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MD

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MONTHLY DEVELOPMENTS MAGAZINE

THIS ISSUE

August 2012 Vol. 30 • No. 8

FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

Leveraging Aid Dollars in the New Ecosystem

FOR MANY YEARS USAID and U.S. NGOs have sought to leverage their resources to achieve greater results. "Building alliances with private sector partners is critical to leveraging the effectiveness of public aid to poor countries," states USAID's Global Partnerships webpage. USAID is right to proclaim the importance of leveraging aid dollars in an increasingly tight budget environment. But even as USAID and U.S. NGOs both engage new actors such as the private sector, new venture philanthropists and universities, we must remember that the longstanding relationship between our communities exists because we are more effective when we engage each other in dialogue and leverage each other's respective assets.

The landscape of development cooperation has been permanently altered by the emergence of new actors, and U.S. NGOs are increasingly aware that we are just one actor among many. Many NGOs are actively trying new approaches to scale effective programs as our niche evolves. USAID and NGOs are right to seek new partnerships with nontraditional players who bring new resources and expertise to the table. Unfortunately, USAID's focus on new partners and rhetoric defining U.S. NGOs as traditional or old have been perceived as disengagement from the NGO community, causing significant concern among InterAction members.

The aid system can be more than the sum of its parts.

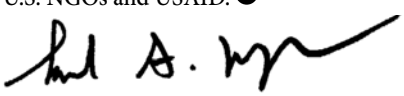
Critiques of this shift tend to get dismissed as a pecuniary concern about resource flows and market share. This misses the mark. Our core concern is that if development actors ignore each other's added value as they plan their future strategies, we eschew the benefits of partnership and fundamentally weaken the aid system we are collectively trying to improve. International NGOs add value in a number of ways, such as: established partnerships with local civil society; grassroots engagement and expertise; global reach; support and resources from the American people; innovation and research; and proven capacity building expertise. International NGOs' skills *must* be part of any new frontier in development.

USAID's website defines leverage as "new, non-public resources … brought by the private sector and other nontraditional USAID partners." By implication, U.S. NGOs cannot be leveraged. USAID needs a new understanding of its "traditional" nonprofit partners; U.S. NGOs certainly can and should provide leverage. Leveraging such NGOs implies taking advantage of our longstanding relationships with local communities; our expertise with capacity building and bottom-up change; our ability to reach the most vulnerable; our innovations; and the $14 billion in private dollars that we raise annually.

U.S. NGOs certainly do not claim to be the center of development cooperation; we could make a similar list of the value added by "traditional" donors, local government agencies, corporations, multilateral institutions, universities and others. But that is exactly the point: if development actors work independently, they cannot take advantage of each other's unique assets, whether those assets are financial resources, scale and reach, technical expertise or local relationships. The aid system can be more than the sum of its parts, but only if we work together to make it so.

USAID's initiatives to engage the private sector and directly fund local actors are good examples of the benefits of partnering. But if these initiatives ignore U.S. NGOs' decades of experience with local populations, they risk making a mistake many donors have made—they will advance direct funding of local groups, but will be donor-driven and not locally owned. Similarly, NGOs should not disengage with the U.S. government even as we partner with new actors and are increasingly funded by private dollars.

The U.S. government is right to try to leverage public aid dollars for the greatest impact possible. But not having a strategy to leverage NGOs ignores our community's decades of experience working together. Our relationship must evolve, as our ecosystem evolves. What that relationship looks like should be the subject of a new, increased dialogue between U.S. NGOs and USAID.



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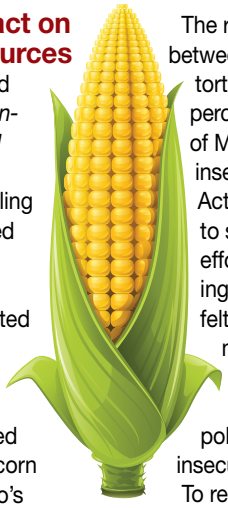
U.S. biofuel impact on Mexican food sources



ActionAid has released a report, *Biofueling Hunger: How Corn Ethanol Policy Drives up Food Prices in Mexico*, detailing the effect of corn-based ethanol production on an import-dependent Mexico. The report stated that the **North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)** has left Mexico exposed to an increase in U.S. corn prices, and that Mexico's imports of corn—a staple crop in that country—have more than quadrupled in recent years. ActionAid projects that those living in poverty will be especially impacted by the price increase of corn and corn-based foods such as tortillas.

The report added that between 2005 and 2011, tortilla prices rose 69 percent, and that over half of Mexicans were food insecure in 2011. Though ActionAid urged Mexico to seek support for its efforts at the G20 meeting in June, many NGOs felt the conference did not take the necessary concrete steps to improve biofuel policies and end food insecurity.

To read the report, visit www.actionaid.org.uk.

Clinton Global Initiative

The **Clinton Global Initiative (CGI)** will host its 2012 meeting September 23-25 in New York City. The CGI Annual Meeting has taken place since 2005 and brings together heads of state and leaders from the nonprofit and corporate worlds to tackle major global and domestic issues. The CGI's goal is to channel resources towards needs, resulting in sustainable change. Leaders solve problems as they hear from expert speakers involved in development work in a variety of countries. As new connections are forged, participants craft their "Commitment to Action" plans in which they identify a need and propose solutions that are implemented throughout the year.

For more information, visit www.clintonglobalinitiative.org.

Orphan nutrition website launched

The **Joint Council for International Children's Services** recently debuted a new website, orphannutrition.org, for understanding the nutritional needs of orphaned children. The website was started under the auspices of Joint Council's and The Meade Johnson Nutrition Foundation's "A Child's Best Start" initiative, which seeks to aid children and inform caregivers in developing countries.

The new website offers advice on the causes, symptoms and treatment of micro- and macromalnutrition, information regarding best feeding practices organized by development stage, and advice about helping special needs children born with fetal alcohol syndrome, low birth weight, cerebral palsy and other problems that affect childhood nutrition. Orphannutrition.org also offers information on recognizing specific vitamin deficiencies.

As the website expands, it will feature a section explaining different nutrition programs and issues inherent in geographic regions. Information will soon be added to a page on safe food practices that will explain the importance of clean water and offer food preparation tips.

For more information, visit www.orphanutirtion.org.

Women and technology competition

Ashoka Changemakers and **Intel** are joining forces to host the "She Will Innovate: Technology Solutions Enriching the Lives of Girls" competition. The competition's goal is to leverage technologically innovative ideas to enhance women's lives in the developing world, while increasing female engagement with technology.

Ashoka and Intel will offer five awards: three $10,000 unrestricted prizes and two $500 cash prizes. According Intel and Ashoka Changemakers, the competition is "a global search for the world's best kept secrets: those emerging ideas that have realized the potential for women to be changemakers; that break down barriers to access, accelerate digital literacy, and promote economic resilience." The competition has four judges, including **Helene Gayle**, the president and CEO of CARE, an InterAction member organization.

The deadline for entering the competition is Aug. 15, with voting between Oct. 17-Nov. 7. Winners will be announced on November 14. For more information, visit www.changemakers.com/girltech.

USAID, Citibank partner on mobile banking

USAID and **Citibank** are joining together to bring mobile banking services to developing countries. It is estimated that only two-fifths of the 5 billion mobile phone users worldwide have access to banking services; and as a result, the rest are exposed to fraud and unfair lending practices.

USAID is continuing its banking service efforts in developing countries, with $23 million being allocated, while Citibank will attempt to incorporate its banking services with mobile money platforms. Nine countries have been targeted to begin the program, with **Columbia, Haiti, Indonesia, Kenya** and the **Philippines** being eyed for the initial phase of the project.

The program's goal is that as mobile banking is rolled out, more businesses will allow customers to pay with mobile money and that efforts can be scaled up, freeing people

in developing countries from bureaucratic delays in payment systems. Past partnerships on this issue have created cash flow channels in which funds go straight into electronic accounts of the intended recipients. These programs have been met with success in countries like Kenya, where 70 percent of households use mobile banking services such as **M-Pesa**.

For more information, visit www.usaid.gov.

New antibody kills Dengue fever virus

Dengue fever kills 20,000 people per year in tropical and subtropical countries, but scientists recently discovered an antibody that could reduce its mortality rate. Trials in mice saw that antibodies taken from recovered patients in Singapore were capa-

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The guide also has detailed maps, itineraries, tips for travelers and provides background information about Cambodia's history and culture.

To order, visit www.friendshipwithcambodia.org.

ble of stretching across surface proteins to kill the virus before it had the chance to infect cells.

The antibody appears as if it will kill all strains of Dengue type one subtypes, and more research is being performed to explore the possibility of killing subtypes two, three and four. Researchers anticipate that they will be able to develop antibodies to cure the majority of cases in Singapore within six months to a year.

The advancement has implications for many developing countries where dengue fever thrives, especially Pakistan, which, along with other countries, has experienced a dramatic increase in cases since 2005. In June, the **World Health Organization** met to adopt guidelines for managing cases of dengue.

For more information, visit www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs117/en.

