

Psychological support programme

All wars – particularly civil wars – create, reopen or deepen cleavages between social and ethnic groups. In Kosovo, normal social interaction has been replaced by distrust, demonization and apprehension. The ability of individuals to contribute to rehabilitation and recovery planning is severely impaired. Returning refugees and internally displaced people find themselves in a hostile and unwelcoming environment, with major obstacles to reintegration. In 1999, the International Federation, supported by the American Red Cross, began implementing a psychological support programme to promote psychological rehabilitation and build prospects for reconciliation. Psychosocial activities were established in five regions of Kosovo, to assist the Kosovo Albanian community. Thirty local staff were employed in this programme, all of them Kosovo Albanians. Their interventions were intended to work specifically on the residual anger, resentment and desire for revenge that are present in the population.

2.5 Impact of National Society programming on dividers and connectors

Institutional development programmes

It was observed that institutional development programming in the post-conflict context raised a number of serious issues for groups who saw the local Red Cross institutions as representing their specific community.

Ethnicity and impartiality

The fact that the two local Red Cross organizations represented the opposing sides in the conflict reinforced the ethnic divider between communities whenever the organizations were used to channel aid to only one side and not both. Both organizations sought to build their relationships with international partners as this clearly legitimized their role as the Red Cross of Kosovo. This sense of division was further reinforced by the fact that the bulk of international Red Cross Red Crescent aid activity was focused in predominantly Albanian areas. This made sense given that 95 per cent of the remaining population in Kosovo was of ethnic Albanian origin. However, the remaining Serb population interpreted the concentration of international aid presence and activity in ethnic Albanian areas as proof of the international community's bias towards the *other* side.

Self-determination and legitimization

Questions concerning the recognition of National Societies and of support given to them often send messages about who/which population gets to "own and control" a territory. Also, the fact that there are two organizations which do not cooperate sends out wider messages of non-cooperation between the populations. Focusing aid on one section of the population – or being perceived to do so – may give an incorrect picture of bias or political support from the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Language and neutrality

Dissemination programming, promotion of the Fundamental Principles and IHL, as well as health education or mine-awareness programming all used printed publications and, in some cases, audio and visual material to deliver their educational messages. The language used for publications clearly sends out messages related to the conflict divisions. In the case of Kosovo, where the issue of self-determination was a major source of division and dispute, the exclusive use of the Serb or Albanian language could be interpreted as taking sides in this particular political dispute and could be perceived as legitimizing the control of one group or another.

The Giljian soup kitchen project

The soup kitchen project, albeit a simple relief intervention, showed clearly the potential negative impact that any aid programme can have on tensions and residual conflict both within and between communities.

Ethnicity and impartiality

This particular programme faced a number of divisions: between Kosovo Serb and Albanian populations; between both of those populations and the ICRC; and between the ICRC and the RCK. Divisions between the two populations increased after the Serb population had to stop using the soup kitchen. They perceived the project as partial towards the Albanian community, especially as not all Serbs understood why they could no longer benefit from the service. Both Kosovo Serb and Albanian populations began to resent the ICRC because of what they perceived as favouritism in employing the family members of staff to work in the kitchen. Finally, tensions within the local Red Cross increased because of the way that local counterparts felt they were being treated.

Winterization support to returnees

The returnee support programme which was intended to facilitate the resettlement of returning refugees actually undermined their prospects for integration into their home communities by exacerbating the division between returnees and those who remained. The exclusive nature of the targeting process increased the sense of resentment already present in the population between those thought to have "run away" to other countries and those who "stayed and fought". Not only had the returnees escaped to what the "remainee" populations considered to be relatively luxurious and safe living conditions during the conflict, now they were also going to receive preferential treatment with resettlement while those who had stayed received little or no resettlement support.

Psychological support programme

The impact of the psychological support programme (PSP) on dividers and connectors was both positive and negative. With regard to the main connector between the conflicting communities – their common experience of suffering as a result of the conflict – the impact of the PSP was very positive. The programme reinforced the common sense of suffering and worked to heal the severe trauma that the entire population – regardless of ethnicity, religion or language – had experienced. By working on these psychosocial issues, the programme helped to reduce tensions and increase connectors, although it is difficult to quantify how large the impact has been.

However, at the time of the BPI intervention, engaging staff from different ethnic groups in the project was still not a feasible option. The potential negative impact of working with a team that is of a single ethnic origin risks undermining the very nature of the programme by sending messages of partiality and non-cooperation.

2.6   Options
Institutional development programmes

Several options were identified to address the potential legitimization and impartiality problems that could arise as a result of institutional development programming. One was to study examples of the

very different ways in which a National Society is organized in countries that have federal structures or political structures with autonomous or semi-autonomous units (such as Belgium, Canada, Spain, etc.). It was agreed that such examples might provide lessons for compromise solutions to guide interim support for institutional development of local Red Cross organizations in Kosovo.

The second option was to organize a one-day workshop using the BPI methodology to focus specifically on the question of KMRC/RCK cooperation, which could provide some ways forward. Open discussions about the potential impact on communities of separate programming activities and the complete absence of any consultation or cooperation between the different local organizations and the messages this was sending about reconciliation and humanity could – given time and perseverance – yield positive results. Options for how to go about diversifying beneficiary populations in programming could also be considered.

Finally, the relative merits of publishing documents in Serb and Albanian, or in English (as a common language), would be assessed and a consensus-based approach to the problem identified in discussions with the different communities.

Giljian soup kitchen project

Workshop participants who had been involved in the Giljian soup kitchen programme reported that it had been a rich, but difficult, learning experience. In order to reduce tensions, it had been necessary to recognize that, during the immediate post-conflict period when security still had not been completely re-established, the Serbs could not use the same soup kitchen as the Albanians. The project team had therefore identified a provisional solution whereby food assistance would be provided to the Serb population through an intermediary; in this case, the food was distributed through Serbian churches. The team recognized, however, that this separation again reinforced ethnic and other dividers between the communities and that longer-term solutions, which did not reinforce such dividers, would still need to be found. Workshop participants also noted that work still needed to be done to overcome the divisive issues of staffing selection and treatment.

Winterization support to returnees

The host Red Cross Society quickly realized that its actions were having a negative impact. Participants from the working group who had been involved in the project were able to report their experience of analysing the situation, and providing the implementing National Society with their observations as to the ways in which the programme was exacerbating divisions between the returnees and the "remainee" communities. The society revised the programme, and began to target beneficiaries in a more inclusive way to assist both those who had left and those who had stayed during the conflict.

Psychological support programme

One suggestion discussed during the workshop to resolve the potential negative effect of using only staff from one ethnic group was to try to involve existing community resources more directly in psychosocial work. For example, by finding a way to use the competence of the Serb population, without necessarily formally employing them as Red Cross staff. It was felt that in the future, when the severe trauma of war and suffering had been given some time to heal and the security conditions had improved, it would be possible to move slowly towards mixed teams, and thus reinforce messages of cooperation. Workshop participants noted that it could be dangerous to rely too much on notions of a recent shared history of "living together peacefully", since arguments over history have been a large part of what has driven the conflict.

3.   Conclusion

3.1   Lessons learned

The experience of the staff of the local Red Cross organizations, as well as those of the International Federation, PNS and the ICRC clearly underline the need for comprehensive context analysis and a thorough knowledge of the dividers and connectors in the area and at the level of the aid intervention. BPI analysis helped to identify a number of key learning points from the post-conflict programming situation in Kosovo which may be useful in other post-conflict recovery situations.

After analysing the problems faced by a number of Red Cross programmes, the participants discussed the situation in Kosovo more generally. They noted that, in trying to apply the BPI methodology, a certain amount of caution is necessary in the present context in Kosovo. Attention should be paid in particular to the following points:

■ History is continuously and vehemently debated in Kosovo; therefore, appeals to common history may appear provocative rather than peaceful.
■ It is important that people working in Kosovo be careful not to impose values from outside.
■ A difficult question that needs to be answered is to what extent should the Kosovo Albanian and Serb populations be encouraged to work alongside each other, so soon after such a bitter conflict?
■ The Movement, however, upholds universal values derived from international humanitarian law and principles, and these need to be imposed if they are not being adhered to. These values and principles have strong relevance for the question of Red Cross structure in post-conflict Kosovo.

Discussion of the different cases analysed led to a specific consideration of the problem of the two existing Red Cross organizations within Kosovo and the associated issues of structure and cooperation:

■ As far as the questions of status and recognition are concerned, very specific constraints exist under the Geneva Conventions as to what is possible and permissible.
■ Participants also considered whether other countries, such as Belgium, Canada and Spain, could provide examples of structural arrangements which would permit a compromise between KMRC and RCK. The precedent does exist for different Red Cross branches to operate under the umbrella of one headquarters, in countries where there are recognizably distinct population groups who desire to work separately to a certain degree.
■ However, it was also suggested that it might be more constructive to defer questions of structure for now, concentrating instead on trying to build cooperation and trust through jointly initiated actions in the humanitarian and development spheres. The group discussed further the use of the BPI methodology to clarify the advantages and disadvantages of such joint actions, but recognized that much would depend on exactly how they were managed:
  ● The continued existence of two separate Red Cross organizations in Kosovo – one for each of the communities – sends out messages of non-cooperation which tend to reinforce the larger divisions between the groups.
  ● However, if the two associations were, nonetheless, seen to be collaborating actively on interventions of joint benefit to both communities, it would send out very different messages of collaboration and rapprochement. The experience of working together on projects would also lay the groundwork for an eventual unification of the two associations on mutually acceptable terms.
  ● All participants recognized that there must eventually be a single, ethnically-mixed Red Cross association which represents within its ranks all the different groups in the area. It would be a great advantage to begin now with small areas of cooperative activity, even if the time for full integration is not yet ripe. One suggestion was to find areas of cooperation in Mitrovica, symbolically the most divided city in Kosovo and

thus of tremendous importance for the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement as a symbol of inter-association cooperation.

● The discussion closed with the vitally important general agreement that people within the Movement are now willing to try for cooperation: the question is not if such cooperation is desirable or feasible but rather how it can be achieved. It was in the light of this agreement that the option of another one-day workshop was suggested, preferably with representatives from both the KMRC and the RCK present as well as PNS, the International Federation and the ICRC. Using the BPI approach, and with the help of a facilitator from the BPI project, the workshop would specifically discuss the question of how to move forward with ideas for operational cooperation as a prelude to eventual unity of the two Red Cross associations themselves.
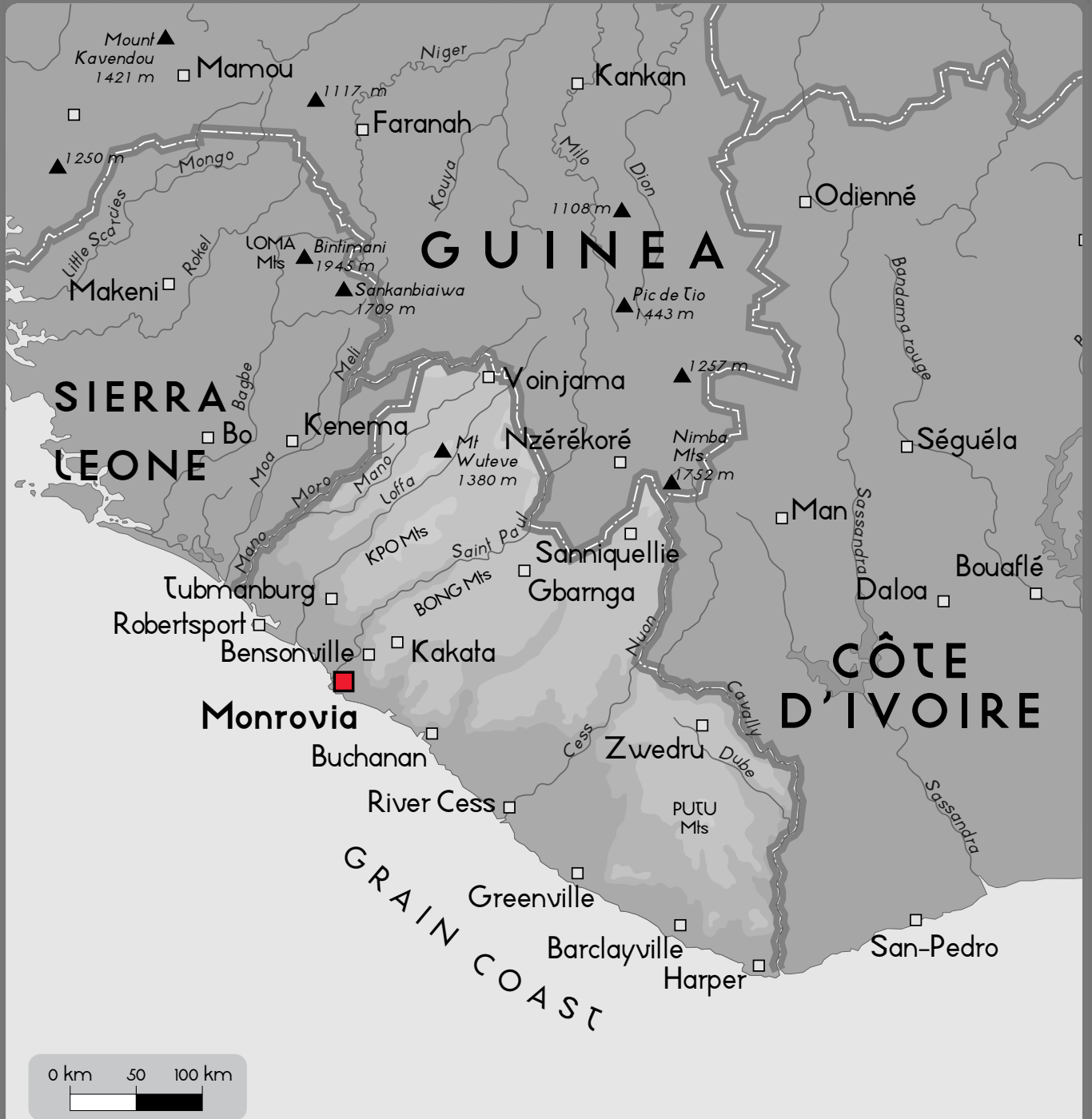
3.2   Follow-up

The workshop participants discussed the following recommendations and options as ways of how the Movement could best pursue post-conflict programming in Kosovo:

■ Although all workshop participants recognized that a single Red Cross organization representing all the different ethnic groups in Kosovo is the desired end-goal, they realized that at present the question of its eventual structure should be deferred in favour of finding small but symbolic areas for operational cooperation and collaboration between the Red Cross of Kosova and Metohija/Kosmet Red Cross.

■ Having recognized that the question at the moment is not if inter-organization cooperation is desirable or feasible, but rather how such cooperation can be achieved in the short term, the workshop recommended holding a second one-day workshop specifically devoted to the topic of inter-organization cooperation. This workshop should use the BPI methodology and, in order to achieve its goals, should bring together representatives of both the RCK and the KMRC.

■ The workshop also recommended that the BPI planning tool should be applied to ongoing Red Cross programming in post-conflict Kosovo. Workshops to introduce the approach should be organized to familiarize all staff with it, followed by practical exercises with a core planning group of employees drawn from the operational Red Cross organizations in Kosovo.

■ Kosovo-based personnel of the Movement should be kept informed of the possibilities to be trained in the BPI methodology. Not only do some International Federation staff members – working in the field or at the secretariat in Geneva – have considerable expertise in BPI, but the organization also regularly arranges training and training of trainers in this approach.

■ To have a better idea of local counterparts' views and reactions to the BPI approach, the International Federation should try to discuss it further with them. It may be useful to commission translations of the BPI brochure into several of the local languages.

■ The workshop closed on an optimistic note, with participants indicating enthusiasm for the BPI and for increased use of the methodology for programming in Kosovo. All agreed to remain in contact in order to foster such work further.

Liberia

Mount Kavendou 1421 m

Mamou

▲1117 m

Niger

Kankan

▲1250 m

Mongo

Little Scarcies

Rokel

Faranah

Kouya

Milo

Dion

Odienné

1108 m ▲

GUINEA

Bandama rouge

Makeni

LOMA Mts

Bintimani 1945 m

Sankanbiaiwa 1709 m

Meli

Pic de Tio 1443 m

SIERRA

Bagbe

Voinjama

▲1257 m

Séguéla

Bo

Kenema

Moa

Moro

Mano

Loffa

Mt Wuteve 1380 m

Nzérékoré

Nimba Mts 1752 m

Man

Bouaflé

LEONE

Mano

Saint Paul

Sanniquellie

Daloa

KPO Mts

BONG Mts

Gbarnga

Tubmanburg

Nuon

CÔTE

Robertsport

Bensonville

Kakata

D'IVOIRE

Monrovia

Buchanan

Cess

Zwedru

Dube

Cavally

Sassandra

River Cess

PUTU Mts

GRAIN COAST

Greenville

Barclayville

San-Pedro

Harper

0 km   50   100 km

1. Introduction

1.1 Why Liberia?

Liberians are trying desperately to recover from a conflict in which as many as 200,000 people – 8 per cent of the population – died,[1] and more than half of the country's inhabitants were uprooted and displaced. Between 1989 and 1996 the country was torn apart as elite groups, allied with local fighters and national and international businessmen, carved out fiefdoms to extract and trade in gold, diamonds, timber, iron ore and rubber. The country has one of the lowest gross national product (GNP) per capita (US$ 103), with slightly more than 80 per cent of the population earning less than one dollar a day.

