

Do No Harm: How Aid Can Contribute to Peace and War

Presented by: Sam Engelstad

Copyright © 2000 The Collaborative for Development Action, Inc. Permission is granted for reproduction and use of these materials. Please cite the source and notify The Collaborative for Development Action.

1
3/13/2007

Introduction

Why am I here to talk about Do No Harm?

2
3/13/2007

Background

- New York University Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
- Masters Thesis at the UN Office of Emergency Operations in Africa (1984)
- UN, World Bank, etc

3
3/13/2007

March 1994 - Recruited by the UN

- 17 page fax from the UN, requesting that I go to Mogadishu as a Humanitarian Officer
- Asked to leave in two days
- At my own insistence, stopped over in New York for a briefing. While there, promoted to Chief of Humanitarian Relief, with responsibility for all DHA (now OCHA) activity in Somalia, except Mogadishu itself.

4
3/13/2007

Arriving in Mogadishu



5
3/13/2007

Somalia and Mogadishu - Political

- Civil war since 1991
- In its wake, widespread famine and death - large international humanitarian presence
- Competing clans, sub-clans, sub-sub-clans, and sub-sub-sub clans, etc
- Security situation extremely tenuous
- United States-led UN presence fails spectacularly, precipitating US withdrawal
- Greatly weakened UN remains. Complete chaos by 1993-94.

6
3/13/2007

Mogadishu, March 1994

- South and north Mogadishu divided by violent “Green Line”
- Two fiercely competing sub-clans, represented by General Aideed of the Habr Gdir in South Mogadishu, and Abgal’s Ali Mahdi, a businessman, in North Mogadishu.

7
3/13/2007

Mogadishu Cathedral



8
3/13/2007

A once luxury hotel



9
3/13/2007

Cholera rampant



10
3/13/2007

Kaysaneh hospital (ICRC)



11
3/13/2007

Blood bank at Kaysaneh hospital



12
3/13/2007

Kaysaneh hospital admissions journal



13
3/13/2007

No public schools system



14
3/13/2007

IDPs living in destroyed government buildings



15
3/13/2007

The UN in Somalia, March 1994

- Greatly weakened and dysfunctional UN
- Cost: \$1 million a day
- 80% spent on security of UN staff, with unclear rules of engagement
- Many eager and talented, but badly led, staff.

16
3/13/2007

The Humanitarian Imperative

- The UN Security Council Resolution establishing the UN Operations in Somalia (UNOSOM II) placed the humanitarian agenda first
- In \$1 million a day UNOSOM operation, the Humanitarian Division had no budget
- Its task was to:
 - Assist *international* NGOs
 - Re-settle internally displaced people (IDPs)

17
3/13/2007

As for my part...

After two confusing, sleepless, days in Mogadishu, called into the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative (SRSG) and promoted to Acting Humanitarian Coordinator for all of Somalia, including Mogadishu.

No permanent Humanitarian Coordinator (CHA) on the horizon.

18
3/13/2007

Among many things, I was tasked with

- Supervising 20 plus international and perhaps 80 national staff
- Assigning international staff to UNOSOM field offices, providing them with meaningful work which would be of real consequence to the Somalis, *and not exacerbate the on-going conflict.*

19
3/13/2007

Humanitarian Division: Most immediate administrative problem

- New international staff arriving every day
- Most very young, with no training or experience
- Looming security risk (kidnapping, shooting, mortar, and small arms fire)

20
3/13/2007

My “baptism”

- Summoned by UNOSOM’s Chief of Staff
- Told to “grab some helicopters” and fly several hundred IDPs from Mogadishu to Belet Weyne

21
3/13/2007

Belet Weyne?

22
3/13/2007

Belet Weyne is located near the Ethiopian border, to the northwest of Mogadishu, in an area fought over by Gen. Aideed and Ali Mahdi in a kind of proxy war. A very dangerous place suffering an uneasy truce.

23
3/13/2007

- Had anyone checked if the IDPs were welcome in Belet Weyne?
- Was proper resettlement procedure followed?

And most importantly...

24
3/13/2007

Who were these IDPs?

- It appeared that most were men between 18 and 24
- What were several hundred young men, flown in by the UN, going to do in Belet Weyne?
- How would this aid affect the ongoing conflict?

25
3/13/2007

This, and other ongoing dilemmas, caused

- Disillusionment, then
- A new resolve: There had to be a better way. It eventually led me to Do No Harm.

26
3/13/2007

What is Do No Harm?

A collaborative project to reduce the negative effects of aid, which are inevitable, and largely *inadvertent* and *unintentional*.

27
3/13/2007

For many years, aid workers everywhere had asked:

"How can we provide assistance in a conflict setting without exacerbating the conflict?"

28
3/13/2007

Do No Harm: History

- **Phase 1:** 15 case studies (1994-96)
- **Phase 2:** 23 Feedback workshops (1996-97)
- **Phase 3:** Implementation (1997-00) in which 12 organizations wrote manual and implemented the DNH design
- **Phase 4:** Mainstreaming - ongoing process of DNH dissemination

29
3/13/2007

What does Do No Harm say about the relationship between the project and the conflict context?

"There is no such thing as neutrality. Every choice we make have consequences, intended or not"

"When you operate in a conflict area, you become a part of the conflict"

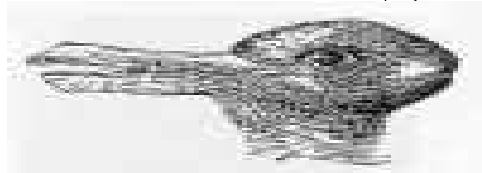
30
3/13/2007

Do No Harm helps us to better understand

- Relationship among the groups in the conflict area
- Consequences of our project decisions.

