

Accepting responsibility?

Each state has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies occurring on its territory. Hence the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organisation, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory. (UN 46/182)

Humanitarian Outcomes

Working hypotheses

- Role of the state relatively neglected by international humanitarian actors
- Government officials rarely big fans of international aid agencies – a dysfunctional relationship
- How to relate to state actors a big part of aid workers jobs but neglected in the academic literature

Humanitarian Outcomes

History of state roles

- 1970s and 1980s state often played a much more central role.
- The share of its relief budget that the European Commission channeled directly through national governments in affected countries had fallen to 6% in the 1990s from over 90% in 1976
- 1990s – rise of NGOs. *Relief came to symbolize not simply the existence of massive humanitarian need, but an effective questioning of sovereignty*
- 2000's a return to state centrality? – India and the tsunami, Pakistan and the earthquake, Mozambique's flood response

Humanitarian Outcomes

Principles

- How can donors and agencies be simultaneously committed to humanitarian, fragile states and development principles?

| Humanitarian | Development | Fragile States |
|----------------------------|---|---|
| Independence Neutrality | Alignment Ownership Harmonisation | State building is the central objective |

Good governance principles

- Participation – the degree of involvement by affected stakeholders in disaster risk management.
- Fairness – the degree to which rules relating to disaster response apply equally to everyone in society.
- Decency – the degree to which the formation and stewardship of the rules is undertaken without humiliating or harming people.
- Accountability – the extent to which political actors are responsible to society for what they say and do in responding to disasters.
- Transparency – the degree of clarity and openness with which decisions about coordination and the provision of humanitarian aid are made.
- Efficiency – the extent to which limited human and financial resources for disaster risk management are applied without unnecessary waste, delay or corruption.

Conclusions

- Agencies will need to more systematically assess and understand state capacities
- A shift from delivering aid directly in ways that substitute for state capacities to supporting states to deliver on their own responsibilities or advocating for state actors to address gaps in responses.
- For donor governments, this means looking again at how they fund disaster response.

Humanitarian Outcomes

Neglected Accountability Dimensions - Where is the state?

- Of governments to their citizens and of ways citizens might be able to hold governments to account.
- Of aid agencies to governments – legitimate reporting requirements

(Affected States have the sovereign right to coordinate, regulate and monitor disaster relief and recovery assistance provided by assisting actors on their territory, consistent with international law). – IDRL guidelines

- Advocacy by agencies to encourage governments to be more accountable to citizens in times to disaster

Accountability Research – Alam 2003

- Two Ethiopia districts were analysed and given performance and accountability scores for famine response.
- Large differences in the relative performance of the two districts in terms of equitable distributions, timeliness, selection of the most needy and participation in decision-making.
- Indicators for accountability included the extent to which officials kept people informed about discussions, whether they listened to complaints, their accessibility and opportunities to represent views in higher-level discussions.