The relation between aid and conflict in Liberia has long been complex. Humanitarian aid agencies have been targeted systematically by most if not all parties to the conflict in Liberia and looting and diversion of aid resources continues to this day. By some estimates, relief supplies and equipment worth over US$ 400 million were looted during the conflict – a large part of which served to fund weapons, patronage and supplies for the various military factions.

A number of different protocols and policies have been developed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the country in an effort to minimize the exploitation of aid by warring parties, including the Principles and Protocols of Operation in Liberia (1995) and the Joint Policy of Operations (1996). The Local Capacities for Peace Project[2] has worked extensively with NGOs in Liberia to help analyse how aid is fuelling conflict there and to identify alternative options for supporting vulnerable groups.

1.2 BPI objectives and activities

After discussions with the International Federation's Liberia country delegation and with the Liberian Red Cross Society (LRCS), Liberia was chosen to be the first West African country to take part in the Better Programming Initiative (BPI). It was felt that an introduction to the BPI application was particularly appropriate given the widespread manipulation of aid by warring parties in Liberia. By providing LRCS with a tool to help analyse the potential impact of aid on conflict, the initiative would help to build the society's capacity to support long-term recovery and reconciliation.

The main objectives of the mission were:
- to explain the BPI's concept and methodology to both the LRCS and the delegation;
- to understand how aid programming in Liberia interacts with the dynamics of conflict in LRCS-assisted communities; and
- to enable the LRCS to incorporate post-conflict reconciliation and inter-group relation-building aspects into their programmes.

A two-day workshop to introduce the BPI concept and methodology to LRCS and delegation staff was held in Monrovia as part of the International Federation's mission to Liberia, which took place from 26 June to 8 July 2000. Representatives from the LRCS, the ICRC and the International Federation's Geneva secretariat and its Liberia delegation attended the workshop, which was facilitated by Luc Zandvliet of the Collaborative for Development Action (CDA).

The workshop participants discussed:
- how implementing the BPI methodology would enable the LRCS to incorporate aspects of post-conflict reconciliation and inter-group relations into their programmes;
- the re-evaluation and reorganization of the LRCS structure which was taking place during the BPI mission;
- the connectors and dividers that exist in Liberian society; and
- programming issues observed during the field visit to the Bong and Nimba chapters.

1. Reno, W. *Warlord Politics and African States*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Riener, 1998.

2. Anderson, M.B. *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace – Or War*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Riener, 1999.

The BPI team visited the Bong and Nimba county chapters with the LRCS's acting assistant secretary general who explained the BPI concept to the chapters' staff and led the analysis of several LRCS programmes being supported by the branches.
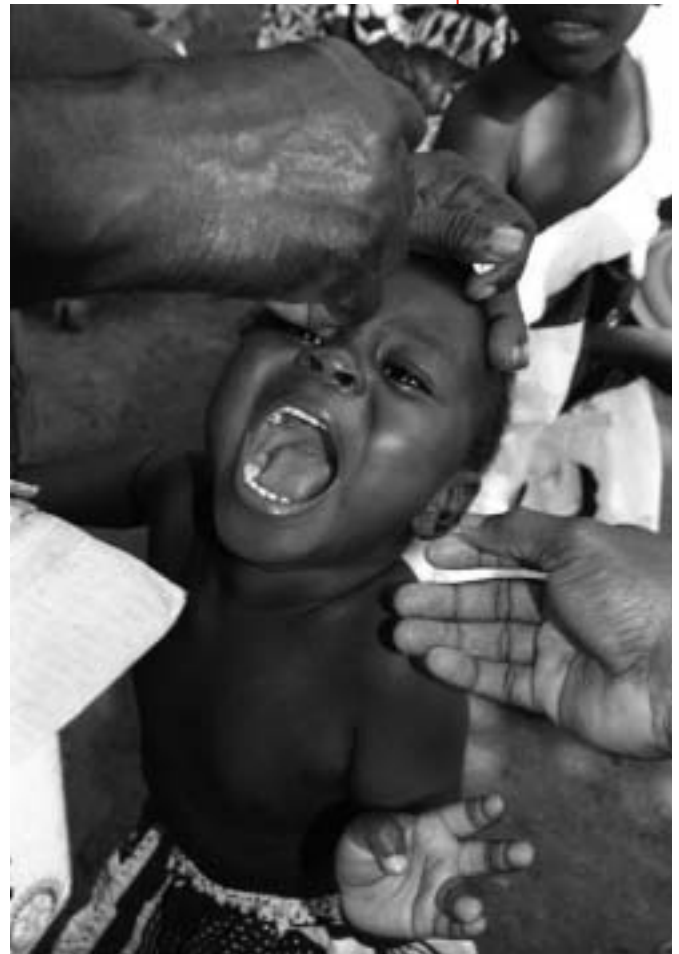
2.   BPI analysis

2.1   Conflict context

The conflict in Liberia has been described as "a war without purpose in a country without identity"[3] – nothing could be further from the truth. The war has followed a very logical pattern since former government administrator Charles Taylor, with the support of Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Libya, led a small force of 150 troops across the border from Côte d'Ivoire into the north-east of the country in December 1989. Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) and other warring parties – both rivals and allies – have pursued well-planned strategies to control trade in gold, diamonds, timber and rubber, generating huge amounts of money that have funded their war efforts.

Liberia was never formally colonized but, since its founding in 1847, it has been plagued by strong class and social differences mainly between the American-Liberians (Kongos), former American slaves who returned to their "homeland" and initially settled in Monrovia, and the "local" people in the hinterlands who constitute over 95 per cent of the population.

On 2 April 1980, President William Tolbert, who had been in power since 1971, was overthrown in an armed coup led by Liberian army sergeant Samuel Doe. Tolbert had headed

Even a campaign to vaccinate children against polio may aggravate tensions between communities if measures are not taken to ensure that everyone benefits.

an aristocracy dominated by the descendants of around 300 American-Liberians who had settled in Liberia in the 19th century. His unpopularity had increased steadily though the late 1970s following a series of crisis measures to reverse economic decline. The removal of price subsidies on rice as a condition of multilateral credit, land reform (which translated into land grabs by elite families and resulted in eviction), forced labour on plantations and massive urban migration, all took place against a background of highly visible corruption setting the scene for Doe's bloody coup.

Doe's stated aim was to ensure that the "local" people became more involved in Liberia's political and economic life. However, he was unable to assert any real influence over a privileged elite who controlled large portions of the country to the extent that they managed local production and overseas marketing though private fiefdoms. They also served as key state officials and controlled regional trade networks, making it impossible for Doe to control economies and politics in the countryside. Corruption, failure to meet payments on foreign loans and arrears on military loans from the United States, the decline in demand for the country's few primary export products, coupled with tribalism and nepotism, led to increased political instability.

Social and economic decline deteriorated even more during the 1989-1996 civil war, in which Charles Taylor sought to overturn the Doe regime. Of Liberia's 2.5 million people, some 200,000 were killed, 700,000 fled to Guinea and Sierra Leone and 1 million were estimated to have been displaced within the country.

3. Goldberg, J. 'A War Without Purpose in a Country Without Identity', in *New York Times Magazine*, 22 January 1995.

The fighting pitted Doe's Krahn-dominated army, supported by Krahn and Mandingo militias and openly allied with ECOMOG (the Economic Community of West African States of the Military Observer Group), against Taylor's NPFL, dominated by Mano and Gio tribes from Nimba county.

Taylor swept through the country gaining popular support and reached Monrovia within six months. Both Taylor's NPFL and Doe's army, the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) were responsible for widespread atrocities against the opposing side's ethnic groups.

In 1996 the NPFL was joined by the mainly Mandingo militia, ULIMO-K, which was previously allied with the Krahn-based ULIMO-J.

Encouraged by the United States, Nigeria led the world's first regional military intervention known as ECOMOG in Monrovia in August 1990, deploying peacekeeping troops from Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Gambia. The neutrality of ECOMOG was in doubt from the outset.

Guinea, Nigeria and Sierra Leone and were all closely allied with Samuel Doe. Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire, along with Libya, openly supported Taylor.

The ceasefire lasted until Taylor – who was in control of all of Liberia except the capital – mounted a new attack on Monrovia in October 1992. Fighting increased through 1993, and continued sporadically through 1994 and 1995, particularly in the diamond-rich west of the country and in the south-east where gold and timber resources are concentrated.

Since the signature in August 1996 of the Abuja II Accord, the security situation has slowly improved, and some 300,000 Liberians have been either voluntarily repatriated or internally resettled, with the help of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Charles Taylor became the democratic head of state after elections in 1997. The security situation has remained unstable, however, and in June 2000, when the BPI mission took place, there was sporadic fighting in Voinjama.

2.2 The relationship between aid and conflict

Liberia has been referred to as a modern war economy:

> "In the context of Liberia and other modern conflicts the term is increasingly used to refer to the exploitative reliance of warring factions on the economic production of territories they control. In the absence of Superpower funding, modern rebel groups are compelled to seek economic support directly from the populations they control, usually by coercive or military means. In Liberia this political economy operates at macro and micro levels. Faction leaders, their associates and politicians, are reliant on their control over valuable resources to fund arms purchases and patronage. Fighters at the local level exploit civilian production to provide their food and other needs."[4]

4. Atkinson, P. *The War Economy in Liberia: a political analysis.* Relief and Rehabilitation Network paper 22. London: Overseas Development Institute, May 1997.

5. *The Independent,* 2 September 1993, quoted in Atkinson, P. ibid.

In such an economy the value of food and other relief aid increases significantly. From the start of the civil war in Liberia, the theft, diversion and looting of humanitarian supplies and equipment has been an integral part of the strategy of most, if not all factions. A multiplication of armed groups operating at micro level exploiting civilian production to provide food and other essentials has systematically targeted aid distributions, agency offices, equipment, vehicles, warehouses and personnel.

In 1993, supported by the office of the United Nations (UN) Special Representative, ECOMOG extended a military embargo on the country to include humanitarian aid, leading ICRC to issue a press statement accusing the UN of "a grave violation of international humanitarian law".[5]

The humanitarian community in Liberia realized that aid supplies were helping to fuel the war. In fact many aid workers felt that their activities were being deliberately manipulated by various factions in order to maximize the possibilities for the diversion of aid resources.

In 1995 a group of NGOs established the Principles and Protocols of Operation in Liberia (PPOL) to minimize the possibilities for aid to feed into the conflict. PPOL is a code based on the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief. However, abuses by the warring parties actually increased culminating in massive looting in Monrovia in April and May 1996 when up to US$ 20 million of equipment was stolen from UN agencies and NGOs.

In 1996 international NGOs developed the Joint Policy of Operations restricting humanitarian activities to lifesaving operations to minimize prospects for exploitation of aid. Mary Anderson's Collaborative for Development Action (CDA) group was also invited to share lessons from the Local Capacities for Peace Project. Looting did not end with the war. In May 1999, fighting broke out in Lofa county (in northern Liberia) between rival government military units. The fighting was followed by looting: both the civilian population and the aid community's offices and stores were plundered. Trucks and cars were stolen, as was over 1,000 tonnes of food that had been stocked in the town of Voinjama in preparation for the rainy season when the area is almost inaccessible.

In mid-June 2000, the European Union (EU) suspended development aid, worth some US$ 50 million, to Liberia. This was in reaction to claims by the United Kingdom and the Sierra Leone government that President Charles Taylor was fuelling the conflict in Sierra Leone by providing arms to Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels in exchange for diamonds. President Taylor reacted by suspending aid activities in Lofa county on the border with Sierra Leone. Most of the humanitarian organizations providing aid to Sierra Leone refugees in the area were supported by the EU.[6]

2.3   Dividers and connectors

During the workshop in Monrovia, participants studied the current connectors and dividers that exist in Liberian society in general and, in particular, in some counties with which participants were most familiar (Maryland, Nimba, Bong and Bomi).

Dividers

Competition for resources

Competition for natural resources is the main divider between groups in Liberia and the source of perpetuation of the conflict. Land reform under Tolbert and William Tubman (president from 1943 to 1971) converted communal lands to private holdings to boost agricultural exports and generate new sources of government revenue. Many farmers were thrown off their properties as a small number of elite families gained control over vast tracts of land. The 20 largest logging firms covered 20 per cent of the surface of Liberia in 1997, and 3,000 private rubber plantations covered a further 15 per cent of the territory. These private holdings turned local inhabitants into agricultural labourers dependent on elite family owners for jobs and welfare. Transnational trading corporations were given major franchises on rubber and mineral resources: for example, in 1980 Firestone Tire and Rubber and Liberian Iron Mining Company provided 52 per cent of government revenues. During the 1990s, United States and European firms extracting timber, rubber, gold, iron ore and diamonds from NPFL-controlled territories provided an estimated US$ 8-9 million per month to Taylor's forces.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is a major divider affecting all people in Liberia. Before the war, a growing and shared sense of identity of being "Liberian" existed between many Liberian tribes. However, the civil war, the widespread ethnically targeted atrocities against civilians and the consequent political system made people feel they belonged to an ethnic group that had a political agenda and that was seen as

6. In March 2001, the UN Security Council imposed limited sanctions on Liberia through resolution 1343 to pressure the government of Liberia to cease support to the RUF. Resolution 1343 bans the sale or supply of arms to Liberia, prohibits the export of diamonds from the country and bans travel abroad by senior representatives of the government and the army, and their spouses.

a threat to (or was threatened by) other ethnic groups. The divider has many sub-dividers, some of which are explained below:

- **Political control/American-Liberian dominance.** Since the founding of Liberia in 1847 until Samuel Doe's military coup in 1980, descendants of freed American slaves (American-Liberians or Kongos) had been virtually unchallenged in their control of economic and political power in Liberia. The Doe coup appeared to unseat the elite arrangement and claimed its intention was to involve the majority "native" Liberians in the running of the country, as citizens equal to the Kongos.[7] Charles Taylor's election in 1997 has, however, been widely regarded as the return of American-Liberians to their former position. The other ethnic groups (the indigenous population), although divided amongst themselves, collectively resent this apparent Kongo resurgence. Memories of the Kongo minority dominance and nepotism during the Tubman and Tolbert era are still fresh.

- **Tribal alliances** during the civil war divided the many tribes against each other – Gio, Mano, Kpelle, Loma, Mandingo, Krahn, Sappe. The civil war essentially pitted the Gio and Mano tribes who had rebelled against Doe in 1985 against the Krahn – Doe's tribe – and the Mandingo who had been given equal rights as Liberian citizens under Doe. After Taylor's arrival in Nimba county in 1989, the Krahn-dominated AFL committed a series of atrocities against Gio and Mano civilians. Soon after, the NPFL massacred Krahn and Mandingo civilians in revenge. Fighting in June 2000 revealed yet another in the many ethnic divisions in Liberia: in this case between the Mandingo and Loma in Voinjama.

- **Liberian origin** divides Mandingos from other ethnic groups. There is a shared perception among many Liberians that Mandingos are really Guineans, and many are reluctant to accept them as citizens. The belief is that Mandingos should enjoy less than full rights regarding political participation, land tenure, government employment and access to services. Even Mandingos who were born and have lived in Liberia for many generations are considered, by most other groups, as having only limited allegiance to Liberia. The largely symbolic decision by Samuel Doe's government to recognize Mandingos as full citizens was widely criticized at the time and received little acceptance. Attempts by Mandingos to hold political positions have been strongly resented. In some towns, such as Bahn in Nimba county, all Mandingos have been forced out of their homes and their properties seized.

Economic roles

The ethnic groups generally occupied different niches in the economy. Kpelle and Mano are mainly grain agriculturists, while Mandingos tended to be engaged in small-scale trading or cash-crop cultivation. The Mandingo are generally perceived as the better-off business class – involved in diamond mining and trading – who own many houses and properties. This feeds into long-standing resentment by other Liberian ethnic groups who envy their relative wealth. Workshop participants also noted that when returning Mandingo are unable to access land because of lingering hostility, they often turn to trading as a means of income. This division of economic roles exacerbated tensions over the price of rice.[8] Rice farmers often resented the traders who were seen as buying rice cheaply during harvest time, only to sell it more expensively in the lean season. The rice farmers generally considered the rice-trading activities of local Mandingos as exploitative and as a source of illegitimate gain.

Geo-political structure

Most LRCS staff agreed that these ethnic dividers are compounded by the national geo-ethnic structure in which certain counties "belong" to a certain majority ethnic group. This has caused considerable damage in Liberian society as it has been prone to manipulation for political purposes and has legitimized control of majority over minority groups.