Current writing on food reserves

As global rates of hunger soar to record levels, and the threat of exorbitant commodity prices to come looms on the horizon, the age-old idea of food reserves has lost none of its relevance. The **Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)** recently announced the release of *Food Reserves and the Food Price Crisis: Selected Writings from 2008–2012*, a compendium of current writing on food reserves: the simple yet powerful idea of saving food in times of plenty for use in times of scarcity.

The **FAO's Committee on World Food Security (CFS)** discussed reserves in 2011. So did the **G20**. Both left only very small doors open to a further conversation. IATP hopes the compilation will open the doors wider and allow an exploration of how reserves could better advance food security and stabilize price volatility. The collection provides an overview of recent writing on reserves, points to work in progress and encourages a more open and rigorous debate about how reserves fit into local, regional, national and international food security strategies.

Download the document from www.iatp.org.

InterAction welcomes new members

InterAction is pleased to announce the following new members:

Adeso
African Development Solutions

Adeso is an NGO working in Africa in a different way than most. It is founded on the premise that development must come from within, not outside, African communities—that Africans must determine Africa's future—and that while international aid has provided much-needed support, it often falls short of enabling lasting change at grassroots level.

A New **G20 FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVE**

Too often, G20 summit declarations include bold statements that are not matched by concrete initiatives. With the Eurozone crisis and the slowdown in global economic growth on the minds of G20 leaders this year, many feared that improving food security, one of the priority objectives of this year's summit, would languish on the backburner yet again.

This year's declaration expressed support for a few development issues including support for the **Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN)** movement, creating decent work and quality jobs, extending the **Anti-Corruption Working Group's** mandate for two years, and phasing out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies. Unfortunately these words of support were, in most cases, not accompanied by concrete steps or action plans.

Fortunately for the 925 million people around the world suffering from chronic hunger there was an exception: the launch of the **AgResults** initiative to encourage private sector innovation in food security. AgResults will encourage private and public sector solutions to enhance food security and agricultural development in the poorest countries. It is designed to leverage research and development focusing on overcoming traditional market failures by creating sustainable markets for agricultural technologies. The initiative will be administered by the **World Bank** with $100 million pledged from the governments of Australia, Canada, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States and the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**.

AgResults grew out of the 2010 G20 Toronto Summit when leaders called for the creation of "innovative, results-based mechanisms such as advance market commitments to harness the creativity and resources of the private sector in achieving breakthrough innovations in food security and agriculture development in poor countries." This resulted in a new scheme coordinated by the World Bank focusing on programs in four areas: inputs and increasing yields, outputs and post-harvest management, livestock, and nutrition.

What distinguishes AgResults is its use of "pull mechanisms." Pull financing rewards innovators of creative solutions only after they have achieved specific desired results. This strategy of developing solutions by fostering competition has been successful in solving other critical market failures, particularly in transforming the production, supply and pricing of lifesaving vaccines.

Initial pilot projects will examine which pull mechanisms are the most effective with food and agricultural concerns. The initial pilot projects will focus on maize production in sub-Saharan Africa and particularly improving crop storage, growing Vitamin A-enriched maize and reducing crop contamination. Future projects are expected to include livestock vaccines, fertilizer innovation, nutrition and livestock productivity.

AgResults is recognized by a number of NGOs as a significant achievement given that G20 promises often go unfulfilled. Nevertheless, critics point out that AgResults neglects crucial food security areas, with a skewed focus on boosting production without emphasizing initiatives that support women and small-scale farmers, or reduce child malnutrition.

While AgResults represents a major collaborative effort to address food security issues on a global scale it is still early in its development, with little certainty of what the harvest will yield.

*— **Emma Giloth**, International Advocacy Intern, and **John Ruthrauff**, Director of International Advocacy, InterAction*

Adeso wants to change this; and its strong bonds with the communities in which it works make the organization uniquely placed to do so.

Adeso's vision is an Africa dependent not on aid but on the resourcefulness and capabilities of its people. It works at the grassroots level in communities to create environments in which Africans can thrive.

Adeso helps vulnerable communities through partnerships and shared decision-making. Its field teams hold regular community meetings and find a way for every group to have a voice. This often means creating avenues for women to participate, and requires perseverance to capture the concerns and thoughts of local minorities.

Adeso is well established in the Horn of Africa, with 20 years of experience in Somalia and more recent operations in Kenya and South Sudan. It intimately understands what is happening in the region because its staff live and work throughout these countries and in its partner communities.

Convoy of Hope (COH) is a faith-based organization with a driving passion to feed the world through children's feeding initiatives, community outreach, disaster response and partner resourcing.

Internationally, COH has more than 100,000 children enrolled in their Children's Feeding Initiative in countries including the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Nicaragua and the Philippines. It includes clean water programs, agriculture training, education, health and wellness, and more.

COH has held more than 887 community outreach events in the United States and around the world. At these events, local organizations, churches, businesses and civic groups come together to provide groceries, health screenings, job fairs, free haircuts, games and activities for children.

When disaster strikes, COH is on the front lines of relief efforts. Corporate partnerships allow the organization to quickly provide necessary supplies such as clean water, food and other supplies to victims in need. Along with meeting victims' tangible needs, COH offers them a sense of hope to help them move forward in spite of the devastation they face.

The COH worldwide distribution network is designed to support local churches, organizations and missionaries in their ongoing efforts to improve the lives of impoverished families.

Joint Council on International Children's Services (Joint Council) helps orphaned and vulnerable children live in permanent, safe families. It does this by advocating on their behalf, marshaling the resources they need, educating those who serve them and mobilizing those who care.

Joint Council is a professional trade association serving the needs of its members for domestic and international cooperative development, governmental relations, communications and education.

Its work focuses on five primary program areas:

Advocacy. Furthering the well-being of vulnerable children with a focus on a child's right to a permanent, safe family is its primary focus.

Global Awareness. Raising awareness of children's rights to family care as part of their overall well-being.

Education and Research. Providing evidence-based information to the public, families, professionals and governments.

Orphan and Adoption Nutrition. In 2011, Joint Council announced a new global nutrition program, piloting in twelve countries, focused on the nutritional needs of institutionalized children.

Emergency Response and Case Management. Assisting in emergency response for institutionalized populations of children.

Joint Council's Annual Medical Institute and Symposium has created an educational environment for attendees to learn about the medical and social developments affecting internationally adopted children and the practitioners who serve them. The 37th annual Child Welfare Symposium will be held in New York in 2013.

Zakat Foundation of America (ZF) helps generous and caring people reach out to those in need. It fosters charitable giving to alleviate the immediate needs of poor communities and to establish long-term development projects that ensure individual and community growth.

Focusing on sustainable development, ZF ensures self-

reliance and decreased community dependence on outside aid. It operates on the principle that without sustainable development there is no progress. ZF also focuses on immediate relief during and after disasters, building and supporting schools, orphanages and health clinics, supporting community development programs and microcredit, providing Ramadan Iftar meals and food distribution, and providing fresh meat for Udhiya/Qurbani and Aqeeqah through support for community-based initiatives.

Through its Orphan Sponsorship Program, ZF provides care and assistance to children who have lost their parents' love and support, allowing them to thrive and receive an education. Children are the most vulnerable members of society who need consistent and comprehensive care and support to grow and prosper. The Orphan/Orphanage Sponsorship Program provides orphaned children with hope, love and prospects for the future.

ZF has programs in Bangladesh, Ghana, Lebanon and Libya providing orphan sponsorship, Ramadan Program, food packages, education and clothing.

NCBA CLUSA INTERNATIONAL

National Cooperative Business Association. The mission of the NCBA's CLUSA International Program is to develop, advance and protect cooperative business (CLUSA stands for Cooperative League of the USA). NCBA demonstrates that cooperatives are a better business model for providing domestic and global social and economic progress. It facilitates cooperation and sustainable development in four sectors: food security and agriculture, democracy and governance, natural resource management, and community-based health.

Across all sectors, its projects reflect NCBA's unique execution of cooperative development. With a focus on sustainable agriculture development, conservation farming, and value chain production, its food security programs have a huge impact on subsistence farming communities worldwide. NCBA CLUSA emphasizes cooperative methodology in its projects in order to strengthen and develop primary, secondary and tertiary agriculture-based, rural enterprises that serve the production and marketing needs of small, rural farmers in high-value, high-cash crops.

Rooted in the belief that knowledge-sharing is an important tool in development, NCBA CLUSA runs programs that bring U.S. farmers and agribusiness professionals into the field to provide training in cooperative development, soil fertility, integrated pest management, millet processing and warehousing, and moringa marketing. Working together with partners at the grassroots level, NCBA CLUSA's projects across the globe are fighting to alleviate poverty and improve the livelihoods of the world's poorest and most vulnerable populations. MD

Photo: Glovatskiy/Shutterstock.com

Miracle Crops?

Are **genetically modified foods** the solution to world hunger?

By **Mozart M. Adevu**, Africa Regional Director, Sustainable Agriculture & Development (SA&D) Program, UMCOR; **Winston G. Carroo**, Executive Director, Agricultural Missions, Inc.; and **June H. Kim** Executive Secretary, World Hunger/Poverty and SA&D Programs, UMCOR

GENETICALLY MODIFIED foods have been held up as a solution to hunger, especially in the developing world. But do we really need GMO (genetically modified organism) technology to end hunger and malnutrition?

