

EDITORIAL:

Why didn't you say so?

Those of you who leafed through the last edition of *The Investigator* may remember our theme of cooperation and our question: "Are we more effective in preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers, if we work together?" The question was open and the conclusion was yours. But certainly, if the experiences of our two contributing authors were anything to go by, cooperation can present considerable challenges in practice.

This edition takes a somewhat different approach to the same basic issue of working with others to address sexual exploitation and abuse in our organisations. It also comes up with some surprisingly different results. For instead of looking at cooperation with other NGOs – our traditional "partners" and "peers" – this issue is concerned with how humanitarian workers consult with the communities they work with.

The idea that we should consult beneficiaries about their needs and capacities and include them in decision-making, is not new. Most people in the aid business will tell you that

consultation / participation are extremely important for good programming and genuine accountability. It's just that they are hard to achieve, especially in humanitarian crisis where insecurity and survival needs are still so acute. There, in a contest between life-saving service delivery and consultation / participation, consultation / participation are often the losers.

Or so the argument goes. Though we don't have room here to debate the competing points of view, it does become clear that preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse is not (just) a question of improving the quality of existing services, rather it is a matter of responding to a separate and distinct form of insecurity inherent in situations of displacement: the risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.

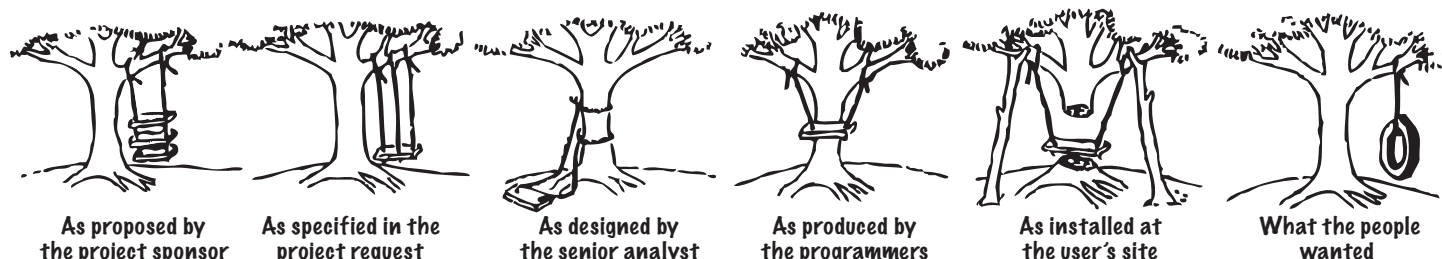
Further, in his feature article, "**A Moving Picture: Community film-making as a tool for raising awareness about sexual exploitation and abuse in Kenyan refugee communities**", Charles Otieno shows how participation can itself be an antidote for the disempowerment caused by exploitation and abuse. As Kenya Country Manager for FilmAid International, he was involved in the production of

four community films about sexual exploitation and abuse in Kenyan refugee camps. The stated aim of the films was to improve awareness of staff codes of conduct on sexual exploitation and abuse and indeed the films succeeded in doing this. But, in the end, the process of community film-making proved equally, if not more, valuable than the dissemination of knowledge.

More importantly, beneficiaries are powerful advocates for their rights and their safety. The question is, how to collect those voices and mobilise this powerful tool for more reform. BSO is experimenting with one method: a consultation with beneficiaries in diverse locations to map the extent of the problem and the perceived effectiveness of agencies' responses. Known as the "**Beneficiary Based Consultation**" the study will soon get underway in three locations around the world. More information will be available in future issues of *The Investigator*.

Meanwhile, enjoy *The Investigator*, Issue 3, "The Consultation / Participation Edition". We welcome your feedback. ■

The story of the project



As proposed by the project sponsor

As specified in the project request

As designed by the senior analyst

As produced by the programmers

As installed at the user's site

What the people wanted

'A moving picture: Community film-making as a tool for raising awareness about sexual exploitation and abuse in Kenyan refugee communities'

Charles Otieno*

The refugee situation in Kenya

The flow of refugees into Kenya began in the early 1990s with the arrival of thousands of young Sudanese boys in the North of the country. Known as the "Lost Boys", these children were soon joined by thousands of other people fleeing the civil war in Sudan, as well as refugees from the inter-clan violence in Somalia. To assist them, the Kenyan Government and UNHCR eventually established two camps, one in Dadaab in Eastern Kenya (actually made up of three camps a few kilometres apart) and one in Kakuma in North Western Kenya. With time, people from other neighbouring countries, especially Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, were also accommodated in these camps.

The Kenya code of conduct on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse

Once in the camps, however, many refugees found themselves entirely dependent on assistance and protection from humanitarian agencies and the host government. This extreme vulnerability in turn created an environment with high potential for sexual exploitation and abuse. As borne out in the assessment conducted by UNHCR and Save the Children-UK in West Africa in 2001, those who provide assistance and protection may also be perpetrators of exploitation and abuse.