31
3/13/2007

What do you see in this picture?



32
3/13/2007

DNH says conflict is characterized by two elements:

- Connectors
- Dividers

We must understand both in order to grasp the relationship between Aid and Conflict

33
3/13/2007

A project should

- Encourage Connectors
- Reduce Dividers

34
3/13/2007

Connectors

- Connectors can be hard to spot. Yet, every conflict has Connectors.
- Most societies have elements that prevent disagreements from breaking into violence. These are called Local Capacities for Peace (LCP) and you want your project to strengthen these.
- Many groups claim to be, in effect, Connectors; learn to be skeptical.

35
3/13/2007

Dividers

- Usually easy to spot.
- Not all Dividers are bad, but represent healthy pluralism. These are not the Dividers we are looking for.
- In a conflict situation, many groups exploit Dividers for personal or clan gain, and may wish to keep *status quo*. When we design a project, it is critical that we ID these.

36
3/13/2007

Do No Harm uses five categories of Dividers and Connectors

37
3/13/2007

1. Systems and Institutions

Dividers:

- Militias, which may favor one group over another
- Legal systems that discriminate

Connectors:

- Trade, irrigation systems, churches or mosques

38
3/13/2007

2. Attitudes and Actions

Dividers:

- Police stopping one group at checkpoint, not others. Bombing at market places

Connectors:

- Adoption of children from "other side." Professional journals or associations. *Normal things.*

39
3/13/2007

3. Interests

Dividers:

- Agriculturalists and pastoralists using land differently, religious laws imposed on people not of that religion.

Connectors:

- Children's welfare and health, education, common religion

40
3/13/2007

4. Common Experiences

Dividers:

- When history is interpreted to highlight conflict, different lifestyles, culture, religion

Connectors:

- Anti-War alliances across boundaries, childhood bonds

41
3/13/2007

5. Symbols and Occasions

Dividers:

- When one group imposes holidays on another group; destruction of monuments.

Connections:

- National art, music, national holidays (WWI when soldiers sang Silent Night across trenches)

42
3/13/2007

Projects typically influence Connectors and Dividers in one of two ways:

- Resource Transfers, or
- Implicit Ethical Messages

43
3/13/2007

A. Resource Transfers

- Theft (food stolen to feed fighters)
- Market effects (aid affects prices, wages)
- Distributional effects (aid reaches some groups, but not others)
- Substitution effects (free up local resources for the war effort)
- Legitimization effects (legitimizes some action, side-lining others)

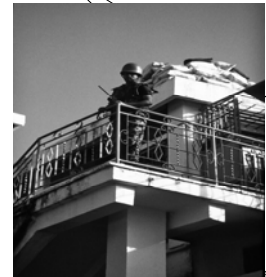
44
3/13/2007

B. Implicit Messages, including...

45
3/13/2007

...Arms and Power

(i.e. hiring of armed guards)

46
3/13/2007

...Aid Workers and Impunity

(staff using goods for private pleasure)

47
3/13/2007

Additional Implicit Messages

- Different value for different life (i.e. evacuation)
- Powerlessness (field staff disclaim responsibility for impact of their aid program)
- Belligerence, tension, suspicion ("These people cannot be trusted." Reinforces the tension and warfare)
- Publicity (using publicity pictures demonstrating the victims and thus demonizing one party in a war)
- Disrespect and competition among agencies (signals that it is not necessary to cooperate)

48
3/13/2007

Can a Divider also be a Connector?

- One river
- Two tribes
- One agency

Not a peace-building effort, *per se*, but aid with peace dividends

49
3/13/2007

A post-war case study: Save the Children Foundation in Tadjikistan

50
3/13/2007

Why a Case Study?

- Encourages participants to analyze relationship between assistance and conflict
- Helps to analyze how assistance may have both positive and negative impact on conflict
- Sets tone for challenging debate with rigorous analysis.
- Gives all the participants identical data with which to do the analysis.

51
3/13/2007

How do we use the collected information on Connectors and Dividers to analyze the impact of the project on the surrounding conflict?

52
3/13/2007

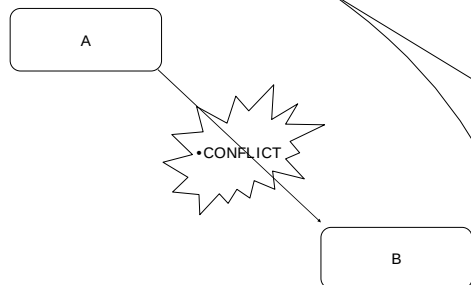
...By estimating how the following seven elements either **strengthen** or **weaken** the Connectors or Dividers in the Tadjikistan conflict context. We ask:

53
3/13/2007

1. **Why** (have we chosen to focus on this particular project?)
2. **Where** (is the project located?)
3. **What** (is the aim of the project?)
4. **When** (are we implementing the project?)
5. **For whom** (who is our target group?)
6. **By whom** (who are our partners/employers?)
7. **How** (do we implement the project?)

54
3/13/2007

The Options Game

55
3/13/2007

What Does DNH Say About Options?

- If the analysis is to be useful, it must lead to action.
- What limits our scope of action? Mandate, HQ, Donors
- It is always possible to make changes along the way
- Minor changes might have a great effect. Level of ambition: Do no harm? Do less harm? Do nothing? Focus on dividers or connectors?

56
3/13/2007