Many nonprofit institutions and farmers' organizations working closely with small-landholder farmers believe much can be done with tools already close at hand that can ensure sustainability.

According to the United Nations World Food Programme and other sources, there is enough global food production today to adequately feed the world's population. Hunger, they say, is not the result of an insufficient supply of food, but of a lack of access to it due to poverty and/or inadequate distribution mechanisms.

Why genetically modified foods?

GMOs are touted as having the potential to improve agricultural productivity by solving problems that conventional methods have not. In addition, it is said that employing GMOs may increase household incomes and food security. These arguments are advanced mainly by multinational seed companies—the same companies that used similar terms to promote the Green Revolution. But how does using GMOs improve access to food?

The verdict on the Green Revolution is not final. Without a doubt, yields increased in most

places where this technology was used. However, when broader socioeconomic impacts and environmental issues are considered, the overall success of the Green Revolution is open to debate. The often-cited example of its success or lack thereof is in the Punjab region of India. Wheat and rice yields definitely increased there, but so did landlessness, debt and farmer suicides. Increased water demands for irrigation also caused a significant decrease in the water table, which in turn led to greater overall food insecurity.

The Green Revolution provided farmers with pesticides, herbicides and improved seeds as a package meant to increase food production at exponential rates to "feed the world." At the time it was introduced, this principle was widely believed, but what has happened with it over the last 30 years?

The plight of resource-poor farmers has worsened as the Green Revolution has increased their dependency on multinational seed companies and farmers lost their indigenous seeds. Using chemical pesticides, fertilizers and herbicides only boosted food production in the short term. Pests soon developed resistance and new types of herbicide-resistant weeds emerged in fields. Chemical fertilizers degraded the soil and agrochemicals wiped out natural predators and companion plants, in turn diminishing biodiversity. As farm subsidies were withdrawn, many farmers—especially those with limited land holdings and capital—could no longer afford the packages of seeds, pesticides and herbicides. For them, the Green Revolution indeed failed.

These same multinational companies then advanced a new scientific initiative—genetic engineering—that isolated, removed and inserted genes from one life form to another. Unrelated species were merged to create new organisms.

Possible effects from the consumption of genetically modified foods on human health are still unknown. Scientists have warned about the possibility of new allergens, carcinogens and toxins. There are justice and moral dimensions as well. Genetically modified (GM) foods should be labeled as such so consumers can ▶

make an informed choice about the food they consume. Even in the United States, identification of GMOs in food is not required by law. And in developing countries, there are hardly forums for such debates, which in turn increases the likelihood that GM foods could easily be dumped on them.

What about the risk to the environment? The risks posed by GM production technologies are unknown, but it is feared that the damage they may cause could be irreversible. Once released, genetically modified organisms become part of the ecosystem, leading to cross pollination of neighboring non-GM crops due to pollen drift. This could result in the eradication of biodiversity in areas that border genetically modified crops.

The technologies involved in producing GM foods and seeds are primarily controlled by private industry in the developed world. Such industries are supported by intellectual property rights to the disadvantage of poorer economies on the receiving end. Their control of GM technologies is likely to restrict sharing of and access to the same technologies by public research institutes that work on reducing hunger in poorer countries.

Other available options

Increasing global food production does not necessarily translate into more food for the poor. In countries that already produce food surpluses and in their neighbors, people still go hungry. Instead, access to food through efficient food-distribution systems and the reduction of rural poverty are critical to resolving food insecurity.

Efforts to address world hunger and poverty should seek sustainable systems of production, with resource-poor farmers making informed decisions on production and investments. According to International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD), solutions to the problems of hunger and poverty, in the long run, "will require a paradigm shift that includes location-specific solutions involving low technology and low- or no-cost strategies, at least initially."

Poorer countries and their governments should explore the use and promotion of crops such as moringa, which are relatively easy to cultivate, provide effective nutrition for whole communities, and have the potential to reduce malnutrition while also providing income.

Because most poor countries—particularly in Africa—have diverse cultures, economies, ecologies and politics, conclusions about the risks and benefits of biotechnology will likely differ from country to country. As developing countries debate whether agricultural biotechnology is appropriate for them, all stakeholders—including small-holder farmers and consumers—should be included. Ultimately, it is the farmers themselves who must decide whether to use the technology and who must bear the consequences.

Potential benefits of crop biotechnology must be weighed against potential risks and considered within a country's broader agricultural and development framework. Benchmarks related to ending hunger and helping achieve sustainable and equitable development should be used. Agricultural development efforts must also include investments in agricultural extension, credit, marketing, infrastructure and trade. MD

A Plague of Locusts?

Desert locusts may amplify the Sahel food security crisis.

By **Nicholas Burk**, Senior Writer, Relief Analysis Wire Website, Melting Glacier Analytics

ON JUNE 19, a collaboration of United Nations agencies and humanitarian NGOs launched an urgent appeal to address the deadly food insecurity crisis affecting 1.8 million people throughout the Sahel. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs cited a variety of underlying factors, including "drought poor rainfall, poor harvest, rising food prices, geopolitical issues, displacement and insecurity."

Now another exacerbating factor has emerged. If it escalates, it could be a tipping point that could turn the Sahel crisis into an all-out regional catastrophe. Due to a quirky overlap of geopolitical instability and a brief outbreak of sporadic rainfall late last year in Libya, swarms of desert locusts have taken flight. In June, locusts began incursions into vulnerable Sahel nations including Mali, Niger and Chad.

Desert locust outbreaks in the Sahel are not new and have been documented for centuries. In 2004-2005, the last major outbreak caused massive crop damage in excess of $2.5 billion and greatly pressured the region's food security situation.

"An adult locust can consume its own weight in food each day, and a million locusts can eat about one ton of food daily—and swarms often contain at least a million or more locusts."

The current event began last October, according to reporting by the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). Sporadic rainfall caused small patches of the Libyan desert to bloom with fresh vegetation near the city of Ghat on the southern Algerian border. A relatively small group of locusts, perhaps riding the prevailing winds of the rainstorms, began feasting on the new plants and started to breed.

Within months, two issues caused this small incident to escalate into a potential regional crisis. First, geopolitical instability in the wake of the downfall of Muammar Gaddafi gripped the Libyan countryside, and locust control operations (such as surveying and spraying) on the Libyan-Algerian border could not be fully conducted. Second, the patches of lush vegetation were short lived and withered away. In response, the locusts' innate biological response to food scarcity was triggered; they gradually began a transition from solitary insects to highly mobile groups with the potential to devastate large areas of vegetation and croplands.

"If conditions become more crowded with less food available, solitary desert locusts change into gregarious forms with a different color and behavior," says Mary Laprade, a lecturer emerita of biological sciences at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. "They become voracious feeders consuming all vegetation in the area. They become agitated and move quickly into new feeding grounds."

According to Laprade, these locusts go through five stages of molting, including several stages as flightless "hoppers" that consume 1.5 kilometers of vegetation per day and ending as fully matured adults that can form a highly organized aerial force capable of decimating all vegetation and crops in its path.

Says Laprade, "Adult gregarious locusts are very mobile. They fly with the prevailing winds up to 20 kilometers per hour. Locust swarms can cover up to 130 kilometers per day. An adult locust can consume its own weight in food each day, and a million locusts can eat about one ton of food daily—and swarms often contain at least a million or more locusts."

According to the FAO's June analysis, swarms have already begun to invade the Sahel. On May 30, a group of adult locusts was reported for the first time in northern Niger. FAO projections

Photo: Todd Hackwelder/Shutterstock.com

predict that other small swarms will soon begin invading northeast Niger, northeast Mali and perhaps Chad. If existing vegetation is consumed in these areas, cropping areas in south and central Niger could be the next target.

"This invasion from Algeria and Libya is worrying because it coincides with the planting of this season's crops in the Sahel where people are already vulnerable," FAO senior forecast officer Keith Cressman told Reuters AlertNet on June 6. "If the locusts stay and breed unperturbed in these insecure areas of north Mali, then we could be facing a big problem by next October. If the locusts move into the south [of Mali and Niger] then they would be more manageable but of course, they would be threatening the agricultural areas of those countries at that point."

"Farmers should continue hand spraying."

Geopolitical instability is not helping the issue. The FAO has allocated $700,000 for controlling the outbreak, but the Libyan conflict has made locust response operations extremely difficult on both sides of its border with Algeria. Violent civil strife in Mali has also made locust control operations in the northern part of the country virtually nonexistent, and locust response equipment has even been looted. In northern Niger, locust response teams must be accompanied by military escorts.

Going forward, Laprade suggests that government agencies and possibly NGOs can address the outbreak by making use of pesticides that are less toxic to humans, farm animals and pollinators. "Farmers should continue their practice of hand spraying—early in the day and after sundown when the locusts are roosting—especially when locust populations are low and still wingless nymphs."

As the Sahel crisis continues, the combination of weather and geopolitical events pertaining to the locust outbreak will need to be monitored closely. This unwelcome variable will need to be integrated into the thinking of all NGOs and international organizations that operate in potentially affected nations. MD

FAO's Locust Watch service continues to monitor the situation and provides frequent analysis and response updates (www.fao.org/ag/locusts/en/info/info/index.html). Question and comments on this article can be sent to the author at glacier.analytics@gmail.com.