Religion and culture

Christianity is the official state religion although, according to some sources, it is the religion of only 10 per cent of the population. During the BPI workshop, it was noted that the dispute over

7. In fact, Doe was related to the elite families and his downfall was partly blamed on his inability to gain control over either the elite families who controlled production and trade or the influential group of civil servants he inherited from the Tolbert regime and who dominated government bureaucracies.

8. In April 1979, hundreds of students were killed by police while demonstrating against a 50 per cent cut in the government's price subsidy on rice.

Mandingo citizenship is compounded by religious and cultural divisions which long precede the war. In Bong, Nimba and Bomi counties, most of the major ethnic groups participate in *Poro* (for men) and *Sande* (for women): cultural traditions that prepare young men and women for initiation into adulthood. These societies are an important form of inter-ethnic social structure – the "bush university" as one of the staff called it – and provide a mechanism for the resolution of disputes. The Muslim Mandingo, however, do not participate in *Poro* or *Sande* societies. Some feel such participation is a violation of the Islamic faith, although other Islamic groups in Liberia do take part.

Education systems

Schools are a divider that further emphasize the religious difference between the Muslim Mandingo and other groups, it has also led to the creation of separate schools in some areas, as Mandingo families send their children to Arabic schools, while the children of other groups remain in government or church-based schools.

Connectors

With ongoing conflict, very fresh memories of a war that directly affected more than 80 per cent of the population and caused the complete collapse of the state, a new geo-political system that divides people into districts according to ethnic origin, massive unemployment and the destruction of the country's main sources of economic production, Liberians are struggling to find common ground on which to build their future.

Liberian identity

A growing sense of Liberian identity connected people of different ethnic backgrounds before the war. Most people used to consider themselves Liberian first and, second only, a member of a particular community. There were many cases of personal friendships crossing ethnic lines, strong enough to withstand the pressures of the war. The Red Cross team was able to cite instances in which members of one community protected other groups during periods of persecution. The war suddenly forced them to be categorized as members of an ethnic group, something many people had no wish to do.

Desire for peace

After seven years of civil war and with the situation in Liberia still unstable, people are weary. Hardly a single family has not lost a family member or suffered directly in some way. People across all ethnic divides are anxious for peace, a return to normality and the prospect of a future for themselves and their children.

Traditional role of tribal elders

A strong connector between groups is the shared respect for the institution of elders. In spite of long-standing tensions in many areas in Liberia, the war was preceded by many decades of positive inter-group cooperation. In most villages, a tradition of joint meetings of elders to resolve inter-group disputes existed. The elders saw mediation and conflict mitigation as part of their responsibility and their authority on these matters was generally recognized within the confines of the village. Red Cross volunteers gave an example from Nimba county, where tensions between the Gio and the Krahn were very high. A Gio chief with great local authority went to Côte d'Ivoire to visit the various Krahn refugee settlements and to encourage them to return to their homes (after an absence of ten years), ensuring them that he personally would guarantee their safety.

Shared concern for youth

Although some of the elders in Nimba county admitted to being afraid of the numerous, mainly young, ex-combatants in their villages, they still accepted that these young people should be able to return to their homes. They recognized that many ex-combatants saw the war as a means of survival or had been pressured to join the militias. The elders' willingness to see the young people return is also reinforced by the strong sense of "home" shared by all Liberians, irrespective of ethnic differences.

Forgiveness

Liberians mentioned an atmosphere of general forgiveness in the country. Many people also pointed out that there was a widespread feeling of being "misled" by their political leaders. Some mentioned that the church had played a considerable role in encouraging this sense of forgiveness. Christian and Muslim leaders established the Interfaith Council, which some interpreted as a sign of a return to the situation pre-war when Muslims and Christians lived together in relative harmony.

Shared interest in improving social services

At local level, there is frequent cooperation between many groups in the funding and management of schools and other shared village or inter-village infrastructure, such as health clinics. There is also regular inter-group cooperation on village rituals and activities, from funerals to football teams.

Traditional societies and rituals

It was suggested by some workshop participants that at a certain – local – level, the *Poro* and *Sande* societies (cultural organizations that prepare young men and women respectively for initiation into traditional adulthood) could act as a connector between certain ethnic groups. In this way the practice could be harnessed as a local capacity for peace. The societies exist in many ethnic groups. Although there are slight differences according to the area and community, they generally operate along the same lines and combine efforts to achieve common objectives irrespective of different ethnic identities. It is difficult to get an exact picture of how these secretive societies function, but people generally agreed that *Poro* membership overrides ethnicity and rules have to be obeyed regardless of other agendas (such as different political agendas). Examples were given of societies' elders mediating in conflict between different groups. In particular, the "Zoe", the most important *Poro* leader, was known to be involved in reconciliation.[9]

2.4 National Society programming

The LRCS had just finished an important reorganization when the BPI mission arrived in Monrovia. A new president, secretary general and assistant secretary general had been appointed, and a new board and management team were in place. Both the International Federation's country delegation and the new management team welcomed the introduction of the BPI concept as a useful contribution to designing and implementing new policy initiatives in LRCS chapters.

From an organizational perspective, the present LRCS structure is still in its infancy. A priority is to develop the society so that it is represented and active in all 15 Liberian counties. With International Federation and ICRC help, a number of chapters are being established and assisted in building up their institutional development and fund-generating activities, so that they become more independent from the Monrovia headquarters.

During the BPI training and analysis mission, the National Society's programming efforts were aimed at continuing the decentralization of the society and improving emergency preparedness. Three new warehouses are being built to store relief items in the regions and thus to be able to respond better and more quickly to emergencies.

2.5 Impact of National Society programming on dividers and connectors

A number of LRCS programmes were visited by the BPI team and specific programming issues were analysed with regard to their impact on dividers and connectors in post-war Liberia.

Political control and National Society independence

The location of Bahn Red Cross branch was clearly increasing the political control divider between the Gio and Mandingo communities. Before the war, Bahn was a thriving town with a mixed Mandingo-Gio population. The Mandingo population was active in trading and diamond mining.

9. More research and analysis of these rituals needs to be conducted to clarify the value of these rituals in connecting groups. Certain aspects of the practices may also be questioned; for example, one workshop participant spoke of the rite of female circumcision being performed in all *Sande* societies.

The Gio population took over these lucrative activities during the hostilities, expelling the Mandingos from the town and confiscating their homes and businesses. The war ended but the presence of Mandingos is still declared "illegal" as some Gio fear that the return of the Mandingo will threaten their newly-gained wealth and political power. Recently, Mandingos have returned to Bahn to visit the market but there is general consensus among the Gio that they cannot stay overnight.

Following the war, the Bahn area faced acute humanitarian problems. As the LRCS Bahn branch had very few financial resources, it asked the municipality to supply a building. The one assigned originally belonged to a Mandingo family who had been expelled by the Gio. The local LRCS staff had accepted to use the building. BPI analysis with the LRCS staff focused on the impact this would have on the ethnic divisions, and the consequences for the Fundamental Principles of impartiality and independence. The message being sent to the expelled Mandingo population was that the Red Cross was not independent, that it was partial to the Gios and condoned, and even participated in, their seizure of Mandingo assets. A similar message was being sent to the Gio, i.e., that the Red Cross believed that the expelling of the Mandingos and the seizure of their private property was perfectly legitimate.

Ethnicity and beneficiary targeting

The provision of services by the Red Cross in Bahn to a mono-ethnic population was another clear example of an aid programme strengthening a divider – in this case ethnicity – between two conflict-affected groups. It raised serious questions about the impartiality of LRCS action: why had the LRCS specifically chosen a location where a mono-ethnic village had been forcefully created? The potential of being seen by the Mandingo as favouring the Gios and "rewarding" them by providing services was analysed. It was explained that the LRCS's geo-political structure prescribes carrying out Red Cross activities in each of the three districts in Nimba so, as Bahn is the capital of one of the districts, the society set up some activities there. This is another example of how the LRCS is bound by its geo-political structure and how this can seriously undermine the Red Cross's actual and perceived independence and impartiality.

In the town of Sakleipie a similar situation exists. The LRCS mothers' health programme is reinforcing the ethnicity divider by excluding Mandingo and other ethnic groups. Sakleipie is a relatively peaceful village where Mandingos live tranquilly among other groups. The Sakleipie chapter organizes educational activities, some fund-generating actions, such as a guesthouse, and a mothers' health programme aimed at a group of traumatized war widows. A women's group started to meet two years before the BPI visit, just before the original Mandingo population returned to Sakleipie. As a result the group was "full" and did not take steps to expand the project to include Mandingos and other returnees. The programme was therefore missing the opportunity to include Mandingo women in the reconciliation process and help strengthen connections with the Mandingo population.

Reinforcing respect for elders

The Bahn office has an extensive vocational training project in which ex-combatants are taught carpentry and English, among other subjects. The village elders were closely involved in deciding who would, or would not, be allowed to attend the project. Like most local people, the elders fear the power and troubled background of these young people, but the Red Cross has helped to reinforce the elders' authority over them which had been eroded during the war.

Religion

Workshop participants – both expatriate and Liberian – mentioned that the National Society is seen as being strongly connected to "the church" or Christianity. Many prominent members of the board are active in the church community.

In some chapters, Christians are more active than followers of other faiths which account for larger majorities in the community. This apparently unconscious perpetuation of Christianity in the LRCS helps to create another image problem for the society, which may cause some non-Christians to distance themselves. Sometimes the link is there for purely practical reasons: the two-day BPI workshop, for example, was held at a Christian education institute as no other appropriate accommodation was available. However, to avoid this sort of problem, the Montserrado (Monrovia) chapter is building its own hall so that in future such meetings can be organized in a neutral setting.

The design and implementation of programmes at field level also feed this divider. The Mandingo are Muslim and as they have difficulties in integrating the LRCS, it is a short step for some to believe that an ethnic- and religion-based bias exists within the society. For example, in Sakleipie, schools run by the Red Cross need to amend their curriculum and activities to include general religious education (and not only Bible studies) and some Arabic studies, so that Mandingo and other Muslims also feel attracted to them.

Political control and staffing

Staffing practice is exacerbating ethnic divisions. Reflecting Liberian reality, staffing at the LRCS has not escaped being affected by ethnic policies. Various staff mentioned that the LRCS is known as the "Bassa Red Cross", after the ethnic group seen as dominating the society. Although the current LRCS administration has a more diverse ethnic representation and has stated their commitment to it, Mandingos and Krahns are still absent from headquarters in Monrovia.

The visible role of government representatives in chapters and on the national board was seen as increasing the divider associated with political control and dominance. In the LRCS, five government ministries have representatives on the national board. This also raises the problem of the society's independence and neutrality.

Ethnicity and staffing

Like many other international aid organizations in Liberia, the LRCS paid scant attention to ethnicity when hiring, which meant that most staff were recruited locally, with one or two ethnic groups disproportionately represented. As often happens in emergency situations, in the absence of any means of effectively advertising job opportunities, staff recruitment was inevitably done by word of mouth. This approach favoured the acquaintances and friends of volunteers or board members.

At field level, where ethnicity is a major divider, branch staffing practice is fuelling the impression that the Red Cross is ethnically partial. The LRCS's headquarters gives chapters considerable freedom to select staff, which is the responsibility of the chapter board. The chapter board chooses the field officers, with the chairperson having ultimate authority. Chapter board members are selected by sitting board members, which means that in effect outsiders find it hard to be chosen. There is thus little accountability to others.

In many chapters, only one or two of the local ethnic groups are represented. For example no Mandingos staff chapter offices. This impedes the collection of information about needs and vulnerabilities in Mandingo areas and consequently excludes Mandingos from LRCS programming.

The resulting exclusion raises basic questions about the impartiality – both actual and perceived – of the LRCS. This Fundamental Principle forbids discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. Moreover, the principle of unity requires that National Society membership must be open to everyone who wishes to become a member. The society also needs to address the question of representation within the community: with only 500 volunteers, the LRCS cannot guarantee widespread involvement and support.

In the absence of a proactive adherence to the principles of impartiality, independence and unity, the LRCS is seriously at risk of feeding the conflict between the groups it is mandated to assist.

Geo-political structure and LRCS organization

The organization of Red Cross chapters, the location of chapters and subchapters and selection of staff largely follow the national political structure. This may play into political divisions that emphasize geographical, social and ethnic considerations. It is therefore assumed – and approved – that the majority group in any county provide the chapter chairperson. One of the possible consequences is that dominant local groups continue to manage and control chapter activities, to the exclusion of smaller groups, and risk compromising the Red Cross principles of neutrality, impartiality and unity.

An example of the perceived geo-political interest – which also shows the complexity of the issue – is the fact that some chapters are envious of what they see as more attention paid by LRCS headquarters to chapters in the south-eastern counties of Grand Gedeh, Grand Kru, Maryland and Sinoe. Some argue that this has not been based on needs and vulnerabilities, but on interests at headquarters related to ethnic and regional considerations.

Competition for resources

The substitution factor was a source of division during the BPI analysis. Discussion during the workshop indicated that the population feels that the provision of services by aid organizations and the LRCS has released the government from its responsibility for providing education and other social services. LRCS chapters have been closely involved in providing various relief and development services, including running schools and health clinics. However, participants felt that the government has not shown any particular recognition or support – either financial or moral – for LRCS efforts. At the same time, it is observed that a large part of state resources is being allocated to the creation and maintenance of political and administrative structures and the armed forces, whose main aim seems to be the creation of wealth for elite groups through the extraction and sale of the country's natural resources. The LRCS, as an auxiliary to the government, was in danger of being seen as a component part of the elite groups' system to increase wealth and exclude the majority of the population.

2.6   Options
Political control and National Society independence

LRCS staff were extremely uncomfortable with the location of Bahn branch but felt they had no option other than to accept it. For this reason, the Red Cross emblem was painted on a portable notice-board rather than on the building itself. Some options were discussed, such as tracing the building's owner and negotiating a formal lease for its use. The LRCS would then be setting an example in recognizing Mandingo rights as a step towards reconciliation between the Gio and the Mandingo. And the Red Cross does have the authority among the population to undertake such an action.

Ethnicity and beneficiary targeting

With a few changes, the mothers' health programme could become an ideal programme to unite and reconcile women of different ethnic backgrounds who have gone through a similar experience. The idea is to stimulate the group of about 20 women to initiate small business initiatives. The field officer agreed to see how to go about including Mandingo women in the programme.

Political control and staffing

Discussions are taking place in the LRCS regarding regulations that would remove pressure on management from lobbying through a system of transparent checks and controls. This is a positive development, as using the Red Cross as a way to obtain a paid job may give the impression that the society can be manipulated by those in influential positions for their personal benefit. The Red

Cross administration is aware that it must avoid being perceived in this way, especially in Liberia, given the complex relations between aid and conflict. The organization is putting measures in place to ensure that board members and chairpersons understand that, although they have executive authority, their positions are mainly honorary.

Ethnicity and staffing

It was suggested that BPI should be included more actively in the formal recruitment policy and efforts should be undertaken to make the Monrovia office more ethnically inclusive. This would include developing an ethnically balanced recruitment strategy that would ensure all Liberian ethnic groups have fair, equal access to job opportunities in the society.

The vacant post of resource development coordinator gave the LRCS the opportunity to set an example by incorporating a BPI analysis into the selection criteria. If it were feasible to recruit someone of an ethnic group not yet represented at senior level in the LRCS, it would signal in a practical way the administration's determination to be ethnically inclusive. It would also help improve the LRCS's ability to think in broader terms of perceived needs and programme options. The new coordinator might be able to contact the business communities, such as the Mandingos and the Lebanese, neither of whom had previously been included much in efforts to generate financial, political and volunteer support. The Lebanese community has an obvious connection with the National Society: they donated the building that houses the LRCS headquarters 25 years ago.

Geo-political structure and LRCS organization

The LRCS is in a unique position to provide an alternative geo-political model which would include the separation between ethnicity and geographical area. This could send a message of "normality" in which ethnic background would play a subordinate role and in which a national "Liberian" identity would be reinforced.

During the workshop, one suggestion was to reorganize the Red Cross into regions consisting of more counties grouped together. Another proposal was to introduce a policy whereby the chapter chairperson would come from an ethnic group not present in the county. Some NGOs in Liberia have put in place a similar policy to ensure a greater level of neutrality.

3. Conclusion

3.1 Lessons learned

The LRCS assistant secretary general acknowledged the timeliness of introducing the BPI concept into LRCS activities, especially those aimed at alleviating poverty, as their projects had not previously been viewed through a conflict perspective. LRCS staff were aware of some of the irregularities of their aid programmes and were only too happy to have the opportunity and guidance to look for and identify solutions to address the problems. A number of key lessons were underlined:

■ Geo-political structures often exist for highly political reasons, but, while such structures are not determined by National Societies, their own structures and location of their local branches may be used as connectors between groups who are otherwise separated. Staffing, programming and dissemination can also be used to provide common ground for separated communities and the National Society should be careful not to restrict inadvertently their engagement along political lines. At a very minimum, National Society management should certainly be aware of any geo-political structural issues and ensure that their programming is not politicized as a result of restrictive administrative systems.