The West African report prompted humanitarian agencies in Kenya to take joint action to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by camp workers in Kenya. In 2003, after a year of collaboration and development, UNHCR and its Implementing and Operational Partners signed a joint *Code of Conduct for Humanitarian Workers in the Kenya Refugee Program*. The "Kenya Code" established a shared set of ethical standards of employee conduct as a first step toward preventing the sexual exploitation and abuse of refugees in Kenya. Its collaborative, inter-agency structure was the natural outcome of the scope of the UN standard (ST/SGB/2003/13), which applies to organisations working in cooperative agreements with the UN and the fact that UN partners often work together to deliver programmes.

From Kenya Code to concerted action

Later, the International Rescue Committee, CARE, FilmAid International and UNHCR submitted a proposal to implement activities directed at preventing sexual exploitation and abuse in the Kenya refugee programme. This project, *Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the Kenya Refugee Program*, was designed to support implementation of the Kenya Code and to strengthen complementary programmatic and operational initiatives to prevent and respond to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries perpetrated by members of staff. Funding was secured from the US Department of State's Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration and in late 2004 activities commenced. After a year of implementation, the project was granted a one-year extension, and later extended for one more year for a third phase to encourage partners in the region (Ethiopia, Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania) to mainstream protection from sexual exploitation and abuse into their programmes and operations.

The project benefits the entire Kenya refugee programme implemented under the auspices of UNHCR and the Government of Kenya, although it has been working to support all

organisations engaged in the delivery of services to refugees.

Raising beneficiary awareness

Campaigns to inform refugees about sexual exploitation and abuse, the Kenya Code and the complaint mechanisms were deemed a critical component of the project. The project used several media to raise awareness including community meetings, slogans on t-shirts, posters, billboards, school debates and online debates for humanitarian workers. For greater impact to be achieved however, the use of visual and oral mass media was seen as important as the majority of refugees were unable to read or write. FilmAid was therefore appointed to produce a set of four local films addressing issues of sexual exploitation and abuse and to conduct an awareness campaign using the films.

Film as a tool for raising awareness

Since 1999, FilmAid International has been using films to raise awareness of social issues in refugee camps around the world. For a number of reasons, we have found it a particularly effective tool of information dissemination. First, it is a popular form of entertainment and so easily engages the interest of people in refugee communities. Second, as a mass media, it can reach thousands of people – regardless of literacy – in one screening. Third, it is transportable and can be duplicated and displayed in remote locations. Fourth, and most importantly, by fictionalising real life situations, film can allow people to objectively discuss controversial issues, such as those involving sex, in a way that breaks taboos.

Engaging the community

For films to be truly effective, they have to be produced with the participation of the particular communities. In Kenya, this was done through a platform known as the Messaging Committees. The Messaging Committees comprised community representatives with diverse interests, including community leaders, religious leaders,

* Charles Otieno is Kenya Country Manager for FilmAid International. Charles has been working with FilmAid since 2005 and his main area of interest is grassroots development communications. FilmAid uses the power of film to promote health, strengthen communities and enrich lives.

women and youth representatives, NGO workers and teachers and other special interest groups such as the disabled. These were selected through consultations with community leaders, women and youth groups and NGO community services departments. In addition, humanitarian agencies also nominated either Sexual Exploitation and Abuse or SGBV focal persons to sit in the committee.

The Messaging Committee in Kakuma and Dadaab refugee camps and in Nairobi, advised the project coordinators, organised discussions at the community level and assisted the project to identify critical areas and issues of concern. This process culminated in the identification of key messages and themes that were to be the focus of the films. The main areas identified by the community in all three locations as needing interventions were the education sector, resettlement programmes, and interaction with security and local authorities. Slogans developed as a result included *“Schools are for Learning, not for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse”*, *“The Police and Security Guards are there to Protect, not to Exploit”*, *“Drivers have a Licence to Drive, not a Licence for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse”*, *“Water, Medicine and Food are for Life, not for Exchange for Sex or Money”*. The process of developing these messages was in itself an empowering process for the refugees.

These messages were then used as the platform for a story-writing competition in the two camps and in Nairobi. Guided by these slogans, over three hundred refugees and agency workers submitted stories and essays on sexual exploitation and abuse. This competition was facilitated by the Messaging Committees in the three locations. The ostensible purpose of the competition was to find the stories to best dramatise the key messages. However, it also created another forum for the discussion of sexual exploitation and abuse among refugees. The messaging committees in Kakuma and Dadaab worked with FilmAid staff to select the winning stories and develop the stories into scripts. In each location, three winners were selected. The winners included six individual refugees,

one person from the host community and two refugee groups.