Is It Really Over?

Experts review the 2011 response to the food crisis in the Horn of Africa and what still needs to be done.

By **Chris Herlinger**, Writer, Church World Service

A boy sits looking over the Seyidka settlement for the famine stricken internally displaced people in Berkulan near Somalia's capital Mogadishu, September 2011.

IT WAS AN EMERGENCY that, in many ways, barely registered in the consciousness of Americans and other Westerners.

"The famine is over, end of story," said Richard Garfield, a professor of public health and nursing at Columbia University who analyzes and writes on humanitarian issues, reflecting on where the region stands compared to a year ago, when alarm over the food crisis and famine caused by the drought was first sounded.

The drought that hit Ethiopia and neighboring Kenya caused massive hardship, although not famine. However famine did affect parts of Somalia, the most politically unstable of the three largest nations affected. Approximately 13 million in the Horn were in some way affected by the drought and food crisis. The result was grave; the crisis slowed down economies, crippled livelihoods and led to tens of thousands of deaths.

A report earlier this year, published by Save the Children and Oxfam, concluded that the response was too slow, and many of those who died might have been spared had donor governments and humanitarian agencies responded more quickly. The report said that between 50,000 and 100,000 people, many of them young children, may have perished.

That is a cruel legacy, and Garfield acknowledges that the story in the Horn is not fully over. Drought in the region continues. And ongoing conflicts between farmers and herders—a long-standing problem in recent years in Africa—are not over either. "There will be continuing political and military insecurity

and banditry. And rapid population growth will continue to create more demands on the land," he noted.

Still, Garfield credits a number of key responses as critical to saving lives, including pumping money into local markets, rapidly scaling up refugee and displacement camps, and limiting the influence of al-Shabab, the insurgent group that seeks a strict interpretation of Islamic law in Somalia.

Al-Shabab initially opposed outside aid in Somalia, prompting enhanced efforts to get famine assistance to affected areas. In late 2011, the scaling up of relief efforts in the country proceeded, with al-Shabab eventually allowing humanitarian access to areas it controls.

Another observer, Pulitzer Prize-winning correspondent Jeffrey Gettleman of *The New York Times*, while not downplaying any of the region's problems, recently said he is optimistic about much in the Horn, including the long-term prospects for Somalia. At a May 22 event in Manhattan, Gettleman said Somali entrepreneurs—both in and outside the country—want peace for business, and he sees their efforts to expand the country's economy as a "spreading movement."

"Ten years ago such a response would not have been possible, much less in such a lawless area."

Gerald Martone, the director of humanitarian affairs for the International Rescue Committee, had a similar observation. Following a visit to Somalia in July, he said the capital of Mogadishu is experiencing something of a building boom, with jubilation under way now that the city is controlled by a single governing body for the first time in 20 years.

But Martone is cautious not to be overly optimistic, noting that Mogadishu is something of an island, with the rest of the country facing extreme tensions like clan warfare as well as continued and severe food stress caused by ongoing drought. "There is still concern about the conditions of food scarcity," Martone said. "We're not out of the woods yet."

A slow response

That confirms an obvious understatement: The last year was not easy for the Horn. The international community was criticized for ▶

Photo: (opposite and top) Reuters/Ismail Taxta, courtesy the Thomson Reuters Foundation – AlertNet; (bottom) CHF International

The Importance of Engaging Communities

By **Juan Michel**, Communications Management Senior Officer, The Sphere Project

The **Joint Standards Initiative**, a collaborative effort of the **Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP)**, **People In Aid** and the **Sphere Project** has issued a new report focusing on quality and accountability in the humanitarian response to the crisis 2011 in the Horn of Africa.

"Eighteen years after the Rwanda genocide, which many regard as the catalyst for the establishment of the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, People In Aid and the Sphere Project, the humanitarian sector continues to struggle with keeping affected populations at the centre of their responses," says the report.

Affected communities felt some agencies implemented projects with little consideration of local needs and expertise. According to the report, this resulted in unsustainable projects that in some cases increased the vulnerability of affected communities.

One community consulted for the report highlighted the agencies' over-reliance on committees or other structures to select beneficiaries, share information and get feedback. In two communities, respondents felt local leaders used their positions of authority for personal gain.

The report also stresses that certain organizations appeared to be systematically failing to harness local knowledge and expertise from relevant administrations and community members.

The lack of participation also concerned local government officials. In addition, members of affected communities said projects sometimes appeared donor-driven, which resulted in low-impact or unsuitable programs.

Examples of ill-directed programs include distribution of unsuitable seeds, and giving maize to malnourished children and dry foods for cooking to drought-affected communities with no access to water.

According to the report, "Effectively engaging communities throughout the project cycle and allowing them to play an active role is fundamental to ensuring the quality and accountability of a humanitarian response."

In one community, every stakeholder group emphasized the need for sustainable, self-reliant programs that build long-term resilience. Government officials noted that in certain regions the flood of aid prompted a dependency syndrome.

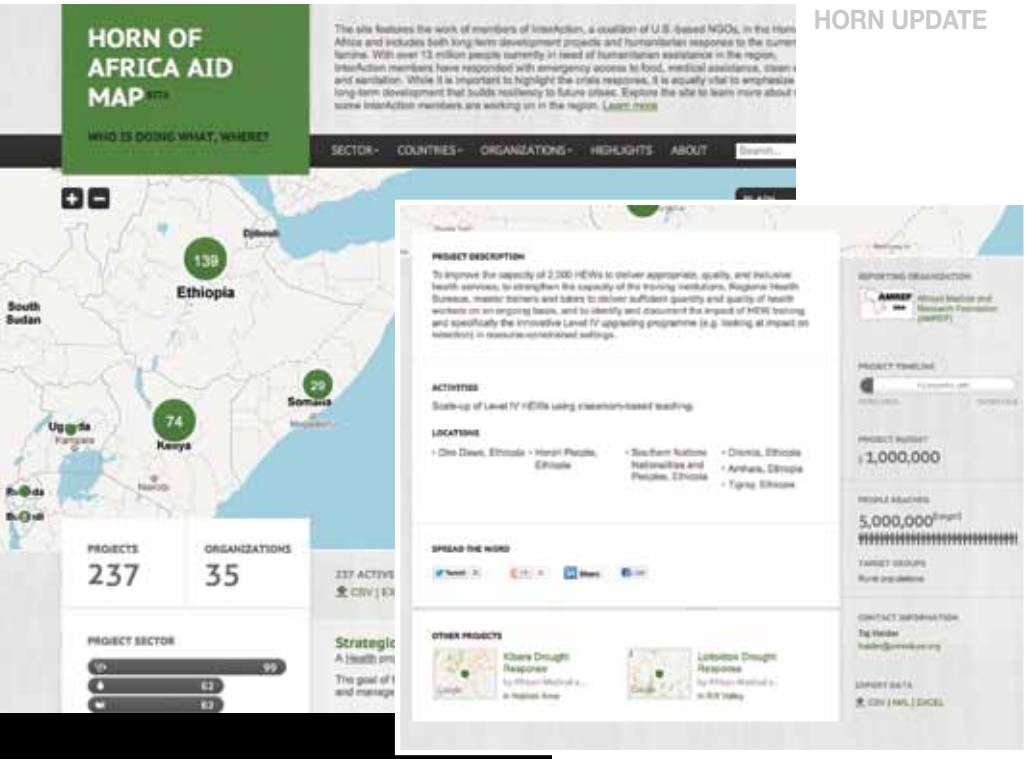
Summarizing the findings of a nine-week joint deployment to the Horn between November 2011 and January 2012, the report highlights several other needs, including good people-management processes and practices, increased peer learning, and capacity-building on the practical application of humanitarian standards.

At the field level, the practical application of humanitarian standards was limited, and some senior-level individuals consulted showed limited awareness of the standards and their use. In agencies that are members of HAP and People In Aid, most staff were not aware of their organizations' accountability commitments. To address these issues, the report recommends the development of joint training materials regarding humanitarian standards.

When it comes to rights and complaints, several groups in one community said they did not really understand their rights, nor did they know how they could safely raise concerns and complaints with the agencies. Community members wanted to be educated in this regard so they could hold organizations accountable.

While acknowledging the findings are based on a small sample, the report urges the humanitarian community to take into consideration the issues it raises.

The full report is available at www.JointStandards.org.



Horn of Africa Aid Map

In response to the drought crisis in the Horn of Africa and the declaration of famine in Somalia last year, InterAction has launched Horn of Africa Aid Map (http://hornofafrica.ngoaidmap.org) to highlight the work of its members in the region. The site captures both the response to the crisis as well as the long-term development efforts of members operating in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. By making this data open and accessible, InterAction not only shows the breadth of its members' work, but also highlights programming gaps and opportunities for partnerships between NGOs, donors and others.

Even though the UN has declared the famine over, InterAction continues to collect information for Horn of Africa Aid Map. The project data on the site has proven especially useful to local organizations. A program officer for a Mogadishu-based NGO, for example, reported that he uses the site frequently to identify potential partners working in his area.