■ It was clear to all participants in the BPI analysis in Liberia that local hiring procedures should be made more transparent. To ensure that the LRCS is neither perceived to be increasing nor

actually increasing ethnic divisions through its aid programming, it must strive to ensure that the various ethnic, religious and social groups are represented in its chapters.

■ At the time of the BPI mission, the LRCS had just been reorganized. A new administration was in place and ready to move ahead with plans and activities. They displayed a natural awareness and constructive approach to BPI issues. For example, they requested a greater Red Cross presence in Krahn areas. These areas had long been excluded from LRCS activities as the Krahn were seen as the "losers" of the war and were connected to Samuel Doe's regime.

3.2 Follow-up

The war in Liberia officially ended in 1997 when the population democratically elected President Taylor as the head of state. However, as in so many of today's post-war situations, the war may be over but conflict continues. Three years later, few people encountered during the BPI team's visit affirmed that Liberia had entered a phase of stability and peace. LRCS staff generally described the situation as "80 per cent peace" or "a very fragile kind of peace". Clearly there is a need for BPI mainstreaming in all LRCS programming for the forseeable future. A number of recommendations were made during the BPI mission and adopted by the LRCS:
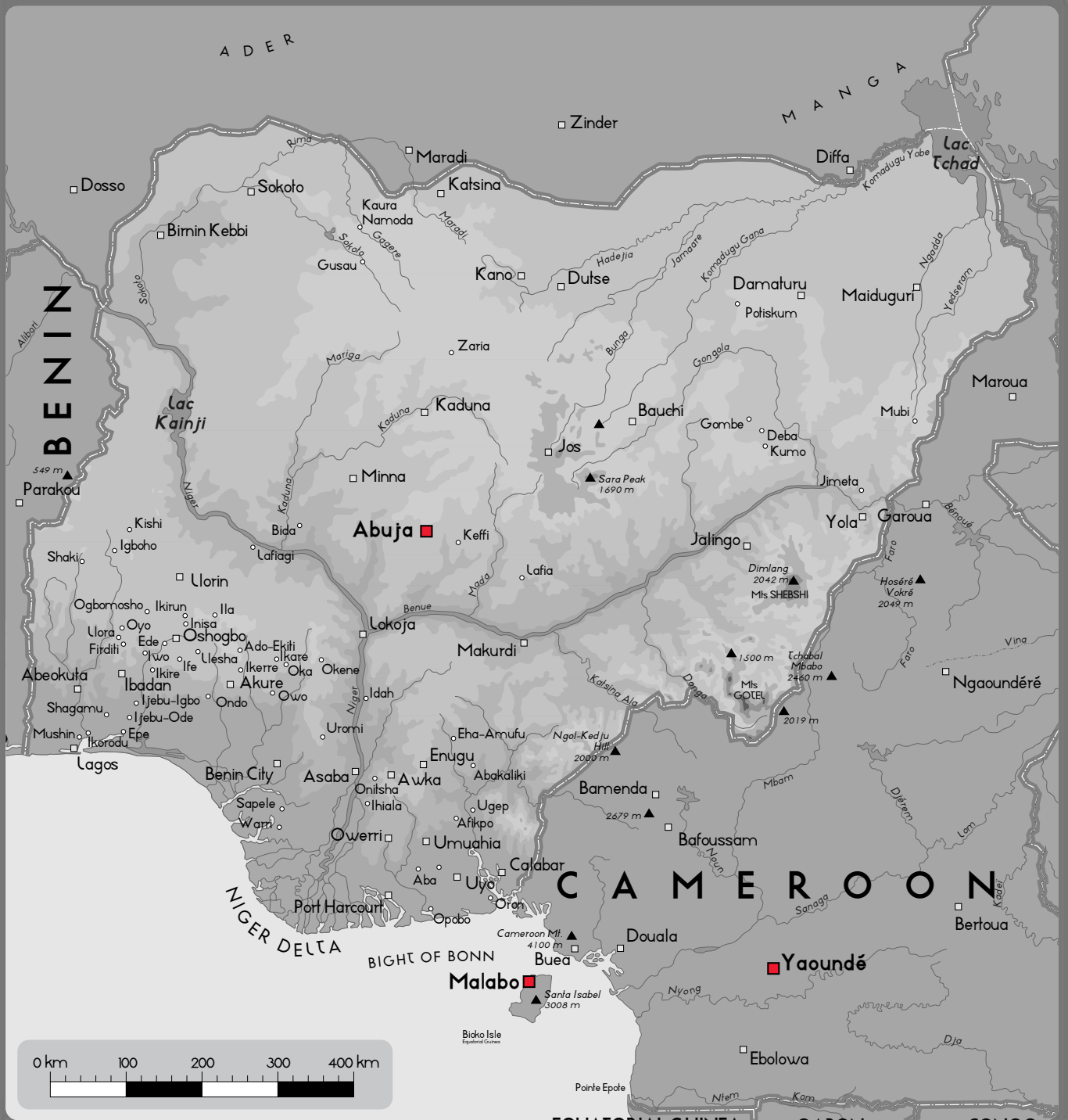
■ LRCS and delegation representatives who attended the workshop would use management and staff meetings and other forums to disseminate the BPI thinking and methodology.

■ Both the LRCS and delegation would encourage and facilitate the use of the BPI thinking and methodology in formal and informal (programming) planning and in the implementation of activities/programmes at headquarters and, initially, the four chapters whose representatives participated in the workshop (i.e., Bong, Nimba, Maryland and Bomi).

■ The LRCS and delegation will identify and use as a model for BPI methodology application an ongoing LRCS aid programme activity in a chapter community where there is marked evidence of inter-group tension. The liaison person's monthly analysis will include details on how the BPI methodology is applied to that particular programme, and the resulting changes and outcomes.

Other ideas for institutionalizing BPI as a practical tool in Liberia were discussed at the workshop. These included:

■ making BPI a part of the approval process for chapters' proposals, and including it when sending proposals to donors;

■ including BPI in the agreement between the International Federation and the LRCS. For example, under "recruitment", the agreement could request that the society "strive to achieve a greater inclusiveness of ethnic in Liberia on a administrative level"; and

■ field officers could include BPI as part of their monthly reporting to headquarters. The objective would be to raise awareness and to identify difficulties in the update and implementation of BPI ideas. Based on the identified needs and objectives, the Monrovia administration could help the chapters think through the BPI analyses and adapt programme implementation.

The Liberian Red Cross Society is one of the participants in the West Africa Regional Mainstreaming Strategy being conducted in 2002-2003, along with Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

Nigeria

ADER

MANGA

Zinder

Maradi

Dosso

Sokoto

Katsina

Diffa

Lac Tchad

Birnin Kebbi

Kaura Namoda

Gusau

Kano

Dutse

Damaturu

Maiduguri

Potiskum

BENIN

Maroua

Zaria

Kaduna

Bauchi

Gombe

Deba Kumo

Mubi

Jos

Sara Peak 1690 m

Jimeta

Lac Kainji

Minna

Yola

Garoua

549 m

Parakou

Abuja

Keffi

Jalingo

Dimlang 2042 m

Mts SHEBSHI

Hoséré Vokré 2049 m

Kishi

Igboho

Bida

Lafia

Shaki

Lafiagi

Mada

1500 m

Tchabal Mbabo 2460 m

Ilorin

Benue

Ngaoundéré

Ogbomosho

Ikirun

Ila

Lokoja

Makurdi

Mts GOTEL

Ilora Firditi

Oyo

Inisa

Oshogbo

Ado-Ekiti

2019 m

Ede

Iwo

Ilesha

Ikerre

Ikare

Oka

Okene

Abeokuta

Ife

Akure

Owo

Idah

Katsina Ala

Ikire

Shagamu

Ibadan

Ijebu-Igbo

Ondo

Uromi

Eha-Amufu

Ngol-Kedju Hill 2000 m

Mushin

Ijebu-Ode

Enugu

Abakaliki

Bamenda

Ikorodu

Epe

Asaba

Awka

Lagos

Benin City

Onitsha

Ihiala

Ugep

2679 m

Sapele

Owerri

Afikpo

Bafoussam

Warri

Umuahia

Calabar

CAMEROON

NIGER DELTA

Port Harcourt

Aba

Uyo

Opobo

Oron

Bertoua

BIGHT OF BONN

Cameroon Mt. 4100 m

Douala

Malabo

Buea

Santa Isabel 3008 m

Yaoundé

Bioko Isle
Equatorial Guinea

Ebolowa

Pointe Epote

0 km 100 200 300 400 km

1. Introduction

1.1 Why Nigeria?

Nigeria has the largest population in Africa: 120 million people from more than 250 different ethnic groups. At independence in 1960 agriculture generated more than half of its gross domestic product (GDP) and was the main source of export earnings and public revenue. Oil accounted for 1 per cent of government revenues. By the late 1980s, oil production was responsible for more than 80 per cent of federal government revenues. In 2000, although agriculture was still the main activity of the majority of Nigerians contributing 40 per cent of GDP, oil provided 83.5 per cent of federal government revenue and more than 95 per cent of export earnings.

Nigerians are poorer today than in 1974.[1] In spite of its rich oil deposits, Nigeria's economy has been in decline for the past two decades and foreign debt is currently at US$ 30 billion or US$ 250 for every man, woman and child in the country. In the 1980s average per capita income fell from US$ 1,000 to US$ 300. Today GDP per capita is US$ 305 – half that of Côte d'Ivoire and less even than Angola at US$ 314. It ranks 146th out of 174 countries on the Human Development Index. Infant mortality is 112 per 1,000 live births and less than half the population have access to clean water. Humanitarian aid agencies are working to assist the most affected groups – they do so in an environment characterized by frequent and intense violence.

In a country as ethnically diverse as Nigeria, it is important that BPI analysis be incorporated into programme planning, to help prevent aid projects from playing into and supporting ethnic or religious dividers.

Since Nigeria returned to civilian rule in May 1999, it has experienced widespread unrest and significant levels of communal violence in which more than 6,000 people have been killed – ostensibly as a result of ethnic and religious differences. In February 2000 more than 2,000 people died in clashes in the northern city of Kaduna. This and many other violent clashes have been set off by the introduction or extension of sharia or Islamic law in a dozen northern states against the wishes of the Christian minorities in these areas. In the south of the country, the oil producing Niger delta region has been subjected to an increasingly violent struggle by rebels against the state and multinational oil companies. Well-organized piracy, hostage taking and sabotage of oil-pipelines and other infrastructure in recent years have prompted comparisons with Colombia.

1.2 BPI objectives and activities

In 2000, the Nigerian Red Cross Society (NRCS), with the support of the German Red Cross (GRC) and the British Red Cross (BRC), proposed to implement a water and sanitation (WatSan) project to improve access to clean water in a number of villages. The introduction of the Better Programming Initiative (BPI) to the NRCS was considered timely, as it would help the National Society fulfil the requirement of its donor, the European Union (EU), to include a peace and conflict impact analysis in the proposal for funding.

The visit sought to introduce the BPI to both the NRCS and the International Federation's Nigeria delegation, and to show how the analytical framework could be used to identify the potential impact of the WatSan project on the dividers and connectors that exist in the Nigerian context.

The mission began with a one-day briefing for NRCS staff and for delegates from both the International Federation's and the ICRC's Nigeria delegations. Subsequently, a field visit was made to Krawa state, which is north of Lagos. It was chosen for its proximity to Lagos (a five-hour drive)

1. "A tale of two giants" in *The Economist*, 13 January 2000.

and the fact that Krawa had been selected for implementation of the WatSan programme. Members of the mission were able to visit a village in which the NRCS had recently assisted members of two communities after a violent conflict had occurred, as well as the branch office in Ilorin. Discussions were also held in three villages that are expected to benefit from the WatSan project.

After the field trip, a one-day BPI workshop took place in Lagos. Participants included senior Nigerian Red Cross staff, International Federation delegates and three branch secretaries.

2.   BPI analysis

2.1   Conflict context

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. Its division into regions reflects the fact that the country has more than 250 ethnic and language groups. The main ethnic groups are: Hausa (21 per cent); Yoruba (21 per cent); Ibo (19 per cent); Fulani (11 per cent); and Ibibio (6 per cent). Christianity is the religion of some 47 per cent of Nigerians; 45 per cent are Muslims, and the remainder are animist. Local rivalries have created many problems which at times threaten national unity, and in recent years the exploitation of ethnic and religious differences between groups to foment strife has been a key element in a strategy to maintain power and control over natural resources.

One of the richest African nations, Nigeria is a major oil exporter producing 2.2 million barrels per day. Oil accounts for over 95 per cent of export earnings. Agriculture employs some 43 per cent of the population. Cocoa, palm oil and palm kernels, peanuts and rubber are the main cash crops.

The country gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1960 and became a federal republic in 1963. Thirty years later, a planned transition to its third civilian regime was aborted when military ruler Ibrahim Babangida annulled the presidential election in June 1993. Eight years earlier, when Babangida seized power during a military coup, he inherited a country in a deep economic crisis. Nigeria had experienced a massive economic boom in the 1970s after oil prices quadrupled in 1973-1974. Oil revenue rose by 2,000 per cent between 1970 and 1980, but corruption, economic mismanagement and patronage brought the country to the brink of economic collapse within a decade. From 1980 to 1985, external debt increased to US$ 30 billion and industrial production fell below 40 per cent of capacity. In 1986 disaster struck when oil prices halved. With the economy in crisis, Babangida announced a series of reforms to liberalize the economy. However, the limited improvements in some areas of the economy in the late 1980s were sponsored by a massive budget deficit which, by 1991, had climbed to 45 per cent of government revenue – up from 20 per cent in 1985.

Babangida was ousted by his defence minister, General Sani Abacha, in 1993. Abacha's five-year rule was marked by overt diversion of government funds (up to 25 per cent of government revenue was siphoned off in 1996), the reintroduction of many controls on the economy and the tightening of military rule. He died in June 1998 and was succeeded by General Abdusalam Abubakar who oversaw a transfer to civilian administration and a presidential election in February 1999 in which former military ruler General Olusegun Obasanjo won 63 per cent of the vote.

Conflict and control over resources

Conflict in Nigeria has centred on access to and maintenance of control over resources and wealth. In recent years control has been maintained through two basic strategies: support for elites through powerful systems of political patronage; and the fomentation of inter-ethnic strife to weaken potential competitors and ensure a monopoly over sources of wealth.

Access to resources and income has funded the political systems of patronage built on a multi-layered network of supporters in key positions, including politicians, military, civil servants and business elites. Their support has been conditional on their participation in the massive wealth generated by the Nigeria's natural resources. In other words, maintaining power in Nigeria requires access to and distribution of wealth. As a result, wealth was created and exploited in every possible way and allocated in order to sustain influence and support. Nigeria's rich oil and natural reserves have been extensively exploited. Between October 1973 and January 1974, OPEC quadrupled the price of oil. Nigeria – like other oil-producing states – found itself in a situation where it simply could not find enough projects on which to spend its newly found wealth. The bonanza continued throughout the 1970s with oil prices continuing to rise until 1981 when they peaked at three times their January 1974 level. In Nigeria the federal government imposed a central monopoly on the ownership of all oilfields and contracted with two of the major oil companies to extract and export the oil. Maintaining control over this incredible source of wealth has been the single greatest concern of successive rulers since then. The wealth it generates has been exploited in every manner possible to create and sustain systems of patronage that help maintain this control.

Economic liberalization as a source of patronage

Economic liberalization presented previous governments with unique opportunities to distribute wealth-generating opportunities to supporters at all levels. Under Babangida and Abacha, liberalization was manipulated to exploit state assets and privileged control of and access to financial information. Privatization and financial deregulation were combined to allow politicians to establish new banks from which they received interest-free, unsecured loans to purchase state assets at a fraction of their real value. Exchange-rate deregulation was manipulated to allow an elite group to take advantage of access to the government's emergency fixed rate to purchase large quantities of Nigeria's currency, the naira, at the much lower market rate. Abacha's regime used World Bank demands to boost internal tax revenues as a pretext for coercive tax collection campaigns to justify the use of paramilitary violence and harassment against key opposition figures in the states of Kaduna and Rivers.

Fomenting conflict between different groups

Since the economic decline of the 1980s, there has been widespread regional dissatisfaction with the mismanagement of the country's wealth. Resistance has grown to the near total diversion of oil industry income to generate massive personal wealth for a tiny political elite, while the rest of the population saw their per capita income decline by 70 per cent during the 1980s.

In response to resistance and the growth of regional groups opposed to government corruption and exploitation, power was maintained by the classic colonial system of "divide and rule". Religious, ethnic, regional and language differences between groups were exploited to repress popular political groups and prevent the development of networks capable of threatening ruling elites. The regime provoked inter-group violence and supported one faction against another (or sometimes both). It then asserted its own authority as a higher power when the loser or weaker party appealed to the regime for support or adjudication. By fuelling inter-ethnic conflict and creating insecurity, previous regimes were able to assert their influence. Arming rival groups or portraying attacks on opposition groups as inter- or intra-group violence, gave the regime a position of adjudicator and protector, and allowed its forces to intervene and restore order.

