
DISASTER MITIGATION,
PREPAREDNESS
AND
RESPONSE

THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL
DISASTER REDUCTION

DISASTER MITIGATION, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

An Audit of UK Assets

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The Oxford Centre for Disaster Studies

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Foreword

The aim of the audit was to gain a coherent overview of the current UK assets available in the field of Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness (DMP). Specifically, to:

- identify strengths, weaknesses and gaps in UK DMP capability;
- encourage and enhance networking and skill-sharing within the DMP community;
- contribute to a more comprehensive and co-ordinated response to international disaster needs.

To these ends the information gathered and presented in this document represents the findings of over 170 returned completed questionnaires from charities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academic departments, government departments, consultancies, consultants and private companies. Additional information and comment has been added by the editors and members of the UK disaster mitigation and preparedness (DMP) community, including those from the UK Co-ordinating Committee of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), 1990-1999.

The text is divided into two sections, *the audit* and *the directory*. The former contains the analysis, recommendations and findings of the research, whilst the directory is a compilation of gathered information, presented in usable form for the DMP community

The audit

The audit comprises the following:

- **Overview**
The overview contains a summary of observations, conclusions and recommendations resulting from the research;
- **Activities findings**
Findings for each of the sections identified under *activities* in the audit, presented as statistical information with comment and lists of useful information. There are seven sections: *Regions of Activity, Hazard Expertise, Work Content and Skills, Education and Training Courses, Networks, Funding and Information Sources*.

The first four sections include two sets of statistics: a pie chart giving the breakdown of organisations according to activity, for example 8 per cent of all organisations responding to the audit are involved in landslide; and a table giving the percentage of activity of a particular organisation according to activity, for example 37 per cent of individual consultants replying to the questionnaires stated work in famine. The final three sections include listings, addresses and telephone numbers of relevant organisations;
- **Summary of organisational activity**
This section summarises in tabular form the activities of organisations according to region, hazard type and skills;
- **Current activities**
Current activities presents information relating to current projects, including organisation/ individual and contact name, project title, objectives and duration.

The audit also contains caption boxes, brief overviews of organisations and individuals, resulting from interviews, intended to present a fuller picture of current activities in this field.

The directory

The directory comprises the following:

- **Directory of organisations**
Information presented of all organisations returning questionnaires includes name, address, contact name and position, income, expenditure, fax, phone and E-mail address, number of staff and mission statement;
- **Directory of individuals**
This includes the name and contact address of every individual in the audit, arranged as address label format for best usage;
- **IDNDR focal points**
gathered information of key UK and international individuals available for comment and broad discussion of their areas of expertise, which make up seven sections: *General Knowledge of Disaster Preparedness/Mitigation, Hazard Types and Related Sectors, Sectors, Country Knowledge, Government focal points, NGO focal points and International focal points*. Focal points have been ratified by the UK IDNDR Co-ordinating Committee and the individuals themselves.

The appendices

There are three appendices, comprising:

- The Strategy Paper that emerged from the World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, Yokohama, 1994;
- Current networks: an unedited listing of all the networks referred to in the returned questionnaires;
- Research methodology: a summary of the research carried out to produce this audit. Also included is a copy of the Audit Questionnaire.

Reading the audit

Before reading the audit it is important to make the following points:

- The editors and sponsors of this exercise were encouraged by the response to the questionnaires, and the willingness of individuals to agree to becoming focal points. However, there are some gaps: some individuals and organisations failed to submit their response in time for inclusion in the analysis (although they are included in the directory). The editors also may not have been able to contact all who should have been included in this exercise. It is hoped that later editions will cover such omissions;
- The information contained in this audit reflects the responses given on the returned questionnaires: it was felt *not* to be the role of the editors to alter any returned information (unless obviously incorrect) since it would have been impossible in practice to check all incoming information. This is a particularly important point when reading the statistical findings, which are based on the assumption that answers given by returned questionnaires are truthful and correct. Hence, although all findings are accompanied by comment, it is nevertheless important to measure the statistical finding with a critical interpretation based on the reader's own knowledge;
- From the earliest stages of the project it was felt important to gather information relating to the currently most pressing activity of many of those in the audit, namely complex emergency and refugee activities. Although outside the scope of natural hazards this information is included;
- The scope of the research has been broadened from the original aim of gathering mitigation and preparedness information only. This has been carried out in recognition of the different understanding of these terms by the wider community, and of the difficulty in identifying these specific activities within programmes. Hence the editors have made the audit inclusive rather than exclusive in its content, in order to contain much of the valuable information received, which would have been discarded otherwise;
- Finally, as a first exercise in this field, the aim was to investigate *breadth* rather than *depth*. Some therefore may feel that more detail would have been useful. Where this is the case it is hoped the audit will prove useful in providing a platform for more detailed research by others.