InterAction members who are working in the Horn of Africa are encouraged to contribute to the map. Please contact mappinginfo@interaction.org to learn how you can participate.

a slow initial response that did not heed the warnings of the Famine Early Warning Systems Network, a USAID-funded initiative. But Garfield notes, "In the end, it [the response] was quite accurate and successful. Ten years ago such a response would not have been possible, much less in such a lawless area."

Sammy Matua, who helped coordinate the response of Church World Service (CWS) in the region, said the overall NGO and government response helped save lives—sometimes under very difficult and insecure circumstances, especially in Somalia. Funding partners and donors, he noted, need to know and appreciate "the efforts of individuals and communities struggling to reclaim their dignity despite the challenges they face."

Yet humanitarians are not resting on their laurels, because, as all acknowledge, the crisis of 2011 has not really ended. Earlier this year, forecasts warned that rainfall in the Horn during the second quarter was likely to be lower than average. Martone noted that the region seems to have entered a cycle where drought is now occurring every two years, rather than every decade, as often happened in the past.

The UN and humanitarian partner agencies said that, like last year, early action is needed this year to prevent food insecurity from worsening. In particular, agencies said building local capacity, resilience and sustainable livelihoods are needed for the region to weather another cycle of drought.

Earlier this year, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) noted that although some humanitarian conditions in the region had improved, approximately 10 million people were still food insecure and needed immediate assistance. Below average rainfall could also reverse progress made and push more people into a more serious humanitarian crisis, especially agro-pastoralists and pastoralists.

OCHA also warned that unless people can improve their ability to cope with recurrent droughts, they will remain trapped in chronic vulnerability. As 2012 has progressed, those worries have been reconfirmed; the so-called "long rains" needed for planting in many parts of Kenya have been spotty, putting some households under stress.

"Food stocks are exhausted and market prices are above average and increasing," said a joint report by USAID, the World Food Programme, the Famine Early Warning Systems Network and the Kenya Food Security Technical Working Group said in a May report. "Food insecurity is intensifying in the coastal lowlands where the long rains have not recharged water sources or supported crop growth." In other areas, the opposite has occurred and hundreds have been displaced by flash floods.

Weather isn't the only concern. An increasing number of refugees and displaced persons have been entering the Kakuma refugee camp in northwest Kenya—numbers fueled by the recent conflict between South Sudan and Sudan. It is also putting stress on locales like the Dadaab refugee camps in northeast Kenya.

Underlying all of these problems are what Kenyan members of the Geneva-based humanitarian consortium ACT are seeing: that the region has experienced recurring cycles of droughts and floods over the past decade that could be attributed to climate change and environmental degradation.

"These cycles have become more frequent and almost predictable, to the extent that the communities are subjected to shocks of droughts and floods, without sufficient time interval to allow for full recovery," ACT said in a recent report. The end result of this cycle, it said, "is a net loss for the communities marked by increased vulnerabilities, weakened purchasing power and an increase in levels of poverty. These cycles pose a serious challenge towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and other global developmental milestones."

Security problems

P.M. Jose, the country representative for

continued on page 26

Humanitarian Action and The Global War on Terror

▶ **Almost 10 years on, it is time for a post-mortem.**

By **Larry Minear**, Researcher, Feinstein International Center, Tufts University (retired)

IN THE FALL OF 2003, the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University convened a series of consultations in Boston, Geneva, London and Washington, D.C. to assess the impact of the so-called *Global War on Terror* on humanitarian aid programs. Attended by donor governments, UN agencies, the Red Cross Movement and NGOs, each meeting ended with more questions than answers.

How should aid agencies proceed in high-profile settings like Afghanistan and Iraq, where the occupying power and lead belligerent is also the major aid donor? Did the conflicts represent a new level of intrusiveness into—and deliberate use of—the humanitarian enterprise by the U.S. government? Would the "war on terror" association compromise the neutrality and operational security of aid operations so inevitably that the agencies should not even try to mount and maintain programs? How would violations of international law affect efforts to safeguard the lives of civilians? What of the deepening us-vs.-them divide in which aid agencies were perceived as "of the North," with few connections to indigenous traditions of assistance or to Islamic agencies? Would aid efforts elsewhere around the world suffer from the priority accorded to meeting needs in Afghanistan and Iraq?

Did the conflicts represent a new level of intrusiveness into—and deliberate use of—the humanitarian enterprise by the U.S. government?

With questions abounding and the wars escalating, participants, rather than seeking answers, engaged in a humanitarian mapping exercise to pinpoint issues requiring ongoing attention. They identified a pervasive malaise in the humanitarian community—a sense that the aid enterprise was caught up in a chain of events over which it had no control. Yet the alarm was not universal. U.K. analyst Hugo Slim scoffed at the notion of a malaise. Indeed, he saw aid groups being right where they belonged: in the thick of the need and challenged to work out satisfactory terms of engagement with the U.S. government and other players, whose political objectives, after all, they broadly shared.

Fast-forward to 2012. The wars are winding down and U.S. and coalition troops are withdrawing, leaving more ostensible space for humanitarian and human rights agencies to function. Yet exiting military personnel and civilian advisors are leaving behind two countries in shambles, their governments in disarray, and a deep suspicion of outside interveners and personnel, no matter their professed intentions.

Now the time is ripe for a post-mortem on the conduct of the humanitarian enterprise in these conflicts. The questions identified in 2003 require reflection not only in terms of effective humanitarian action in settings as diverse as Afghanistan and Somalia, but also in anticipation of future crises in which perceived U.S. national security strategy again threatens to upstage humanitarian imperatives. In retrospect, were the agencies unduly alarmed? To what extent were their fears borne out by events?

InterAction, which has confronted these issues at close range over the past decade, would be a logical convener, or coconvener, of such a post-mortem. It played a similar role in 1985-87, providing a forum for NGOs to reflect on problems encountered during the ▶

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Cold War and chronicled in *Helping People in an Age of Conflict: Toward a New Professionalism in U.S. Voluntary Humanitarian Assistance*. As with the 2003 humanitarian mapping exercise, an array of organizations and viewpoints would need to be engaged, bringing to the table perspectives well beyond the NGO sector and well beyond the United States.

Here are some of the questions such a post-mortem should address, each followed by some of the realities from the field that reinforce specific points of concern.

What are the comparative advantages of the various actors engaged in delivering human needs assistance in one form or another? The conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have attracted a more diverse than usual array of institutions providing services to civilian populations. These include coalition forces as well as military and civilian contractors—each with international personnel and local hires. The cast of characters includes organizations that are for-profit and charitable, single-purpose and multimandate, non-Western and Western. Not all agencies do all things well. What is the most serviceable division of labor among them?

How should humanitarian organizations position themselves relative to the U.S. and coalition troops and their armed opponents? Early in the wars, U.S. aid agencies contested the requirement that NGO staff not talk with the media without a U.S. military official present. To cement collaboration, organizations were invited to station personnel at the U.S. Central Command in Tampa (the International Committee of the Red Cross declined, the World Food Programme accepted, and NGOs responded variously). Aid groups in both theaters interacted differently with military-led provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs); for some, the extent of collaboration was influenced by the nationality of the PRT troops involved. It was not until July 2007 that InterAction-led NGOs and the Department of Defense reached agreement on guidelines for relations with each other.

The current U.S. army field manual asserts that there is no such thing as neutral humanitarian assistance. "Whenever someone is helped, someone else is hurt, not least the insurgents."

To what extent is U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine compatible with principled humanitarian action? The current U.S. army field manual asserts that there is no such thing as neutral humanitarian assistance. "Whenever someone is helped, someone else is hurt, not least the insurgents," it observes. "So civil and humanitarian assistance personnel often become targets." Complicating the picture further, many U.S. troops regard their "hearts and minds" work, which included distributing supplies donated by their own communities back home, as the most worthwhile and satisfying aspect of their deployments.

To what extent do U.S. antiterrorism regulations undermine the work of aid agencies? Enacted in 2001 and subsequently reauthorized, the USA Patriot Act constrains the ability of agencies to provide material or financial support to proscribed organizations. Over a seven-year period that ended in late 2010, a coalition of charities and other agencies sought to persuade the U.S. Department of the Treasury to take an alternate approach. In finally calling a halt to the discussions, the agencies participating in the Council on Foundations-led process noted in a January 2010 press release that the new guidelines were "a significant deterrent to the important work of philanthropy here in America and around the world." They also identified a negative effect on U.S. national security itself.

A more recent case in point: analysts have concluded that the 2012 response to the famine in Somalia has been significantly delayed because of antiterrorism-related restrictions on the movements of U.S. funding and aid organizations.

How might the U.S. government be encouraged to respect more fully and faithfully the established principles of international humanitarian law and military conduct? Earlier this year, InterAction member organizations conveyed to the director of the CIA their alarm at the use of medical personnel—ostensibly dispensing polio vaccine—as part of an effort to locate and watch Osama bin Laden. In the words of InterAction's Sam Worthington, "The CIA's use of cover of humanitarian activity for this purpose casts doubt on the intentions and integrity of all humanitarian actors in Pakistan." In protest, the Pakistani authorities closed down some inoculation programs. The conflicts also involved recurrent violations of the laws of war by the principals, with the blowback affecting international aid groups.