For example in Ogoniland, the Movement for the Salvation of Ogoni People (MOSOP) – led by writer and former government administrator Ken Saro Wiwa – mobilized regional support to agitate for a percentage of oil revenues to be given to local communities. The regime used intra-ethnic violence to discredit the movement and criminalize its leaders. At a MOSOP demonstration in May 1994, four traditional leaders were killed. The government blamed intra-Ogoni rivalry and arrested Saro Wiwa and other leaders. They were sentenced to death and hanged in 1995.

2.2   The relationship between aid and conflict

Nigeria is not engaged in conflict. Nor does it represent a post-conflict situation. It is currently experiencing a very difficult transition from a military dictatorship, where control over resources facilitated corruption, nepotism and political patronage, to a democratic state, where institutional accountability holds sway. Two decades of deconstruction of the economy have caused widespread poverty, fuelling high levels of social unrest. Inter-group tension, sometimes expressed in violent demonstrations, had been used frequently to oppress popular movements. More recently, it has been manipulated in efforts to destabilize and undermine the democratic government.

As the government struggles to address the consequences of two decades of economic decline, the possibilities for increased unrest are high. Nigeria faces two formidable challenges: it must deconstruct the networks of patronage and corruption; and it must reduce the US$ 30 billion foreign debt so that government revenue is not swallowed up by debt-service and can instead be used to build social services, providing health and education, infrastructure and employment.

During the BPI mission, many observers claimed that the political situation in Nigeria was highly fragile and that the ingredients for a national conflict lay just beneath the surface. However, people dismissed the notion of a single conflict. Instead, they considered the country a collection of distinctly different contexts that were predominantly peaceful but may occasionally erupt into violence.

The Nigerian Red Cross is present in all 36 states of Nigeria and has clustered its branches in six geographical zones. The NRCS enjoys a good reputation, established during a long history of humanitarian commitment that goes as far back as the Biafra crisis (1967-1970). This reputation allows the society to intervene even when fighting is ongoing, making it the only relief organization with the capacity and authority to do so.

Most branches face difficulties raising local funds, partly due to competition from local agencies. There are many local aid agencies in Nigeria, set up by wealthy Nigerians who establish their own non-governmental organization (NGO) which bears their name. In a context characterized by competition for access to wealth and positions of influence, the aid sector is seen by many as a potential opportunity to attract funding and influence the distribution of resources of all types, from relief goods to employment opportunities. Development in particular has been a much-exploited activity: in one state alone, over 1,300 local "development" projects were set up but never completed because the money "ran out". In most cases corruption, embezzlement and patronage are now credited with the loss of most of the funds allocated for these projects. In addition, some perceive the Nigerian Red Cross Society as a "foreign" organization, with significant resources sent from abroad, and therefore not in need of any Nigerian monetary support.

At present, the branch offices rely heavily on resources and support from Lagos headquarters to implement certain core programmes. As such, they would all very much like to be included in any programme that is initiated at the national level, including the WatSan programme. Such projects make it easier for branches to recruit Red Cross members and bring resources, such as a vehicle, or the means to employ additional staff in a resource-scarce environment. In addition, the branches make efforts to carry out activities on their own without necessarily relying on the national headquarters, for example in establishing motherless babies' homes.

The NRCS has faced violent, but highly localized, conflicts. According to NRCS staff, the origins of these conflicts vary widely. Disputes over land ownership are a main source of tension, especially when the land is considered ancestral and "needs to be defended with blood". Access to water and other resources are also cited as a common trigger for dispute. Some of the conflicts originated or became centred around religious issues, mainly between parts of the Muslim and the Christian

populations. In a case in Krawa, Red Cross staff spoke of their response to a conflict between various "cults" at the local university that had turned violent.

2.3   Dividers and connectors
Dividers
Under previous regimes, the government often exploited dividers at the heart of locally-based clashes between ethnic groups in order to promote conflict. This prevented any single group from establishing a strong network and gaining access to the regime's source of revenue. Humanitarian organizations need to be fully aware of the wide range of such dividers in Nigerian society today in order that aid programming does not inadvertently play into the dynamics of violent conflict. The following overview is provided as an example of some of these dividers and connectors. However, only thorough contextual analysis at the level of the organization's intervention can provide a complete picture of the dividers and connectors that need to be considered before any programming takes place.

Ethnicity and language
Emphasis on the differences between Nigeria's 250 different ethnic and language groups has been accentuated to maintain divisions within and between communities at all levels from village to state to north and south. Babangida and Abacha both maintained control by manipulating factions and provoking and supporting one group against another in order to assert the regime's authority when the loser or weaker party appealed to the regime as a higher power and judge.

Geo-political structures
The system is anchored by the division of administrative areas according to ethnic, language and religious differences between groups, reinforcing differences and divisions which become the fault lines along which conflict can be provoked, supported or managed. The ethnicity of leaders at national and state level has also been used to mobilize ethnic groups in struggles for power and control over resources.

Religion
Although violence between people of the same faith is far more common than inter-religious fighting, the almost equal split between Christians (47 per cent of the population) and Muslims (45 per cent) is a division that can be easily exploited to fuel conflict. Failure by successive governments to invest in education and industry has created an environment where Nigeria's massive population of youth has little prospect of satisfactory employment. Unrest and agitation have increased in recent years and fundamentalist groups have attracted frustrated, disempowered supporters who claim to represent the oppressed. In recent years, the introduction of sharia law in northern Nigeria has been used as a pretext by some for political purpose to agitate and draw communities into violent clashes.

Inequality
A failed economy, unemployment, the lack of basic infrastructure including electricity, health and education, corruption and nepotism have all increased the divide between the "haves" and the "have-nots" in Nigeria. As elsewhere, the differences in socio-economic status range from minor to enormous, but at all levels they create deep divisions between groups. With one in every two Nigerians living on less than 30 US cents a day, the difference between those who can afford the basics for living and those who cannot is a major divider.

Competition for resources
Fighting between groups in the south is rooted in control over resources from the exploitation of the region's oil wealth. Since the 1970s, the federal government has claimed exclusive ownership of all land and mineral wealth in all states and regions of the country. Demographic growth has increased pressure for land, and agricultural inputs and disputes over entitlement and ownership have frequently sparked violence in recent years.

Connectors

Shared need for social services

During the last two decades little progress has been made in the provision of social services by successive governments. Tough economic reforms were introduced, which reduced state spending on public sector developments such as health, education and infrastructure. The sense of injustice that this promotes can be harnessed to engage people productively in volunteer social service programmes and community work or it can be exploited by political and extremist movements and frustration channelled into agitation and violence. At community level, much can be done by well-organized local NGOs to address vulnerability.

Shared experience of poverty and hardship

Today, most Nigerians face harsh austerity measures without realizing any of the benefits of economic reform. For example, the recent removal of subsidies on fuel, such as petrol and household kerosene, has worsened poverty without any visible improvements in social services in return. This shared experience and desire for a better life can be harnessed by humanitarian organizations to bring people together across ethnic and religious boundaries to work together on aid programmes and care and maintenance programmes.

Urban lifestyle

During the oil boom, working in construction and services became more attractive than farming. Millions of peasants moved to the towns and cities in search of jobs and a better life. The proportion of Nigerians living in urban areas grew from about one-fifth in 1963 to over a third in 1991. Hard times have served to bring people together as economic interdependence has grown. As people have moved from rural to urban areas, ethnic differences have been lost as cosmopolitan habits have eroded traditional customs. The common experiences and connections that have been established can be taken into account and built on during programme planning and implementation by aid organizations.

Shared rejection of corruption

Lagos newspapers and the international media regularly publish reports on embezzlement and diversion of public funds during the previous regimes. Nigeria has been classified as the second most corrupt country in the world by Transparency International, a Berlin-based consultancy. Fifteen years of military rule were marked by one scandal after another, transferring billions of dollars of public money for social services and infrastructure into the pockets of well-connected figures in the military and political elite. People are tired of the corrupt and nepotistic practices and are united in a shared rejection of abuse. In these circumstances, it is critical that humanitarian organizations do not undermine this connector between people by "playing the game", i.e., paying bribes to have telephone lines installed in days instead of months, or other service-related repairs carried out, or bureaucratic barriers removed.

Common concern about violence

Economic hardship and political manipulation of ethnic differences has played upon people's insecurity and brought an upsurge in communal violence in Nigeria in the past two years. As pressure for land grows, the differences between the 250 different ethnic and language groups are increasingly used to justify violence and expulsions of "settler" tribes (who have been living in an area for generations) by "indigenous" people. Already, many community-based initiatives bring people together across ethnic and religious lines in an effort to reduce inter-group violence. In Kaduna, there are examples of Christian and Muslim clerics working together on peace-building projects. This connector between people is a vital link that can be strengthened or undermined by humanitarian organizations depending on how they plan and implement their programming.

2.4   National Society programming

NRCS activities have a strong relief focus, but it is currently increasing its capacity in fields such as financial accounting, institutional management and fund-raising. The current emphasis on capacity building and enhancing quality structures will help the organization create solid foundations, upon which additional programmes and responsibilities can be based.

The water and sanitation project

The availability of clean and potable water is a major problem in Nigeria. The previous secretary general of the NRCS proposed to design a WatSan programme. The German Red Cross agreed to support the project and later the British Red Cross was also asked to join, in order to complement the GRC's technical expertise with the community development expertise of the BRC. Support for the WatSan proposal by two (European) National Societies was also thought to improve the chances of the proposal being approved by the EU.

The result of these efforts will be a proposal outlining a bilateral programme between the NRCS and, jointly, the British and German Red Cross. The International Federation's role is mainly that of a "broker" between the implementing partners.

A work schedule for the project design follows a phased approach. These are:
- Phase 1. Pre-selection of project sites and collection of basic information
- Phase 2. Feasibility study and project design process
- Phase 3. Project-cycle management
- Phase 4. Drafting the proposal for the EU

The BPI visit took place between phases 1 and 2, after the branch secretaries had made their pre-selection of project sites.

The pre-selection of project sites began with the acting NRCS secretary general selecting six states (one in each of the six geo-political zones). All of the states selected had branches that had already been supported and strengthened by other programmes, as it was felt that they would be in a better position to implement the project. NRCS members in each of the six states were asked to select 12 locations in their area which would be considered for project implementation.

Five criteria were taken into consideration in the pre-selection of locations:
- The village should consist of 100-200 households to ensure that the project would have a sufficient impact on the community as well as to allow for a proper impact evaluation afterwards.
- Locations taking part in similar projects implemented by the Nigerian government or by another NGO should not be included.
- The village must be vulnerable to water-borne disease or public health risks, such as cholera.
- The village should have a coherent structure to prevent existing internal disputes from undermining proper implementation of the project.
- The village should be close to an existing Red Cross structure. This criterion was included to make it easier to provide public health education by Red Cross volunteers as part of the project.

Branch secretaries had to justify their choice briefly and assign a villager from the selected location as the contact person.

2.5   Impact of National Society programming
on dividers and connectors
NRCS staffing and ethnicity

The Fundamental Principle of unity requires that a National Society must be open to everyone and that it must extend its activities throughout the entire country. In a country consisting of over 250

different tribes or ethnic groups, the NRCS inevitably has to consider its ethnic constituency. At the Lagos headquarters, this is done with admirable consistency. The National Society goes to great lengths to avoid being seen as biased when recruiting staff. When asked why they had been selected to join the organization, some staff acknowledged that "they were the right person [in terms of their ethnic background] at the right moment".

At branch level, staff ethnicity does not appear to be an issue, apart from in the more "radical" states such as Zamfaria. Contrary to the situation in some other West African National Societies, some state branch secretaries belong neither to the ethnic majority of the state nor to the state's "indigenous" ethnic group.

On the whole, representation is well managed and helps to undermine the negative effects of ethnic division in areas assisted by the Red Cross. However, NRCS staff noted that it is not always easy to do this and there have been positive and negative experiences in recent years.

The Ife-Modakeke case
This case was reviewed during the BPI analysis as an example of the NRCS providing relief assistance to two communities during violent clashes. In this case, relief was distributed at a neutral ground – a church. However, the Red Cross agreed to the request of leaders from both communities not to include Red Cross staff who were also members of the "other side" in its delegation for negotiations, as they were regarded as "spies".

The Kaduna case
It would be worth the cost and effort to analyse, document and learn from the NRCS response to the Kaduna riots. When riots between two communities of different ethnic-religious backgrounds got out of hand and exceeded the capacity of the Red Cross branch, Red Cross members from five other branches assisted the Kaduna branch. These members represented a variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds. Despite the difficult situation, the Red Cross managed to present itself as a team in which religion and ethnic origin played no role. Regardless of their background, all team members had access to all areas where the conflict raged. Many in the Red Cross speak highly of this intervention in terms of how successful the relief efforts were.

NRCS staffing and people's shared rejection of corruption
In the branches, the selection procedure for governance is relatively independent from headquarters in Lagos. This independence, however, increases branch vulnerability to public suspicion. Although the National Society takes into consideration the integrity of people elected to office before approving their position, the Nigerian people's deep disillusionment with the behaviour of public officials and their widespread rejection of corruption and abuse of power increases the need for transparency in Red Cross behaviour. There is a risk that some individuals in branch offices are perceived (whether true or not) to use their affiliation to the organization to cater to their own agenda. This is especially the case when a chairman's associates are perceived to benefit from arms manufacturing or arms dealing. In this case, the implicit message that the Red Cross sends to the community is that if someone has acquired wealth, by whatever means, he is also able to acquire an important position in a respected public organization. Such an impression can undermine the connector that exists between people who are tired of corruption and willing to work together across community and ethnic divisions for humanitarian ideals.

Geo-political structures and ethnicity
Although each state in Nigeria contains a mix of ethnic groups, the boundaries of local governments are drawn up to group "similar" population groups, e.g., based on a common language. The Nigerian government has recognized and even emphasized the difference in communities with different languages and ethnic backgrounds by drawing a local government borderline between them. The NRCS's geographical structure follows the national structure of governance. This means

that each state has one Red Cross branch and that the branch office is located in the state's capital. Red Cross "divisions" are set up according to local government structures. In this respect the NRCS's administrative structure may support the accentuation of differences between communities and groups and facilitate the manipulation of divisions for political gain.

The Share-Sarage case

An outsider would certainly consider the communities of Share and Sarage to be one village. No boundary is visible: houses are the same on both sides of the road that forms the boundary. During a recent conflict over a piece of land no bigger than a living room, one group, the Yoruba living in Share, blocked the water pipeline they shared with the Noppe from Sarage and then contaminated the only other water source available to the Noppe. The conflict turned violent and the Krawa Red Cross branch swiftly responded with relief assistance to some 4,000 affected people.

As the two communities belong to different local governments, the NRCS branch instructed both of its Red Cross divisions to provide relief. Although the NRCS made sure that residents of both Share and Sarage received exactly the same materials, each Red Cross division assisted only one side in the village.

As a result of following the local government structure and providing relief through its two Red Cross divisions, staff at headquarters realized that the Red Cross had acknowledged and even legitimized the difference between the two sides of the conflict. Moreover, the Red Cross had implied that it was not necessary for the two sides to cooperate or even to communicate with each other in order to get relief assistance. In the case of Share, the additional implicit message was that you can cut off water supplies to your "enemies" and still be rewarded with humanitarian assistance. It was noted that in the event of other incidents, where only one Red Cross division was present in the area, the single Red Cross division was charged with assisting both sides.

In one interview, the Share-Sarage community leader insisted that the Red Cross establish an office in the community. That is, one office for each community. Some local Red Cross staff agreed, but headquarters' staff felt that this approach would violate the Red Cross principle of unity.

As a result of the Share-Sarage case, the Noppe people from Sarage had no access to a clean water source. The NRCS addressed this need by drilling two new wells on their side of town. Despite the fact that these wells are less that a kilometre from his home, the Yoruba leader was obviously unaware of this assistance provided to his adversaries. Red Cross staff explained that this was a deliberate policy. As one coordinator put it: "We do not focus on the causes of the conflict, we only focus on needs."

Substitution

Two of the criteria included in the water and sanitation project are: that the NRCS will work in small communities where needs are greater in order to maximize the project's impact; and that the project will focus on communities that do not benefit from similar programmes run by the Nigerian government or other NGOs.

Because of the great (financial) constraints that local governments face, it is presumed that few resources are allocated to smaller and poorer communities. Instead, in the Nigerian context, authorities choose to focus on areas where they have political support or where they can otherwise profit from wealthy population groups. Small, poor villages are thus easily ignored. When relief agencies do implement activities in marginalized areas, local governments have no incentives to increase their accountability.

Rather than simply accepting that the local government cannot (or chooses not to) contribute to NRCS efforts, the WatSan project relies on dialogue with local government to determine what the

authorities can or should contribute, either in public support, technical know-how or other (non-financial) commitments.