Screenings and post-screening discussions

Four film scripts generated from the story-writing competition, were developed and approved by the Kakuma Messaging Committee between May and June 2005. The four films were shot in Kakuma camp by FilmAid staff together with a technical crew comprised of refugees and the host community. The films starred refugee actors and were produced in English and dubbed in 4 languages. Since then, over 200,000 people have viewed these films. Thousands of refugees attended the mass evening screenings in Kakuma and Dadaab. In Kakuma, Dadaab and Nairobi, FilmAid organised daytime screening sessions with (approximately) 20-30 participants and facilitated discussions.

Achievements and challenges

Reactions to the films were extremely positive. People enjoyed the films and related to the subject matter. Discussions during the smaller screenings confirmed that exploitation and abuse are problems in refugee communities. Though some refugees saw relationships between “consenting adult” refugees and humanitarian workers as legitimate, they also recognised that harsh living conditions make refugees especially vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. In their view, improving services is critical to stamping out the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The project of course met a few challenges, the biggest being the fact the films were developed at the same time as the complaint mechanisms and protocols on the preventing of sexual exploitation and abuse. This meant that the films could not be very specific in passing out messages on response as this was yet to be agreed by the agencies. Also, resource and time constraints made it impossible to produce a film in each of the three locations. Thus even though communities from

all the three locations participated in conceptualizing the films, only the community in Kakuma participated in its actual production. Finally, it was important that there be some basic awareness on the subject among the community for their participation to be more effective. Limited awareness amongst beneficiaries before the films were produced, meant that FilmAid relied more heavily on input from agencies. FilmAid did make attempts to screen other films of sexual exploitation and abuse but these films are rare or hard to come by.

Conclusion

In Kenya, film proved a powerful tool for raising awareness about sexual exploitation and abuse. Developed with the community, the four films reached wide audiences and stimulated open discussion about this normally taboo issue; we expect an end-of-project evaluation to show an increase in awareness about sexual exploitation and abuse issues amongst refugees in the Kakuma and Dadaab camps and in Nairobi. FilmAid will continue screening these films as part of its regular activities and has produced a manual to help facilitators stimulate discussions.

However, we learned that the most critical aspect of the project was not necessarily the end product – the films – but the process of making the films and community involvement. FilmAid has screened hundreds of films in the refugee camps but the reaction of the community to these films was more than we expected. Refugees were seeing themselves on screen, addressing issues that they themselves had raised, in their own languages and reveling in the pride that this was a result of their own work.

FilmAid will continue making the films and accompanied resources available to other agencies conducting similar activities in other refugee camps. However, to have more impact, it will still be critical that other agencies working in different locations make an attempt to produce local materials in local cultural contexts and languages. ■

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

AUGUST 2007 – JANUARY 2008

Monrovia, Liberia

Follow-up workshop* 09–12 October 2007**

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Follow-up workshop* 19–21 November 2007

Washington (DC), USA

Complaints Mechanism Workshop .. 20-21 September 2007

Training of Trainers workshop* 19–21 September 2007

Investigation workshop 24-28 September 2007

Follow-up workshop..... January 2008

Amman, Jordan

Follow-up workshop* 13–15 November 2007

* Attendance by invitation only

** Exact dates to be confirmed

Oxfam meets BSO: training to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse

Anna Dinnis*

Oxfam has become increasingly aware of and concerned by the risk that some humanitarian and development workers may exploit and abuse beneficiaries, in some cases sexually. These incidents not only cause great harm to the people we are trying to assist, but they also have an impact on Oxfam's reputation.

In mid-July I joined 18 colleagues from across the globe at a Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Workshop. Conducted jointly by Oxfam and Building Safer Organ-

isations, the aim of the workshop was to train us all to be able to investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by Oxfam staff. We had representatives from all regions and job families, which made for some very interesting discussions and fostered a great learning environment.

It was a very full week of thought-provoking and perception-challenging discussion. We began by looking at different kinds of abuse, and exploring the cycle of sexual abuse, to see how some people might take advantage of the opportunities that working with vulnerable populations affords. We talked of the importance of understanding local culture, so that we are able to provide complaints mechanisms, and are able to conduct investigations in a sensitive way.

At the beginning of the week we were told that if we took just three things

away from the workshop, they should be 'planning, planning, and planning'. The facilitators showed us practical ways of planning and conducting an investigation, taking Oxfam's Code of Conduct as the basis.

This planning was put into action later in the week when we split into groups to undertake a 'real-time' case study. We conducted a series of interviews, and met to reflect upon our findings, linking them to Oxfam's Code of Conduct, and to share our experiences and advice.

This is a fairly new topic for the MEEECIS Region and our PSEA team is still in its initial stages. We have trained four members of staff, and are looking forward to working together to increase the protection of children and vulnerable people, to whom we have a duty of care. ■

* The article is reproduced with permission from *Humanitarian News: Bulletin from Oxfam GB's Humanitarian Department, August 2008*. Many thanks to Oxfam for their assistance.



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