At the end of the day, in ways urgently needing to be analyzed, no humanitarian actor remains unaffected by these conflicts. All have something to gain by pondering the lessons to be learned. MD

Drones Reconsidered

UAVs' noncombat applications can assist humanitarian interventions in the Horn of Africa.

By **Whitney Grespin**, Operations Associate, Atlantean

Illustration: Oleg Yarko/Shutterstock.com

REMOTE SENSING AND AERIAL surveillance have been around for millennia—since Noah sent forth the dove from the ark and it returned with an olive branch—but in recent years, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) have rarely earned attention for any such peaceful pursuits. However, although UAVs have made headlines for their combat applications, their capabilities have been purposefully developed and advanced to make them ideal for use in humanitarian efforts.

The Horn of Africa is home to more consistent food and water shortages, armed engagements, population migrations and overall complex environments than perhaps anywhere else on Earth. The constantly evolving state of affairs across the region necessitates the collection and sharing of information as events unfold so aid and development organizations may best prepare for and respond to events as they happen. Using UAV observation capabilities to collect, process and disseminate information in a timely fashion can enable the most efficient allocation of time and resources so responders can effectively address incidents and disasters as they happen.

The technology

Similar to the broad market of automobile styles, UAV systems (*systems* includes not only vehicles, but also the technology necessary to control the aircraft) vary widely in both form and function. UAVs may be small, portable devices that can be launched by hand like throwing a football; medium-sized crafts that can be launched by catapult; or even vehicles as large as traditional airplanes that require runways for takeoff and landing, and may be controlled either as a remotely piloted aircraft or as an autonomous entity following preprogrammed instructions. This diversity of form and operational capability gives users a breadth of options when considering which UAV systems would be most suitable for them.

As the UAV industry has grown, the systems' technical capabilities and user-friendliness have advanced considerably and, perhaps more importantly, are now at a competitive price point for humanitarian use. Though these systems are expensive, their return on investment is unparalleled in terms of gathering critical information to achieve the best situational awareness with the smallest risk to human life or provoking adverse reactions from sensitive actors. The ability to customize mission flight paths and determine precise data gathering goals allow UAVs to be extremely responsive to user requirements. This allows each user or stakeholder to specify precisely what sort of data or geographic focus they want observed, which further demonstrates the value of investing in the technology for interorganizational collaboration.

The applications

The ability of a UAV to act as an "eye in the sky" allows system operators to observe and relay situation reports on circumstances that might otherwise go unnoticed by interested stakeholders. Events such as the movements of civilian populations, who may be intentionally traveling away from or returning to specific geographic areas, can be relayed to organizations that can react to those movements. These UAV data collection activities can provide vital information when trying to predict things like the rate and trajectory of refugee flows. This observational capability can be taken a step further and applied where civilian populations need a humanitarian corridor for safe passage through a conflict area or require access to a lifesaving resource such as a body of water.

Unlike human-collected information, the data collected and delivered by drones is completely impartial.

UAVs can also unobtrusively keep actors honest by monitoring adherence to agreements like the demilitarization of specific areas or, in more severe cases, can discover and document tragedies like mass graves. In addition to these larger scale interventions, UAVs can be used by small groups of individuals venturing into potentially unsafe territory. Hand-held UAVs are routinely used to conduct route reconnaissance, which increases movement security in potential conflict zones. These same systems could also be used to track movements of malicious actors, such as tracking marauding pirates in the Gulf of Aden back to their bases of operations to identify both dangerous areas and routes.

Many who are wary of "drones" should consider their unique capabilities and sourcing aptitudes. Unlike human-collected information, the data collected and delivered by drones is completely impartial. The information visible in their raw imagery and the analytical products resulting from their data collection are based solely on facts and augment or clarify other sources of information like word-of-mouth news.

UAV imagery from flights over Haiti was used ... to help aid organizations determine the best approach for relief delivery and conducting recovery operations.

The proof

In March of 2011, the Fukushima nuclear site was assessed by an American military UAV, which collected data and imagery to help responders understand the damage inflicted by the Tohoku earthquake and subsequent tsunami. Only 14 months earlier, UAV imagery from flights over Haiti was used to evaluate the extent of the earthquake's damage to infrastructure, and subsequently to help aid organizations determine the best approach for relief delivery and conducting recovery operations. This past performance could be drawn upon to identify best practices when applying this technology to humanitarian incidents throughout the Horn and beyond.

The U.S. military has also discovered that UAV data can indicate problematic incidents in civilian populations that may otherwise go unrecognized by the government. In Afghanistan, for example, UAVs have helped to recognize that a specific nomadic population has ceased to move, which the military learned usually signified a major health problem or illness in that group. As a result of this realization, military professionals have been able to relay word to individuals on the ground, who are then able to make contact with and assist that population. The replication of this same process and reaction would doubtless help aid organizations make contact with underserved and underresourced populations across the region, and expand their reach to assist the most vulnerable populations.

The way ahead

Theoretically, relief and development organizations could call for the military to fly taxpayer-funded vehicles from existing bases in Yemen and Djibouti over high-risk or high-activity areas throughout the Horn of Africa. However, the relative affordability of such systems is currently at a level where those same entities could consider investing in their own UAV systems. Instead of begging resources and favors from other groups, such organizations could make a concerted effort to invest in this technology. Should an outright vehicle purchase be prohibitive, there is also the option of pooling resources to work with companies that provide UAV services and data sources, but operate and maintain the vehicles on their own dime.

If multilateral stakeholders can work together to form a consensus on sharing both responsibility and transparency, UAV technology can realize its maximum utility to support both stability operations and development initiatives. MD

Remember the Exit Strategy?

▶ It's **markets**, not NGOs, that are key.

By **John Sauer**, Head of Communications and External Relations, International Programs, Water For People

GOOGLE THE WORDS "NGO exit strategy" and the first entry that comes up is a ReliefWeb article from 2005. For all the talk about sustainability, aid effectiveness and reaching the poor, this is a simple but telling indicator that NGOs aren't pursuing their unspoken core objective: to work themselves out of a job by solving the world's greatest crises. In reality, progress towards stated missions envisioning "a world without hunger" or "safe water and sanitation for all," actually moves along at a snail's pace, with many NGOs working in a single arena for 20 or 30 years.

To be fair, in some cases there are reasonable explanations for failing to exit, such as political insecurity and conflict. In other cases the failure is an indication that the NGO approach needs a reboot. There are a growing number of thought leaders and organizations who think market system development is the model that NGOs must adopt to succeed in moving billions of people out of poverty. In this model, the NGO serves as an outside facilitator that galvanizes support and partnership (think polio eradication) on a global level, while at the local level it strictly focuses on monitoring and market system analysis, increasing local stakeholder capacity, and helping to remedy bottlenecks in the system.

"The poor are dependent on market systems for their livelihoods. Therefore changing those market systems to work more effectively and sustainably ... will improve their livelihoods and consequently reduce poverty."

They call this approach Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P). According to a 2008 report published by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the central idea of M4P is that "the poor are dependent on market systems for their livelihoods. Therefore changing those market systems to work more effectively and sustainably for the poor will improve their livelihoods and consequently reduce poverty."

Within M4P, the exit strategy (or more specifically, the sustainability of the program in a way that does not require NGOs' continued assistance) is an integral part of the program design *from the beginning* and is realized when the markets function well enough to reach the most poor and vulnerable. The poor receive products and services they want and can afford (toilets, healthcare, food) but are also involved as participants and income earners in the process (like farmers and sales people).

In a move away from the traditional NGO project approach of having a set number of beneficiaries (recipients of products or services) at any given time, a market-based approach seeks to foster a *system* as the primary end goal. This system supports a process that does more than just meet development objectives. In addition, products and/or services offered continue to expand, diversify and be sustained in the long term because the local private sector drives the process forward as it does in all other vibrant markets worldwide. If the proper market incentives are in place, households acquire products and services they want at a reasonable price, and the private sector plays the leading role in ▶

maintaining its current customer base as well as bringing in new customers (including the poor) in the future.

Critics of the market approach say markets do not necessarily reach the poor with quality, higher priced products and services. The argument is that NGOs then need to step in to provide them. Unfortunately, doing so exacerbates the problem. The point is that NGOs need to envision a more active role in developing the market system, rather than trying to replace it with a different system. The NGO role should focus on continuously monitoring whether the poor are getting the products and services they want. Better monitoring and tracking then make it possible pinpoint market failures and to determine how to fix them without distorting the market. In this scenario, NGOs contribute to the augmentation of current developing markets by looking hard at *who* market systems do reach. Equipped with this evidence, NGOs can advocate and facilitate processes by which even the most poor and vulnerable have access to quality products and/or services for an equitable cost compared to other customers.

The NGO role should focus on continuously monitoring whether the poor are getting the products and services they want.

Done right, M4P produces more effective market environments in which enterprises deliver demand-led products and services. M4P encourages new private sector operators to enter the market to help meet increasing and diversifying demands. These markets and enterprises can then flourish because they are focused on customer demand.

The Kenyan mobile money industry and the success of M-Pesa is a recent example of a deliberate intervention to develop a market to meet the needs of the poor. According to Jonathan Ridley in a 2011 report he published for Coffey International Development, the support provided by the U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) was critical to creating M-Pesa, a company that as of 2011 has nearly 13 million customers (40 percent of Kenyan adults).