In 1998, Ode-Giwa, a small village that had been proposed for inclusion in the WatSan project, suffered from a cholera outbreak, attributed to the poor water and sanitation conditions in the village. An NRCS/International Federation assessment team recommended constructing two water points and two latrines, one on either side of the road that passes through the village. To increase the accountability of the authorities to villages such as Ode-Giwa, it was proposed that NRCS would contribute 50 per cent to the costs, the local government 35 per cent and the village 15 per cent (in labour). Despite various attempts, two years later the local government was still unwilling to sign a letter of understanding. Tired of waiting and recognizing the worsening sanitary conditions, the Red Cross branch debated whether to go ahead with the construction of one water point and one latrine using funds that had already been allocated to the project.

This example may send a message to the government that if it waits long enough, relief agencies or other outsiders will provide services to communities that are marginalized and politically carry little "clout".

Specific considerations for the water and sanitation project

Water and sanitation projects are considered branch activities. Branches such as Niger, Borno, Logos and Imo have previously undertaken WatSan activities, such as well and latrine construction, as part of the community-based health programme.

For many years, NRCS branches have been requesting increased engagement in WatSan activities. This new project, therefore, was received enthusiastically in the branches that were selected for its implementation. As a result of the project, the local Red Cross will have a much stronger profile in the villages, and many anticipate that a number of villagers will become Red Cross members. The branches also expect to receive additional benefits such as vehicles and additional paid staff for the duration of the project.

Nearly all of the villages selected for implementation described their environment as very peaceful. This was a natural outcome of the selection criteria, which specified that only communities that are coherent and not involved in a conflict situation could be included. However, in its proposed format, both the process and the substance of the WatSan project were found to have significant potential for aggravating divisions within and between communities.

Reinforcing dividers
- **Geo-political structures and selection.** The implementation of the pre-selection phase of the project appears to have been top down, driven largely by headquarters. The six states were chosen by NRCS senior staff based on strategic political criteria. The state branch secretaries were informed of the selection of their state, and then instructed to provide 12 potential sites for implementation. Regardless of the basis for this selection, the fact that it was not seen to be based on needs assessment may lead some people – particularly in states which were not selected for assistance – to conclude that political factors of influence and patronage may have motivated selection and exclusion.
- **Demands for social services.** The pre-selection for the WatSan sites took place in February 2001. Branch secretaries forwarded the names of villages that they proposed for inclusion in the project. Currently a feasibility study is under way, which will result in a draft proposal. Selecting locations prior to a feasibility study and informing the community about this decision – as has been in the case in a number of villages – may backfire. For example, just after the BPI visit, the Red Cross team decided to reduce the number of participating states from six to three. Obviously, this will have consequences on how the NRCS is viewed in villages that will not

benefit from the programme, despite earlier "promises". The Red Cross will face a similar challenge if it is technically impossible to provide water or sanitation in a selected village, which may well be the case (it may be the reason why the target villages do not already have any water). If this were to happen and, for example, a nearby village were better located to drill or improve water sources, the NRCS must be able and prepared to deal with community relations between villagers who had been promised water services and those who actually receive them. In such a case, there would be a serious risk of exacerbating bitterness among communities over the failure to provide them with basic social services. The NRCS runs the risk not only of having to answer to angry communities but possibly of increasing tensions between neighbouring communities when one receives support and the other does not.

■ **Ethnicity and beneficiary selection.** Due to operational constraints, limited transportation possibilities and large areas to cover, not all states were able to conduct a needs assessment or gather field data other than that supplied by local government records. As a result, some of the proposed sites have not been visited personally and their selection was, albeit with the best intentions, based solely on secondary information. The hazards of selecting villages without visiting them can be seen from the following example.

One of the villages selected could draw water from a nearby riverbed, but another village is situated on the opposite bank of the river. The branch secretary could not visit the location himself and he was unaware of the presence of the second village. The selection of one community but not of the other could obviously have a profound impact on the relationship between the two villages. A possible secondary consequence of this approach is that it feeds into, and reinforces, the prevailing notion that the Red Cross is a foreign entity whose decisions are made from above. In turn, this fuels the apathy of wealthy citizens who at present show little concern about the position of their marginalized fellow citizens.

■ **Inequality, patronage and beneficiary selection.** Other projects have shown that the manner in which aid is given tends to legitimize some people and activities while "delegitimizing" others. Such impacts, which reinforce group connectors or dividers, are known as "legitimacy effects". Some of the criteria of the pre-selection procedure have inevitably generated legitimacy effects, which may be either good or bad, as the following examples show:

● As previously mentioned, some locations were selected to make up for promises previously made. A chairman's or branch secretary's power to deliver will reflect strongly on his/her personal authority and legitimacy, rather than on the NRCS as an organization.

● Some of the sites were selected based on recommendations by local government officials. Although they probably recommended villages for justifiable reasons, the legitimacy given to their advice reinforces their own standing in the community.

● In a remote village, Red Cross presence in the area was linked to activities initiated by the previous branch chairman, who came from the same village. NRCS headquarters had asked branch secretaries to select villages close to a Red Cross presence and this, coupled with the secretary's wish to select locations spread evenly across the state, led to the selection of this village. Even if the village does have legitimate humanitarian needs, its selection will be perceived as being linked to the previous chairman and indeed it legitimizes his continued authority in the community.

● The selection procedure requires that a contact person be appointed for each community. In one case, the local government suggested five villages, one of which was pre-selected because a community member works in the local government office. This village was consequently selected and the individual became the designated contact person. Although NRCS staff agreed that this method would certainly not undermine the authority of the village elders, it is nevertheless apparent that the contact person will be perceived as instrumental in bringing water to the village.

■ **Competition for water as a divider.** All three villages that were visited spoke of peaceful relations with their neighbouring communities. All three, however, acknowledged strained rela-

tions with pastoral Fulani cattlemen who are not considered part of the community and are in the area about four months a year to graze their cattle. In Krawa state, they are seen as a nuisance. The cattle destroy crops and, in one instance, reportedly polluted a water source with Guinea worm. In general, people fear the firepower of the Fulani, and thus a confrontation between the two groups is usually carefully avoided. When an elder was asked if he would provide water to a thirsty Fulani herder, his answer was: "No way." The relationship between the villages taking part in the WatSan project and the Fulani needs to be considered during the design of the project.

2.6   Options
NRCS staffing and ethnicity
It was discussed during the workshop how the NRCS could, even in difficult situations like Ife-Modakeke, still use its role to build on the common ground that exists, even during extremely violent conflicts. For example, in future clashes, the NRCS could embark on very transparent negotiations with all sides to ensure that the Red Cross team has members from each community. Rather than feed into a fear of spying, the Red Cross could indeed set an example for normalcy and use its leverage (bringing goods that both sides desire) to build on existing local capacities for peace. In fact, the Red Cross team could itself behave as a local capacity for peace.

NRCS staffing and shared rejection of corruption
Some National Societies which experienced a similar dilemma chose to apply transparent selection criteria for governance and management positions in their organization. It was felt that such guidelines might ensure a correct perception and usage of the Red Cross name.

Ethnicity and NRCS structures
In the case of Share-Sarage, workshop participants recognized that such an approach provided a short-term solution but might backfire for both the NRCS as well as the Noppe community after the Yoruba find out about the new wells constructed by NRCS (a plaque on the wells clearly identifies the generous donor!). Given the history of conflict between the communities, the wells could be an easy target for further violence. It was agreed that in a future clash, preference should be given to a more transparent response. Although such an approach requires courage and probably more training at the branch level on how to handle a potentially violent situation, Red Cross staff expressed an interest in the opportunity to explain Red Cross principles clearly to the community while positioning themselves more effectively as an impartial and neutral organization.

3.   Conclusion
3.1   Lessons learned
BPI analysis helped the NRCS staff identify a series of options that would support the effective implementation of water and sanitation programmes as well as overall programming and help prevent aid programmes playing into and supporting the dynamics of conflict.

Among other lessons, the BPI analysis showed that NRCS programming can take advantage of a number of opportunities to build on existing connectors between different groups. Nigeria is a highly volatile country as highlighted by the loss of over 6,000 civilian lives in communal clashes in less than two years. Increasing competition for scarce resources, transition to democratic rule and deepening economic hardship as austerity drives people deeper into poverty, have increased tensions between the many ethnic groups and increased vulnerability to exploitation by political actors marginalized by the return of democratic rule. The NRCS is in a key position to promote cross-group cooperation and give practical examples of how people can set aside their differences and work together to build a better life. For example, in Share-Sarage, both communities share the same

infrastructure, marketplace and water source. They also shared human and material loss due to the violent conflict. In the event of a violent clash in the future, this connector can be turned into a "capacity for peace" if the NRCS insists that both communities cooperate – beginning with shared communication – in the programming of humanitarian assistance.

The timing of the mission of itself provided a critical lesson for programme planning – in Nigeria and elsewhere. The BPI analysis mission took place just days before the WatSan consultant arrived in Nigeria to conduct a feasibility study and draft a proposal, thereby providing valuable information for inclusion in the programme plan. But the analysis was too late to be of benefit to branch secretaries who had already selected the villages where the WatSan project would be implemented. Subsequent difficulties with communities regarding selection could easily have been avoided by a thorough analysis of the context of the intervention. BPI is a simple straightforward tool which can be easily used to provide such an analysis and reinforce significantly the integrity and practicability of programme planning.

3.2 Follow-up

A number of recommendations emerged from the BPI mission and analysis:

- **Training and dissemination.** This first BPI visit identified some of the opportunities that the Red Cross staff have to use their activities to strengthen local capacities for peace and to set an example of "normalcy". It is, however, a challenging task to get the leaders of two adverse communities to agree on the manner and targeting of relief. It is likewise difficult to attain full transparency about the services provided to opposing sides. Equally challenging is the need to persuade local governments to increase downward accountability. Branch secretaries especially will require specific training and moral support to handle such situations more effectively. This process will take time and, if the NRCS chooses to take up this challenge, not all staff will be willing or able to make the transition to an approach that does not follow the most convenient methodology.

- **Focus on field level.** During the visit, NRCS staff introduced to the BPI were mainly from headquarters. Many of them are only indirectly involved with the operations in the field. Although it is vital that all staff at headquarters are familiar with and supportive of the concept, these ideas need to reach the field in order to increase impact. Policies and directives from Lagos about the integration of BPI in reporting systems and decision-making strategies are only effective when the field understands what is expected of them. On a future visit, it will be important to focus specifically on increasing understanding of BPI at field level, with special emphasis on training branch secretaries.

- **Incorporate BPI into programme planning.** After the BPI workshop, some Red Cross staff were eager to incorporate a BPI analysis in the WatSan project and proposed that it be included in the selection of the WatSan locations just before final commitments are made, i.e., when a "proposed" site becomes an "actual" site. Although this intention deserves credit, it is important to clarify two fundamental elements of BPI:
  - Because the context of conflict is ever changing, BPI should be a continuous process which is an intrinsic part of every decision taken, no matter who makes the decision or when. Approval for the project may not be given before early 2002, by which time many things may have changed in Nigeria. NRCS staff confirmed that the country should be considered as a collection of distinct, different environments and contexts rather than one entity. A BPI analysis of the situation in Kaduna will be substantially different to one in, say, River state or Zamfaria state. A one-off BPI analysis undertaken at a particular moment in the process will not, therefore, be of much use. It may even prove harmful if staff were to regard the project mistakenly as "conflict-assessment-proof", thereby lowering their level of alertness.
  - BPI is a useful tool that can be used in any decision-making phase, but is not exclusively intended for site selection. Such a limited approach could be harmful if all

other decisions that have an impact on a context are not considered. Taking into consideration potential unintended side-effects should be, like a BPI analysis, a continuous process. It is critical to focus beyond the few but obvious potential triggers for tension.

The engineer writing the WatSan proposal recommended the inclusion of BPI training as part of the project design. This would certainly enhance an understanding of BPI at the field level. Many of the branch secretaries, who would benefit from such training, did not take part in the BPI workshop. Training that focuses on gender, BPI and socio-cultural analysis would increase the branch secretaries' capacity to deal with a wider range of challenges and increase the quality of data collection for the feasibility study.

■ **Supporting programme intervention in communal conflict situations.** It is also suggested that a future visit devote time for travel to other states that regularly experience violent conflict between communities. NRCS staff specifically recommended visits to Kaduna and Cross Rivers states.

BPI is about building on the achievements to date and improving the provision of humanitarian services. As one International Federation delegate noted, "It is about freedom of fear," and about taking decisions. But it should not be forgotten that NOT taking a decision is a decision in itself.

Tajikistan

UZBEKISTAN
KYRGYZSTAN
CHINA
AFGHANISTAN
PAKISTAN

LENINOBOD
KARATEGUIN
KHALTON
BADAKHSHONI KŬHÍ
Pamir

DUSHANBE

Shardara · Yangiyul' · Angren · Almalyk · Chust · Namangan · Jalal-Abad · Oy-Tal
Syrdar'ya · Adrasmon · Kokand · Shakhrikhan · Andizan · Kara-Suu · Osh · Alay kuu
Gora Bodoyob · Kanibadam · Marguilan · Fergana · Asaka · Eski-Nookat · Sopu-Korgon
Khŭjand · Qayroqqum · Isfara · Frunze · Kyzyl-Kyya · Erkech-Tam
Bekabad · Ghafurov · Shŭrob · Khaydarken · Pik Skobeleva · Sary-Tash
Khavast · Nov · Shariston · Vorukh · Daroot-Korgan
Dzhizak · Ŭroteppa · Isfana · Lenin Peak
Shariston · Mathoh · Jirgatol · Qarokŭl
Umertan · Ayni · Zarafshon · Tojikobod · Qullai Garmo · Rangkŭl
Pik Samarkand · Zaratshon · Novobod · Gharm · Sangvor · Aqbaytal · Murghob
Ziddi · Takob · Tavil'dara · Ghŭdara · Alichur · Tŭkhtamish
Varzob · Romit · Obigarm · Qal'aikhum · Bartang · Qizilrabot
Kofarnihon · Khovaling · Vanj · Rushon · Dzhilandy · Wakhan
Hisor · Norak · Leningrad · Shazud · Yuben'
Uzun · Yovon · Sovet · Khorugh · Andarob · Qal'eh-ye Panjeh · Sarhadd
Denau · Danghara · Kŭlob · Qal'eh-ye Bar Panj · Roshtqal'a
Qŭrgonteppa · Kalininobod · Vose · Feyzābād
Kumkurgan · Vakhsh · Yangi Qal'eh · Eshk"shem · Ishkoshim
Dzharkurgan · Kolkhozobod · Moskva · Nowsh"k · Tirich Mir
Termez · Shahrtuz · Dusti · Keshem
Aivadzh · Shŷr Khān · Emam žahēb · Talogān · Khānābād
Maz^r-e Sharŷf · Kholm · Qondız · Bāghlan
Baghlan

0 km 30 60 90 km

1.   Introduction

1.1   Why Tajikistan?

Since the break-up of the Soviet Union the people of Tajikistan have suffered enormous hardship and poverty. Its population of 6.2 million people has been subjected to a bloody, five-year civil war in which at least 50,000 died. Up to 600,000 people were displaced internally by the fighting and an estimated 80,000 fled the country seeking refuge mainly in Afghanistan. Many people have left permanently to build a life in neighbouring countries.

Deep divisions exist within agricultural areas in Tajikistan, as the cultivation of cotton is prioritized over other crops in terms of the quantity and quality of land and irrigation resources allocated to its production.

Post-war reconciliation and recovery are slow and complicated by the post-Soviet transition to a free market economy. The suffering caused by the war has been compounded in recent years by chronic food shortages as a result of insufficient domestic production, the slow pace of land reform and underinvestment in the agricultural sector. Food production was further reduced by the partial collapse of the country's irrigation infrastructure and pressure to increase cotton production.

Humanitarian organizations including the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan (RCST) have been providing emergency relief to alleviate suffering and limited rehabilitation assistance to support recovery. In doing so they face a major dilemma: how to respond to widespread and prolonged vulnerability to hunger and malnutrition caused by structural – political and economic – factors?

Only thorough analysis of the political, economic and social context and an understanding of the dynamics of conflict at the level of planned intervention can ensure that aid programmes do not undermine long-term recovery even as they ease suffering in the short term.

It was suggested that the BPI methodology for analysing the impact of aid on communities recovering from conflict and high levels of social violence could help inform programming by the RCST.

1.2   BPI objectives and activities

Tajikistan was one of the first countries in which the BPI analysis was used. The operating environment was extremely complex: post-conflict recovery during the transition from communism to liberal democracy, and from centrally-planned to free-market economics, in a country affected by drought, economic crisis and regional instability.