While DFID's support was important, very favorable conditions in Kenya's market system were also key in creating an environment in which the mobile market could develop successfully. The existence of well-trained marketing agents, favorable rules and regulations, and a strong cast of market players all contributed to the meteoric rise of M-Pesa and the mobile money industry. Moreover, demand for these services was substantial because people were fed up with the informal and risky methods being used to transfer money. The new method offered a safe and reliable alternative. Conversely, countries where pieces of this intricate puzzle were missing have had more limited success in developing a mobile money industry.

It is in these missing pieces that NGOs can find their opportunity in the M4P approach—an opportunity to help finish the puzzle by cre-

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International Climate Financing

Successes in Nepal show how such financing has broad benefits for development.

By **Vanessa Dick**, Senior Program Officer, Foreign Assistance, World Wildlife Fund

NEPAL IS A SMALL COUNTRY, about the size of North Carolina. But within its borders Nepal is home to an entire planet's worth of geographic diversity. From the high mountains shared by snow leopards and the rugged Rai and Sherpa peoples, to the lowland tropical forests of the Terai Arc where farmers coexist with tigers and elephants, these geographies and communities are on the front lines of the growing threat climate change poses to ecosystems and livelihoods in the developing world.

Within the development sector, climate change is quickly becoming the primary filter through which all donor country assistance and recipient country plans must pass. Developing countries, particularly least developed countries like Nepal, are struggling with climate change's immediate impacts and calling on donor nations to provide the financial assistance necessary to build climate resilience and pursue low emission pathways. Nonetheless there are those in Washington that see "international climate finance" as three dirty words that are unrelated to development objectives, but ignoring this growing interconnection puts current investments at risk and undermines the sustainability of future progress. As development advocates, it is important that we recognize this reality and work together to ensure that both climate and development objectives are met in this changing world.

Shape of the challenge

Nepal is faced with a number of challenges as it strives to develop despite climate change. Rapidly melting Himalayan glaciers are a major near-term threat to communities that sit below swelling glacial lakes, as well as to the billions of people downstream that rely on these waters for agriculture and drinking water. Increased deforestation is cutting directly into important community assets and raising greenhouse gas emissions. At the same time, communities are eager for energy access, as it often acts as the catalyst for development.

Nepal is not alone in its challenges. In Africa, the average number of weather-related natural disasters has more than doubled in the past decade, including the worst drought the Horn of Africa has seen in 60 years, propelling the entire region into a dire food crisis. In 2005 and 2010 the Amazon experienced two "once-every-100-years" droughts. Thailand is currently recovering from the worst flooding it has seen in more than half a century. But these severe weather events, likely due to the effects of a warming planet, pale in comparison to the long-term impacts to climate change.

Bottom line: Without aggressive, ambitious action, we are headed for a world where global average temperatures could increase as much as 6°C. Under those conditions, sea levels would likely rise 2 meters by 2100. In low-lying countries the consequences will be devastating; Bangladesh alone expects as many as 17 million displaced people. Disease vectors for viruses such as malaria and dengue fever are expected to migrate to new areas, exposing large numbers of previously unexposed populations. In some African countries, yields from rain-fed crops could be halved by 2020; and in Central and South Asia, crop yields are predicted to fall by as much as 30 percent. By 2025, 1.9 billion people will live in countries or regions with absolute water scarcity, and two-thirds of the world population could be under stress conditions. We must help countries reduce emissions while simultaneously preparing for these impacts. Inaction not only

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jeopardizes existing and expected development gains, but also yields a developing world overwhelmed with humanitarian crises rather than planning for long-term growth.

Encouraging signs

The good news? There are reasons to be optimistic. The global community has taken significant steps to create a new urgency to integrate climate and development. In Copenhagen in 2009, the U.S. joined the rest of the developed world in committing a total of $30 billion in 2010-2012 to help developing countries to fast start their mitigation and adaption efforts. Developed nations also promised to raise $100 billion per year from public and private sources by 2020. These commitments represent among the largest for foreign assistance in history. They have also spurred developing countries to undertake high-level, in-country conversations on how to reduce emissions and prepare for impacts while advancing development. So whether politicians in Washington like it or not, developing countries are thinking about their development challenges in climate terms.

So how are these new climate development dollars being spent and how does it support the U.S.'s broader development goals?

Adaptation. Climate adaptation includes practical steps to protect countries and communities from the likely disruption and damage from the effects of climate change. Efforts mostly focus on the least developed countries particularly vulnerable to the physical and socioeconomic impacts of climate change. This includes understanding the impacts climate change will have at regional, national and local levels. This information is invaluable as development agencies work with nations to develop and implement long-term development strategies. For example, Nepal is a focus country within USAID's Feed the Future food security initiative. As part of the initiative's five-year strategy for Nepal, USAID will integrate current climate programming in the Terai Arc Landscape with its food security planning on crop and variety selection, land use planning, and improved understanding of irrigation and water management. Not only does this act as an insurance policy to U.S. food security dollars spent in Nepal, it also increases the likelihood that results will be sustainable.

Whether politicians in Washington like it or not, developing countries are thinking about their development challenges in climate terms.

Deforestation. Destruction of forests is a key driver of climate change, contributing at least 17 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD) programs recognize the value of forests as carbon storehouses by providing economic incentives to forested countries to reduce their deforestation rates while advancing important social and environmental safeguards. REDD assistance focuses on activities like developing systems to track changes in deforestation over time and building systems to equitably distribute REDD finance to local communities. It also supports communities in locally-controlled forest management, which results in important improvements to land tenure systems and income generation for communities that sustainably managing their forest assets.

In Nepal, plans are in place to increase dispersal of biogas technology. Biogas plants break down biodegradable matter to produce methane, saving an estimated two tons of fuelwood per year per biogas plant. Nepalese biogas plants are fed with cow dung and human waste, with the methane output burned in cooking stoves and the solid residue used as farm fertilizer. The result is cleaner cookstoves for families throughout rural Nepal; this in turn decreasing the dangerous respiratory diseases associated with cookstoves fueled by firewood. In Madhuban village in the Kata corridor, one woman said the biogas technology has been especially valuable because it frees her from collecting firewood, as well as having to constantly monitor and feed the fire while she cooks. She has been using her new "free time" to grow and sell vegetables, creating new income for her family.

Climate vs. growth or climate *and* growth?

Some critics claim that curbing emission rates impairs economic growth potential. But assistance is helping plan for low emission economic growth through the development of Enhancing Capacity for Low Emission Development Strategies (EC-LEDS) that help developing countries in their efforts to pursue accelerated, sustainable, climate-resilient economic growth while slowing the growth of greenhouse gas emissions. The U.S., for example, is providing targeted assistance to 20 developing country partners, including Nepal, to create and implement EC-LEDS with the help of individuals and communities affected by climate impacts and including the data, modeling and analysis needed for effective plans.

The impacts of climate change—and natural resource depletion—are not isolated. They touch the lives of everyone, particularly in developing countries where NGOs work. Supporting international climate finance supports development. Ironically, one positive effect of climate change may be to force the development community to unite to tackle this global challenge. Whether it is global health, food security, or democracy and governance, all sectors will feel its impacts. MD

Photo: Daniel Prudek/Shutterstock.com

SMS: Good Aid or Good Business?

▶ Reaching for a **cell phone** is not the same as reaching out to hold a hand.

By **Michelle Risinger**, International Development Consultant

THE PROCESSES OF globalization are typically presented in both a positive and a negative light. Supporters proclaim the development of new technology, the unprecedented sharing of information and communication, and the opening of new markets and the reduction of international trade barriers. Critics point out globalization's inclination for structural violence, the destruction of the environment and a propensity for self-serving consumerism that drives the beast to run faster.

In 2011, at the launch of the GSMA mWomen partnership with Visa, USAID and the Australian Agency for International Development, U.S. Secretary of State Hilary Clinton announced, "As excited as we are by mobile technology, we are more excited about how it can help people." The program represents an unprecedented public-private partnership between the worldwide mobile industry and the international development community. There are numerous examples of other successful SMS (text messaging) programs run by philanthropic NGOs around the world, and research suggests that a 10 percent increase in mobile phone penetration rates has led to an additional 1.2 per cent increase in GDP (gross domestic product) in low- and middle-income countries. Benefits from mobile technologies include increased access to health and education, the support of civic participation and activism, and an increase in women's sense of security and independence.

And yet, one cannot help but pause at the shadowed irony and greater implications of using SMS technology. In many respects, it has been globalization and the proliferation of capitalism that has furthered the divide between the global North and South that necessitates international development programs. By harnessing SMS technology, what role are NGOs now playing in the forces of globalization? What are the implications of using a corporate-based, consumer solution to meet humanitarian needs? Do the benefits of SMS programs outweigh the long-term costs of globalization or is the creative use of technology further stimulating the consumerism that characterizes modern globalization?

As the desire for cheap labor has driven mobile phone production into the Global South where labor is inexpensive and unregulated, workers have been unable to realize their full potential and are often recipients of aid programs. There are serious environmental implications as well. Mobile technology has been linked to the unprecedented and devastating loss of the honeybee; cell towers have been investigated as a possible cause for brain tumors and cancer; and the U.S. alone discards 65,000 tons of cellular waste each year. The size of the industry is also significant. According to Pyramid Research, text messaging generated $49.4 billion in revenues for cell phone companies worldwide in 2005—and was projected to yield $76.5 billion in 2012. With all major telecommunications conglomerates registered in the Global North, one can see that although research suggests empowerment through cellular technology, capitalism and consumerism are no less of a driving force in the process.

This all being said, research on empowerment through SMS technology is highly positive. According to the London Business School, an extra 10 mobile phones per 100 people in a typical developing country leads to an additional .44 percentage points of growth in GDP per person. Oxfam recycles old cell phones and runs an SMS program in Armenia whereby beneficiaries receive alerts on health rights directly to their phones. Highly popular, Frontline SMS is a free software program that turns a laptop and a mobile phone into a central communications hub. Once installed, the program enables users to send and receive text messages and is used by HIV/AIDS programs in rural Kenya and disaster-affected communities in Haiti, and also supports education in Kyrgyzstan.

In Uganda, the Women of Uganda Network provided 12 rural women farmers' groups with a mobile phone and six months of free airtime, so the women could listen and contribute to a popular agricultural radio show, as well as communicate with each other. Interestingly, once the six months of subsidized airtime was finished, the women opted to continue paying for the airtime themselves. In another noteworthy example, a joint venture between the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab and a Costa Rican NGO outfits abandoned shipping containers as digital community centers with Internet access, sending them to remote villages throughout Central America providing education, health care, entertainment and financial services.

One must wonder if corporate partners—such as Visa and GSMA (the GSM Association)—hope to take advantage of this untapped market in developing countries.

Additionally, in wealthy and technologically advanced countries like Finland, France and Spain, Internet access has recently been declared a basic human right. Are we putting the cart before the horse by sending digital media centers to locations that are still struggling with the more traditional basic rights such as food, water, shelter and health care?

These last two examples raise one final issue: How does one balance between the emerging benefits of cellular technology and global responsibility? In many ways, the answer remains to be determined. In some sense, we must accept that due to the interconnectedness of the world, all of our actions can and do have long-term global effects and in this moment. It is not impossible to imagine that corporations involved in mobile technology can have altruistic motives, but NGOs should make responsible efforts to anticipate the potential outcome of corporate partnerships and to consider what the long-term advantages and effects might be for the population they aim to assist.

Mobile technology enables us to connect with each other in an unprecedented manner, but it also dehumanizes the face-to-face act of communication itself. It is imperative that the NGO community remembers that reaching for a cell phone is not the same as reaching out to hold a hand. MD

Horn update

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Catholic Relief Services (CRS) in Kenya, emphasizes these same worries, as well as the fact that security in the region is far from settled. "Increasing insecurity is restricting the access of humanitarian players like NGOs," he said. "This is negatively affecting the lives of the most vulnerable in northern and eastern Kenya and the refugees in Dadaab." Jose stressed that governments in the region, outside players with influence (like the U.S.) and the United Nations need to do more to help resolve regional conflicts that are worsening the security situation.

Matua of CWS called security the most pressing problem for NGOs at the moment—the problem that has refused to go away.

"The presence of terrorism and the continuous abduction of humanitarian workers inside Somalia and in Daadab remains an extremely serious challenge," he said. He added that such insecurity contributes to ongoing food issues because, among other things, it causes the costs of transporting food to jump.

Those are not the only problems related to food, Jose said. Food stocks are becoming exhausted and market prices, now above average, are increasing—particularly for some commodities like corn. "This could get worse in the next few months," he added.

Still, Jose believes the food security of Kenyans has improved compared to a year ago, thanks to the humanitarian response by the government, the public and NGOs.

Matua agrees. He said that while international media attention on the Horn was not sustained, it did spur funding levels just enough and within a fairly reasonable amount of time.

Jason Belanger, who recently served as CRS emergency coordinator in Ethiopia, sees a mixed picture. He says that a key issue to be addressed in Ethiopia is the need to ensure that those involved in any drought response continue to closely monitor early warning information and take action before potential problems turn into crisis situations.

Belanger believes the 2011 drought response in Ethiopia was delayed not due to a lack of early warning information, but rather a lack of action at the critical moment when a response was most needed. There were several reasons for this, but the most glaring was that funding was not immediately made available to help mitigate the most severe impact of the drought.

Intractable problems

If funding is one ongoing problem, others are tougher and more intractable.

The impact of climate change, Matua said, is starting to be felt in the region and it could be contributing to the cyclic nature of recurring droughts. "Already areas that received some good rains during the October-November 2011 rain season have received very poor rains during the March-May 2012 seasonal rains," he noted. This means farmers must wait until the October-November 2012 rains before they can expect to see any relief.

That reality, humanitarian workers say, means that all involved in the response—be it NGOs, national governments or donors—need to invest in what Matua calls *proactive interventions* that enhance the drought resilience of communities. This, he and others argue, will reduce vulnerabilities to recurring droughts and other hazards. Rainwater-harvesting interventions are a good example. "This water could be stored to grow food, as well as for domestic use and livestock during the dry periods," Matua said.

Sustaining and then expanding programs need to focus on enhancing the resiliency of communities in the region. This is part of a long process and requires patience, according to Jose. International funding for the 2011 crisis was not initially commensurate to the needs of the region, he noted. "Donors need to keep in mind that a response to famine cannot be just short-term relief such as providing water and food," he said. "It requires three to five years of support in the recovery phase to improve social and economic stability, and the resilience of the community to prevent (future) droughts and famine." MD

Markets

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ating and encouraging favorable market conditions that ensure effective access to a product or service last without future intervention. The Kenyan example demonstrates that while there are many aspects of the market system that need to be working properly for a market to develop, when conditions are right these markets *can* reach the poor and vulnerable.

The key objective of market system development is to strengthen the market in such a way that services (providing food, water and sanitation) increase, specifically for households previously without access. For the market to remain healthy and grow, numerous participants have to be incentivized to play their role and have the capabilities to do so. Getting this right requires looking at business development services, the business enabling environment, research and development of technologies, and the role of the public sector, according to Tim Stewart of the Springfield Centre for business in development. Hence, with the right analysis, NGOs can identify a more strategic and targeted role in M4P work.

Graham Craft, director for corporate and foundation partnerships at Mercy Corps (an early adopter of M4P work), thinks this program model will entail some growing pains since "… NGOs are used to doing the work ourselves, but in M4P you let the markets do the work." NGOs will also have to bring on new staff with different skills and have different kinds of discussions with their donors about outcomes versus outputs. But for Craft, making this shift is critical. "[T]his is the best way for us to stay relevant and to achieve our missions. To get at the core of our missions we have to do more than just implement a good project; we have to solve the problem. Unfortunately, a whole bunch of good projects doesn't solve a problem, so we have to try a different approach."

Encouragingly, traditional donors like USAID are shifting some of their support to market systems approaches, such as the Development Innovations Ventures program. And, as already mentioned, DFID has also been moving in this direction for a long time. Major foundations such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation are also putting support and funds behind M4P approaches.

Hopefully, as evidence builds in support of market system development, more donors and NGOs will begin to consider using this approach as a way to fulfill our mission to reach the most poor and vulnerable with the products and services they critically need. At the same time, we can also realize that unspoken objective to work ourselves out of a job—to envision a world where international development is redundant. Now *that* would be a graceful exit. MD

Questions and comments can be sent to the author via twitter @johnwsauer or by email, jsauer@waterforpeople.org. Water For People, www.waterforpeople.org, works with local governments, communities, the private sector, and civil society to ensure water and sanitation services in a region for everyone forever.

Best Practices

Have you gathered lessons learned from your work in the field that could benefit others? Send your summary of less than 1,000 words to cbrobst@interaction.org and share your expertise with the entire NGO community.

Best Practices & Innovations (BPI) Initiative

Phase Two, Round One Winners

InterAction is pleased to announce the winners of Phase Two: Round One of our Best Practices and Innovations (BPI) Initiative, which focused on how international NGOs help build the capacity of local implementing partners working in food security and agriculture. The BPI Initiative was launched in September 2009 with support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to promote information sharing on effective program approaches and to improve practice standards. All submissions were reviewed by a selection committee of experts and evaluated according to five criteria: evidence of effectiveness/success, efficiency/cost-effectiveness, equitable outcomes for women and men, sustainability and replicability/adaptability. The winners were recently recognized at an event at InterAction. For more information on these interventions and the BPI Initiative visit www.interaction.org/work/best-practices.

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MercyCorps

Mercy Corps
Civil Society and Market Networks for Pro-Poor Sustainable Environmental Development in the Ayeyarwady Delta

The key innovation of Mercy Corps' project involves the introduction of a market-based approach to energy poverty as part of a disaster risk reduction strategy following Cyclone Nargis. High quality fuel efficient stoves have been designed, tested and commercialized through a network of civil society organizations. Access to affordable stoves reduces household expenditure on fuel by over $70 per year, while conserving protective forest land and supporting entrepreneurship. The project has also provided a platform for motivated community members to play a rare active role in civil society, creating an incubator for a new generation of civil leaders and enabling a bottom-up approach to local problem solving. MD

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