The BPI engagement in Tajikistan can be divided into three separate phases:

- **Phase 1.** An introductory and piloting phase aimed at raising awareness of the potential negative effects of aid delivered in post-conflict situations, and testing the applicability of the Local Capacities for Peace (LCP) project's findings to RCST programming in the specific circumstances of post-Soviet, post-conflict transition in Tajikistan. Two missions were conducted in May and November 1999. During the intervening period the International Federation's relief delegate and his RCST counterpart undertook an initial analysis of the food security programme (FSP) using the BPI methodology.
- **Phase 2.** A follow-up mission in October 2000 to evaluate the application of the BPI to the FSP and review findings in the light of a large-scale drought relief programme (DRP) planned for implementation in late 2000 and 2001.

- **Phase 3.** An evaluation mission in July 2001 to analyse the application of the BPI methodology to the DRP.

The specific outcomes from the different phases of the BPI interventions in Tajikistan were:
- In 1999, a revised FSP and 23 RCST staff and five delegates trained in systematic analysis of the impact of aid delivered in situations of post-conflict or social violence.
- In 2000, an assessment of potential negative and positive effects of the planned DRP, an impact analysis questionnaire to guide planning of DRP interventions and an impact graph to map individual organization's recovery programmes by sector and level of intervention, highlighting their potential for political impact.
- In 2001, an evaluation of the DRP, a BPI Tajikistan case study and a chapter on Tajikistan in the *World Disasters Report 2001*.

2. BPI analysis

2.1 Conflict context

Most of modern Tajikistan was part of the feudal Bukharian Emirate, a Russian protectorate, prior to its incorporation into the USSR during the Soviet division of central Asia into ethnically based republics in the period between 1924 and 1929. Traditionally one of the poorest republics in the Soviet Union, it received a large proportion of its national budget in transfers from Moscow. In 1990 this subsidy amounted to 47 per cent of government revenues.

In 1991, Russia dissolved the Soviet Union and Tajikistan declared itself independent on 9 September 1991. Conflict began in November when the Communist Party candidate, Rahkmon Nabiyev, won the presidential election, defeating the candidate representing the Democratic Party of Tajikistan (DPT) and the Islamic Renaissance Party (IRP). In May 1992, following months of anti-communist demonstrations, Nabiyev was forced to govern in coalition with Islamic and secular democratic parties. A month later, armed Nabiyev supporters overthrew the coalition and replaced it with a neo-communist government. Demonstrations in the capital degenerated into violent confrontations between pro-communist and opposition supporters. A pro-communist faction from the south established the Kulyabi Popular Front militia and the conflict shifted to the southern Khatlon province and escalated to all-out warfare. Between May and December 1992, 50,000 people were killed as regional groups mobilized around ideological (communist versus democratic) and religious (Islamic versus secular) differences. As many as 100,000 people may have died in the bloody, five-year civil war. One-tenth of the population, some 600,000 people, were displaced internally while 80,000 were forced into exile, mainly in Afghanistan.

The regional divisions were deeply rooted in Tajikistan's Soviet-era experience of northern dominance, forced displacement and religious oppression. During this period the economically dominant northern Leninabad (Soghd) region provided most of Tajikistan's governing elite. The success of the Kulyabi Popular Front militia against opposition fighters forced the Leninabad communists to cede control to their Kulyabi allies from the poorer south. At a meeting of the Tajik parliament in November 1992, Emomali Rahmonov, head of the Kulyab Soviet of People's Deputies, was elected head of the Supreme Soviet – in effect head of state and government.

Opposing them was a coalition dominated by parties from the eastern regions of Qarateghin and Gorno-Badakshan, composed of the IRP, the DPT and La'li Badakshan. Islamic groups had been pressing for a more active role in politics in many of the central Asian republics and this ambition was partly realized in June 1990 when the USSR Congress of Muslims created the pan-Soviet Islamic Renaissance Party from which emerged Tajikistan's IRP. Its main stronghold was in the Qarateghin region among Garmi communities who had been forcibly relocated from the Qarateghin region to

provide labour on the state cotton farms of the Vakhsh during the Soviet period. The DPT was a popular nationalist movement composed mainly of Dushanbe intellectuals. It had no armed supporters. The IRP and DPT were allied with La'li Badakhshan, a party representing mainly Pamiris seeking increased autonomy for the eastern region of Gorno-Badahkshan.

Fierce fighting and widespread atrocities took place in the southern Khatlon region in late 1992. Pro-communist Kulyabi militias expelled most of the non-Kulyabi population in the winter of 1992-1993 and many fled to northern Afghanistan where the IRP developed an effective guerrilla force. By 1996, the opposition had coalesced under the United Tajik Opposition (UTO), capturing valleys in the east of the country.

The conflict was fuelled by external powers seeking to influence the outcome of the war. However, the rise of the Taleban in Afghanistan and the fear that their style of fundamentalist Sunni Islam would spread into Tajikistan and across central Asia prompted intense international pressure for a resolution to the conflict. International mediation resulted in a peace deal, signed on 27 June 1997. A new coalition government was established between the People's Democratic Party of Tajikistan (PDPT) and the opposition parties led by the IRP. The peace agreement also provided for the return of all refugees, demobilization of guerrilla groups and the holding of elections.

Although the internal political situation has improved since the signing of the 1997 agreement, security remains a problem in some parts of the country. Military forces that were once loyal elements of the army have rebelled on three occasions since 1997. The third rebellion in November 1998 was launched from Uzbekistan and reportedly involved Leninabadi elements dissatisfied with their exclusion from power. Relations with neighbouring Uzbekistan have not been helped by the Dushanbe government's inability to prevent armed forces from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) from using its territory to stage incursions into Kyrgyzstan and southern Uzbekistan in August 1999 and again in August 2000. The IMU is made up of ethnic Uzbeks who fled Uzbekistan and fought on the side of the IRP during the civil war.

In November 1999 President Rahmonov was re-elected, and in February-March 2000 his PDPT consolidated its parliamentary position following a poor showing by the Islamist opposition.[1] In June 2000 Russia and Tajikistan agreed to maintain Russian forces in Tajikistan for a period of ten years.

Today, Tajikistan is struggling with a very difficult twin-transition: from war to peace and from Soviet state to independent free-market economy. In doing so it faces a formidable series of obstacles which contribute to a strong undercurrent of social tension and conflict:

- The removal of the Soviet Union's government revenue subsidy.
- The destruction wrought by five years of civil war and the subsequent loss of taxation revenues and foreign investment.
- The deterioration of national infrastructure as a result of years of neglect and underinvestment.
- The exodus of a large proportion of its most educated and productive population.
- Chronic food shortages, an unemployment rate of up to 80 per cent of the country's workforce and absolute poverty for most of the population whose annual average income is estimated at US$ 111.
- A thriving drug-trafficking sector with up to 25 per cent of Afghanistan's opium, morphine and heroin production being smuggled through Tajikistan.

2.2　The relationship between aid and conflict

An analysis of the post-Soviet, post-war recovery process under way in Tajikistan suggests that poverty, vulnerability and hunger are deeply rooted in political and economic inequities. With one of the lowest ratios of arable land per head in the world, Tajikistan is chronically food deficient. Annual cereal production during the Soviet era averaged 42 kilograms of cereal per head (against an estimated

1. Sporadic violence continues however. In mid-2001 a number of prominent political and religious figures were assassinated and 60 people were killed in clashes between the army and former UTO forces near Dushanbe.

need of 146 kg). This was not a problem as one of Tajikistan's principal function in the network of Soviet republics was to produce cotton which it traded for grain – to make up the food deficit – and other imports. In the pre-civil war period cotton production averaged almost 900,000 tonnes per year.

Since 1991, however, output has fallen sharply. As a result of the destruction and disruption caused by the civil war, annual production was down to 318,000 tonnes in 1996. Deterioration of the irrigation infrastructure, decrepit machinery and continued reliance on low productivity Soviet-era collectives and state farms have spoiled any prospect of a significant increase in production. The impact on prospects for recovery is severe; cotton provides roughly 12 per cent of government revenues and is one of Tajikistan's main sources of export revenue and hard currency to service foreign debt.

To increase production the government has expanded the area of arable land under cotton cultivation. This has had direct consequences on food production. Cotton has been prioritized over cereal at all levels – displacing cereal cultivation on irrigated land and increasing competition for land, water and other agricultural inputs. The government has also stepped up the privatization of state cotton farms and cotton-processing factories (ginning mills) as part of a major process in its strategy for transition to a free-market economy. By 2001 the state property committee had sold off all 32 of Tajikistan's cotton ginning mills, some 400 of its 600 state and collective farms (each comprising 1,000-2,000 hectares), and 5,500 other state-run enterprises.

There have, however, been widespread reports of impropriety in the privatization process. According to *The Economist's* Intelligence Unit, "influential business and political figures have enjoyed preferential treatment and were awarded lucrative state assets at extremely low prices".

Meanwhile the vast majority of Tajikistan's population was suffering through the country's most severe food shortages in recent history. At the end of the war, 16 per cent of households were categorized as critically food-insecure. By 1999, chronic malnutrition rates in excess of 40 per cent were being reported by the World Food Programme (WFP).

In 2000, Tajikistan experienced its worst drought in 74 years. The damage wrought by the civil war, combined with the virtual collapse of the irrigation infrastructure in some areas and a shortage of quality seeds and fertilizers, was compounded by severe shortage of rainfall, raising fears of impending famine. The grain harvest produced barely 25 per cent of national food requirements. Over 1 million people were facing starvation.

It seemed that almost a decade of humanitarian food aid programming had contributed nothing to food security in Tajikistan. Since 1991, humanitarian agencies and in particular WFP and the European Union through its European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) had engaged in large-scale aid programming providing direct food aid to vulnerable groups to alleviate hunger. By the late 1990s, fears that institutionalized food aid was creating dependency and perpetuating chronic food insecurity led to an increased engagement in agricultural rehabilitation assistance to household and peasant farmers to promote food security. This drew aid organizations directly into the dynamics of political and social conflict, in some cases sparking violence between peasant farmers and local authorities.

WFP and Action Against Hunger (AAH) had reported acute malnutrition rates in the south of the country in 1999 and much of the aid programming was concentrated there. The agriculturally rich Khatlon province was one of the worst affected. Khatlon has a history of inter-group tension. In the 1970s and 1980s in the Vahksh valley, where resettled Garmi and Pamiri communities border indigenous Kulyab and Uzbek villages, disputes over access to land and water were common as demographic pressure and scarcity of agricultural inputs sharpened differences and increased competition over resources. It was here, between these groups, that the fiercest fighting and the worst atrocities took place during the civil war. The potential for conflict generated by agricultural

rehabilitation programmes allocating land, tools, fertilizer and seeds to limited numbers of peasants from different communities who had recently emerged from a long and bloody conflict over these resources was enormous.

The international aid community was confronted with a major dilemma: how to intervene meaningfully in the heavily politicized environment of land access, use and control, yet remain neutral. If aid interventions were limited to addressing immediate needs, it was alleged that by supplying hundreds of thousands of tonnes of food, organizations were relieving the government of its responsibility to support food production through investment in irrigation infrastructure, land reform and agricultural rehabilitation programmes. On the other hand, providing agricultural rehabilitation assistance could be interpreted as aid organizations' legitimizing increased cotton cultivation at the expense of food production. This in turn could be seen as supporting a privatization process which seemed to be exclusively benefiting an elite minority at the expense of a starving majority.

2.3   Dividers and connectors

Although there are differences between the northern and southern contexts in Tajikistan, both dividers and connectors are of broad scope, affecting all of the population. While connectors are deeply rooted, most dividers are relatively recent, arising from the Soviet-era manipulation of ethnic and national identities or from competition over the control of land and water resources arising during the post-Soviet transition.

Dividers

Regionalism/ethnicity

The civil war in part opposed regional groups within the Tajik population. The traditionally dominant Leninabadis from the north were allied with the Kulyabis in the south of the country in support of the communist government. They fought an opposition of mainly Garmi and Pamiri groups whose main support was in the Qarateghin region (central Tajikistan) and the Gorno-Badakshan province in the east of the country. Much of the fighting took place in southern Khatlon province, with a mixed population of Kulyabis and Uzbeks ("indigenous" to the province) against Garmi (transplanted to Khatlon in the 1930s to work on state cotton farms). Khatlon is particularly affected by food insecurity.

Access to land

Land is one of the most contested resources in Tajikistan today. Only 7 per cent of the land is arable, but 70 per cent of the population of 6.2 million live in rural areas, i.e., a population density on arable land of 488 people per square kilometre. Competition is sharply intensified by food scarcity, poverty and widespread unemployment.

Land reform is under way to improve access and effective use of arable land. State and collective farms are being privatized and the government has also distributed 75,000 hectares of mainly irrigated state-owned farmland in small plots of 0.75 hectares as part of the presidential land scheme. The distribution process has been less than transparent and information on the scheme itself, as well as conditions of entitlement and responsibility, has not been fairly disseminated. This has fuelled claims of unfairness and corruption and manipulation of the scheme. As a result, local conflicts between authorities and disgruntled peasants about entitlement have been common, sometimes resulting in both individual and collective acts of violence.

Land use

Cotton is prioritized over other agricultural production at all levels, in terms of the quantity and quality of land allocated for cultivation, irrigation, infrastructure investment and payment of salaries.[2] This sets up a series of deep divisions within agricultural areas (mainly in the irrigated valleys in the south, west and north of the country) where cotton is cultivated:

2. Tajikistan has 840,000 hectares of arable land. In theory 555,000 hectares are irrigated, though failure to maintain irrigation canals and pipes, pumping stations and electricity supply has caused much of the irrigation infrastructure to collapse, and in reality less than 400,000 hectares may be serviced by functioning irrigation. Of this, 280,000 hectares are sown to cotton, probably leaving less than 100,000 hectares of irrigated land under cereal.

- Cotton farming is closely connected with Garmi and Pamiri communities who have been transplanted from the Qarateghin and Badahkshan regions. These groups have maintained a very distinct identity as a result if their origin and collective experience. During the civil war they constituted the main opposition to the pro-communist Kulyabis and Leninabadis.
- Cotton cultivation is carried out mainly on state farms, as opposed to individual private farms or peasant associations.
- Privatization of state and collective farms and cotton ginning plants has exacerbated divisions by transferring state- or publicly-owned assets into the hands of private entrepreneurs, while the vast majority do not have access to even small "presidential plots" of 0.75 hectares.
- The cultivation of cotton requires much more water than cereals, and thus irrigated land is prioritized for cotton. This is a further source of division particularly when, as happened in 2001, cotton production increased at the same time that cereal production halved causing food shortages and forcing people to pay inflated prices for imported food or queue for humanitarian aid.

Water distribution

Water for agriculture is a major source of tension, occasionally resulting in violence. Although Tajikistan drains enough water from melting snow and ice to supply the five central Asian republics, the irrigation system to deliver this water has virtually collapsed on almost half of the irrigated land. Pipes, electricity generators and pumps have fallen into disrepair due to insufficient government revenues for maintenance. As a result, irrigation in large areas of previously irrigated land now depends on rainfall. In recent years much of central and southern Asia has been hit by drought, intensifying competition for access to irrigated land between transplanted and indigenous communities and between cotton and cereal production.

Neo-feudal labour systems

The provision of labour for state projects has tradition ally been a source of deep division in Tajik society. From 1930s until the 1970s, hundreds of thousands of people were forcibly resettled from central and eastern areas of the country to provide labour for intensive agricultural projects and new industries. Entire Garmi and Pamiri villages were resettled and preserved their distinct identity as a result of their experience. This stimulated inter-group competition for employment and sharpened perceptions of social difference. Today, unemployment is high at around 50 per cent of the labour force. Of those employed, 67 per cent work in agriculture. Many people working on collective state cotton farms (*sovkhoz* and *kolkhoz*) have not been paid their regular salary for years.

Inequality/elite group manipulation

Inequality is a powerful divider between people and communities in post-war Tajikistan, where ethnicity, origin, connections, income, membership of elite groups or parties are too often the main determinants of access and opportunity. Tajikistan is under severe pressure to produce quick results in economic growth – through privatization of state assets, restricted public spending and the removal of subsidies. Growth is, at best, unequal and, according to respected international analysis, the privatization process has been "anything but equitable".[3] The net result is a widening gap between an elite group of politicians and businessmen and the vast majority who have no access to any means of trade or production and survive on an average annual income of US$ 111. Gross domestic product (GDP) in 2001 was only 50 per cent of that of 1990.[4]

Nationalism/ethnicity

Ethnic Uzbeks make up 25 per cent of Tajikistan's population.[5] In the early years of the Soviet Union, territories that were historically Tajik were incorporated into the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic within which modern Tajikistan was an autonomous region. In 1929, Tajikistan was granted the status of full soviet socialist republic, incorporating the Uzbek province of Leninabad. Half a million Tajiks and the Tajik cultural centres of Samarkand and Bukhara remained within Uzbekistan. Relations with Uzbekistan have been tense since the civil war. Both governments have

3. *The Economist's* Intelligence Unit. *Country Profile 2001*, p. 56.

4. Op. cit., p. 58.

5. Prior to the civil war, Tajikistan also had a dynamic Russian community accounting for up to 8 per cent of the population. Most have left and today they number less than 2 per cent.

higlighted national issues of language and culture and sought to revive old identities from previous periods in history. There are significant Uzbek communities in both Khatlon and Soghd (Leninabad) provinces and food shortages have fuelled competition for resources such as land, water and aid.

Connectors

Religion

As 85 per cent of the population is Muslim (80 per cent Sunni, 5 per cent Shia), Islam is a major connector between people at all levels. In pre-Soviet times there were many religious occasions, practices and traditions which brought people from different families and communities together and which provided a commonly accepted framework for behaviour in all day-to-day aspects of life, as well as agreed mechanisms for addressing and resolving intra- and inter-community conflicts. One example was the shared dinner in the local mosque which provided community members with a regular, structured forum to discuss common concerns.

Respect for community elders

The *mahallah* system is used in most villages and is respected as a source of leadership, guidance and conflict resolution. Prior to the Soviet period, Tajik communities in both rural and urban areas were self-organized through citizens' or *mahallah* councils. These councils of male elders provided a forum where male heads of households would meet and discuss local problems and conflicts. The Soviet system weakened traditional civic institutions such as *mahallahs* and undermined their authority by creating and empowering professional associations to represent the Soviet state within the community. When conflict broke out in 1992, people withdrew from state-sanctioned organizations and reverted to the traditional structures based on community, family and local ties.

Shared interest in basic services

In the post-civil war context, local governments cannot afford to provide local communities with basic services such as water, sanitation and electricity. There is an increased reliance on community-based organizations and people have mobilized at local level through the *mahallah* system and other village councils and traditional mechanisms. The central government has created a network of *jamoats* – semi-official institutions located between *mahallah* councils and local government structures – to include these community councils in the local administrative structure.

Strong family ties

Tajikistan is a mainly rural society with 73 per cent of the population living in rural areas. Networks of solidarity are built on family and community ties. Tajiks have strong family connections and both give and seek support from immediate and extended family structures known as "clans". Clan membership and links with villages or places of origin are often maintained even after moving to urban areas. Urban neighbourhoods are often populated by people from the same region. Family relationship can thus act as a connector at local level within communities where such relationships exist, and also at sub-national and national level as a basis for understanding with other communities in Tajikistan who function through the same systems.

Desire for peace

Public opinion consistently supported peace and opposed the conflict in Tajikistan, yet fighting continued for six years. The peace agreement came about as a function of political and geo-political factors which were apparently not materially influenced by public opinion at local or national level. However, opposition to war and violent conflict is a major force that connects communities of all types in Tajikistan. The civil war, with its disintegration of lives and livelihoods, is still fresh in people's minds a few short years later. People are tired of conflict and there is an overwhelming desire for peace. This is a strong connector between people at local level and is shared across sub-national boundaries.

2.4   National Society programming
Food security programme 1999-2000

In response to widespread vulnerability in post-war Tajikistan, the RCST conducted a variety of aid programmes including a direct food assistance programme for 76,500 beneficiaries. In 1999, a food security programme (FSP) to promote food production was piloted as an alternative to the direct food assistance programme. Initially, the pilot began with 4,000 beneficiaries and increased to 12,000 in two areas south of Dushanbe. Inputs were provided at three different levels:

- The RCST provided food for two purposes: rations to feed the beneficiary family during the interim period until they could become food secure; and a second ration which they could monetize to buy seeds and fertilizer.
- The beneficiaries themselves provided tools, willingness, and physical and technical ability.
- Local authorities provided beneficiaries with a small plot of land (0.75 hectares), under the "presidential land scheme" which would allow them to produce enough food for family needs, plus a surplus which could be sold for seeds and fertilizer for the next planting season.

Drought relief programme 2000-2001

In 2000, Tajikistan experienced its worst drought in 74 years. Domestic cereal production fell by 47 per cent and over 1 million people faced hunger and malnutrition. In August, the International Federation sent a team to conduct an emergency assessment and a major drought relief programme was planned with the following objectives:

- Provide food aid to 31,250 households in the southern Khatlon and northern Leninabad regions.
- Supply target groups with seeds to plant for the following year's harvest.
- Improve or expand the water system for the target population through repairs and cleaning of water channels within food-for-work activities.

2.5   Impact of National Society programming on dividers and connectors
Food security programme

Two BPI missions were conducted during 1999: in May to introduce the BPI methodology; and in November to support analysis of the FSP. The analysis revealed a number of ways in which the FSP was increasing tension within and between communities in the assisted areas.

Beneficiary targeting and elite group manipulation

In one of the two areas being assisted, the FSP was not targeting assistance to the most vulnerable people. Beneficiary selection through *jamoats* (local authorities) had resulted in support being extended to leasehold farmers renting 30-hectare holdings from owners of recently privatized peasant associations. While the *jamoats'* intention was to support recovery and to provide food, seeds and fertilizer to these leasehold farmers so that they could increase production, they were clearly not among the most vulnerable and their participation in the programme exacerbated tensions with the majority who had neither been allocated land nor received humanitarian assistance. For them this was another case of partiality towards certain groups who benefit from the privatization process. As a result the manipulation of the programme by the *jamoats* reinforced the existing division of inequality.

Initial monitoring in the second area found that FSP beneficiaries were being selected according to the programme design, i.e., landless peasants were receiving plots which they could cultivate as agreed. However, a more in-depth analysis revealed that the programme was fuelling tension and conflict in several ways:

- **Access to land and beneficiary targeting.** The FSP depended on the *jamoats* to allocate plots of land from the presidential land scheme to beneficiaries. The government had set aside a total of 75,000 hectares for this scheme, which meant that 100,000 families would qualify. In the areas where the FSP is being implemented, the number of plots was very small and entitlement

was intensely contested. The fact that FSP beneficiaries would be entitled to a plot of land caused resentment by other peasants who did not qualify for the FSP and were competing for one of these plots. Analysis revealed some cases where two members of the same extended family, living as neighbours in the same compound and with relatively similar socio-economic conditions, applied for plots under the FSP. But whereas one brother qualified, the other did not. This caused resentment even at family level and certainly fed directly into the tension and conflict between groups and communities who had been on opposing sides during the war. (During the BPI introductory phase in 1999, the RCST's FSP manager could not be contacted as he was in hiding from furious landless peasants who had not been selected for the programme.)

- **Access to land and elite group manipulation.** Beneficiaries were entitled to 0.75-hectare plots, but in many cases they were not being allocated the agreed-size plot. One such example was included in the BPI analysis: RCST staff interviewed beneficiaries who were in possession of the certificate received from the authorities entitling them to a plot of 0.75 hectares, but were able to show that they had only been allocated a plot of 0.15 hectares. This fuels the already existing conflict over access to land, further frustrating landless peasants who feel that they have been cheated out of their entitlement, and are given plots of land which can never provide sufficient crops to ensure food security.

- **Taxation.** Although the presidential decree stipulated that only a token tax payment would be levied on presidential plots, the potential of farmers to gain from the FSP was compromised by the fact that in some areas local authorities were levying a tax of up to 30 per cent of their harvest. As with the denial of beneficiaries' entitlement to a correctly-sized plot, this type of manipulation of the aid programme exacerbates the tensions that exist between landless peasants and elite groups controlling resources and access to land in Tajikistan.

  Such behaviour increases people's sense of powerlessness. When corruption and manipulation take place with impunity and people have no mechanism or institution to respond to the denial of their rights, their feelings of irrelevance and frustration can fuel conflict and violence. Violent groups and extremist organizations thrive in these environments by offering aggrieved people an outlet for their frustration and resentment.

- **Access to land and neo-feudal labour systems.** Beneficiaries were allocated plots of land in accordance with the FSP's aims and objectives, which were the subject of a written agreement between the authorities and the RCST. No responsibilities or contractual obligations other than those stipulated in the FSP accrued to beneficiaries in return for this plot. However, interviews conducted with some FSP beneficiaries as part of the BPI analysis revealed that some beneficiaries were required to work on collective farms or *kolkhoz*, without any agreed remuneration for their labour, in return for the allocation.

Drought relief programme

In November 2000, prior to the implementation of the drought relief programme (DRP) a BPI analysis of the project was undertaken with RCST staff and International Federation delegates. The main objectives were to review the findings of the BPI's FSP analysis, analyse the programming context in the light of the drought, and highlight implications for the planned DRP so that potential negative impacts could be minimized and, where possible, avoided. This pre-implementation peace and conflict impact analysis highlighted a number of ways in which the programme might enflame existing divisions and increase tensions and conflict.

Improved access to water

During periods of drought, water is clearly a major source of tension. Half of the arable land in Tajikistan is rain-fed and even when precipitation levels are more or less normal, disputes over water occasionally result in violence. In times of water shortage there are at least four ways in which engagement by the RCST in water provision would provoke or increase tensions between different groups:

- **Water distribution.** Rain-fed land is rendered useless during drought, fuelling resentment against holders of irrigated land who may be associated with controlling elites. Activities intended to improve access to water need to be carefully analysed and planned in order to avoid playing into this division.
- **Inequality.** The existing water distribution system prioritizes water to state farms, collectives and associations, to the detriment of the small leaseholders and presidential plot holders. Engagement in this sector raises questions about who will be assisted, how and why.
- **Land use.** Cotton cultivation requires disproportionately more water than cereals, frequently causing friction between the different farming communities. Engagement exclusively in support of cereal or food-producing land may increase tensions with the cotton farming community.
- **Nationalism/ethnicity.** There were reports that minorities such as Uzbeks were discriminated against in the allocation of water, fuelling ethnic tensions. Incidents of sabotage of pumping stations or blocking irrigation canals were reported in the south of the country. Particular care was required to ensure that ethnic divisions were not exacerbated by aid programming to improve access to water. The RCST would need to monitor carefully adherence to beneficiary targeting and selection criteria to ensure that minorities were not discriminated against and avoid exclusive focus on one or another group.

Food for work and neo-feudal labour systems

For many people in Tajikistan, food for work is similar to forced labour and recalls the forced displacements of the Soviet period. These experiences are closely linked to the system they fought against during the civil war. Having watched as state farms were privatized into the hands of a new elite since the end of the war, some people may consider that the obligation to work on these farms today in order to receive basic food rations is something of a provocation.

Food for work and inequality

For the Garmi and Pamiri communities, in particular, food for work to rehabilitate irrigation systems could enflame post-war tensions. They fought and lost a bitter war. They now faced the government's failure to allocate sufficient land and water for cereal production and to provide adequate investment to repair irrigation on food-producing land. This, combined with the belief that the privatization process was exclusively benefiting certain groups, was fuelling resentment and conflict.

Access to land

The DRP proposed to provide seeds to families for the forthcoming planting seasons. Deciding who should be the beneficiaries raised major dilemmas and the question of access to land arose. If the RCST became directly involved in beneficiary selection there was a risk of entering a heavily politicized arena. On the other hand, stepping aside to allow the authorities to select the beneficiaries might raise questions of partiality.

The RCST and inequality/elite group manipulation

The RCST and the International Federation, together with most other internationally supported aid agencies, were perceived by many people in Tajikistan as releasing the government from its responsibility to invest in rehabilitating infrastructure for irrigating the land allocated for food production. Elite groups maintain control over water and land, while food aid is used to stave off famine and obviate the need for major rehabilitation of irrigation canals and land reform to address the structural food deficit. This failure to provide long-term solutions after a decade of intervention was seen as consolidating the status quo and deepening the divide between the new classes, and exacerbating tension and conflict.

2.6   Options
Redesigning the food security programme
Following an analysis of the FSP using the BPI methodology, it became clear that the RCST's engagement in land allocation was exacerbating tension and conflict at various levels. Competition was so intense and manipulation and corruption so prevalent that the negative effects were likely to outweigh any benefits that derived from the project. It was also clear that the main objective of food security through transition from direct food provision to agricultural rehabilitation was not realistic, given the limited number of plots available for the programme and the number of beneficiaries being assisted by the FSP (76,500). A more universal solution, which was not so heavily politicized and could not be manipulated so easily, would have to be sought. After extensive discussion, consultation with local communities and peasants, an option was identified that would allow vulnerable groups improve their food security without enflaming existing or latent tensions by playing into competition over access to land, or exploitation of beneficiaries to support neo-feudal labour practices or corruption.

In rural areas, some 95 per cent of families have access to small common plots of land within or adjacent to their compound and these could in most cases be cultivated as kitchen gardens. It was decided that this land should be used as a basis for assisting beneficiaries with food security. The size of the plots was generally less than 0.75 hectares, and one kitchen garden was often shared by several families living in the same compound, so the exploitation of such plots would not deliver complete food security. However, the fact that almost all beneficiaries had access to kitchen gardens and that ownership was neither contested nor open to manipulation meant that this was a more effective contribution to improved food security. Negotiations with authorities over access to land and conditions for beneficiaries were discontinued. With kitchen gardens as the new focus of the food security programme, the Tajikistan Red Crescent was able to avoid becoming part of the problem of ongoing competition over access to and control over land and water. Engagement in this highly political sector and involvement in disputes over land misappropriation and unreasonable "taxation" were avoided.

Drought relief programme
The pre-intervention mission and training using the BPI methodology helped to reduce the potential negative effects of the DRP in several ways:
- Reviewing the findings of the BPI analysis of the food security programme reinforced the understanding of both RCST and International Federation staff of the mistakes that had been made, and sensitized new staff to the RCST experience.
- Analysis of the planned programme, highlighting the dividers and connectors that exist both at national and local levels helped the RCST and expatriate staff to understand the potential impact of the planned programme on latent and live conflict in communities. Staff were able to pay more careful attention to programming around these issues.
- Programming staff were able to develop an impact analysis assessment or food security programming "filters" to guide planning of DRP interventions in specific areas. These filters help to support systematic analysis of potential negative impacts by posing a short series of questions relating to:
  - the political context in the areas to be assisted;
  - the ethnic make-up of the population;
  - systems of land access and management and water distribution; and
  - the implications of food for work or food for asset rehabilitation programming.

Subsequently an impact graph was designed to map individual organization's recovery programmes by sector and level of intervention, highlighting their potential for political impact. This tool can help to:
- clarify political implications of programmes and identify neutral levels of engagement;
- position interventions and understand the level and extent of their impact, critical when vulnerability is rooted in political and economic systems;
- clarify roles and responsibilities of different organizations in the post-war recovery process;

■ facilitate coordination; and
■ identify gaps in the recovery strategy.

3.   Conclusion

The Better Programming Initiative has increased awareness and understanding of the potential and actual negative impact of aid programming in Tajikistan. As a result, BPI has contributed to improving the quality of food aid programming in response to the drought – not only by the RCST but also by other humanitarian organizations.

The application of the BPI analysis to the food security programme in 1999 provided the RCST and the International Federation's delegation with an understanding of the underlying dynamics of inequality and other structural causes of food insecurity as well as the political dimensions of aid and its use by certain groups. Through this, they were able to realize the interaction of aid with the dynamics of conflict. As a result the RCST could apply a whole series of important lessons from the FSP to the planning and implementation of the 2000-2001 drought relief programme. This helped the National Society to avoid playing into the underlying conflict and averted the potential use of aid resources and dynamics to support systems that perpetuate food insecurity and vulnerability.

3.1   Lessons learned

The BPI analysis concluded that national-level political and economic structures at the heart of poverty, hunger and other vulnerabilities are beyond the scope of Red Cross Red Crescent programming. The RCST is not equipped to deal with macro-level recovery and structural reform. It lacks the institutional expertise and resources required to engage meaningfully in this area. Its strength lies in its access to and knowledge of disaster-affected communities, its ability to assess needs effectively, and its capacity to deliver assistance to individuals, families and communities. Through systematic analysis and well-designed aid programming, the RCST can provide a support network for vulnerable groups during the transition period while the appropriate social infrastructure is being put in place.

Post-war transitions inevitably produce situations of unequal growth and certain elite groups, whose position sometimes allows them to derive enormous wealth while the vast majority of the population lives in abject poverty. To some extent this situation is evident in Tajikistan and needs to be taken into consideration when programmes are planned and implemented. Aid interventions to support vulnerable groups during the transition to recovery or in response to emergencies need to be based on complete analysis, so that staff are aware of the inequities that exist between groups and understand the potential impact of all aspects of their programming on these inequities and the systems that produce them. Programmes should be designed in a manner that avoids exacerbating the tension and conflicts created by structural inequalities.

The BPI helped to inform and develop effective programming by developing the RCST's capacity to identify systematically the negative impact of aid on tension and conflict in targeted communities, and by providing tools to define of the limitations on RCST programmes in addressing vulnerability created by economic and political systems.

3.2   Follow-up

Tajikistan is one of a number of countries in central Asia that will be included in a regional mainstreaming strategy in 2002-2003. Programme managers from the RCST and other National Societies in the region will be trained, and trainers and individual National Society mainstreaming plans will be developed and implemented during 2003.

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary Service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

The *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies* promotes the humanitarian activities of National Societies among vulnerable people.

By coordinating international disaster relief and encouraging development support it seeks to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

The Federation, the National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross together constitute the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.