Introduction

Before undertaking this audit, the general assumption of the editors, and to those spoken to in association with the project, was of a series of strengths and weaknesses in the field of the UK capacity to prepare against or mitigate future disasters. The findings from the audit now identify these strengths and weaknesses, as well as providing information on the activities of organisations involved in disaster mitigation, including consultants and consultancies, NGOs, academic bodies, private companies and governmental departments

Whilst the UK is largely free from major hazards, there is nevertheless extensive work proceeding in this field involving British organisations and individuals working in other countries, mostly in the Southern hemisphere: Africa, Asia and Latin America. Work of this nature in these regions has no doubt been assisted by extensive post-colonial contacts, the extensive development emphasis in UK academic institutions and the tradition of humanitarian voluntary aid which has been particularly strong in the UK.

From the audit, the major UK contributions would appear broadly to lie in the following areas:

- The prediction, monitoring and management of drought;
- The development of food security systems in drought-prone areas,
- Seismology and engineering seismology, strongly represented in British academic and consultancy bodies (this focus probably derives from the primary development of the subject in the UK);
- The development of cyclone-warning systems (The Meteorological Office continues to fulfil an international role in the global cyclone-warning network),
- The systematic approach to disaster management developed by British NGOs, which is well documented and widely adopted internationally. This work has been a collective effort of such groups as Oxfam, Save the Children Fund, The British Red Cross and Action Aid, amongst others;
- UK publishing that continues to make a significant contribution through key journals (the primary one being *Disasters*) which provides a vital dissemination tool for research findings. In addition publishers such as Intermediate Technology Publications, Wiley and Oxfam Publications have maintained a steady flow of materials on this theme. Publishing remains the key channel for the development of knowledge (greatly enhanced by the growth in use of the Internet);
- Disaster Management Training, a very extensive and growing sector; for example the United Nations Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP) has been extensively supported by UK expertise;
- Hazard-resistant low-cost building construction, which has been a major subject in this field since early programmes in the late 1970's with key texts being produced and disseminated.

The IDNDR

This audit appears midway through the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). It allows us to judge, in part, how well equipped the UK disaster community is to further the objectives of the IDNDR. Readers can make their own assessments from the data and commentaries that appear in the following pages, setting this information against the IDNDR's 'Strategy for the Year 2000 and beyond' issued at the World Conference in Yokohama in 1994 (see Appendix One for the Conference Strategy Report)

However the audit is designed to go further than this. It is intended to stimulate action to contribute directly to the IDNDR's global strategy. Perhaps this appears an ambitious aim; but we hope the audit will make a discernible contribution in four of the strategic areas highlighted at Yokohama

The IDNDR seeks to develop a global strategy of prevention (point A of the 'Strategy to the Year 200 and beyond') As an analysis of resources available for disaster prevention, the audit is part of this process. Its

national-level findings make up a tiny part of the picture world-wide but can be set against similar exercises being planned or implemented elsewhere, or against regional surveys such as the directory recently compiled by *La Red* for Latin America. There is a particular need for analysis of capacity in countries of the South.

The strategy calls for the identification and networking of existing centres of excellence (point E). The audit identifies skills and capacities in the UK, which is a prerequisite for effective networking. Moreover, it sets out some suggestions for better networking among the disaster community. Linked to this is the need for improved co-ordination and co-operation in research and for more interdisciplinary research (point K).

However, whilst studies such as this can stimulate co-operation, they do not guarantee it. There may be institutional or personal obstacles. In the UK, where competition for relatively limited research funding is intense, financial barriers may be the most formidable.

The Yokohama conference called for higher priority to be given to the compilation and exchange of information on natural disaster reduction (point M). We trust that the results presented by the audit will be valuable in supporting this process. The very commissioning of the audit reflects the importance attached to this work by the UK's IDNDR Committee and the Overseas Development Administration (ODA).

However, the audit is a starting point, not a conclusion. Its findings must be taken up and acted upon by organisations and individuals in the UK, and perhaps beyond, if it is to make any significant impact on the progress of the IDNDR.

The audit

Overview

Regions of activity

Hazard expertise

Work and skills

Education and training courses

Networks

Funding

Information sources

Summary of organisational
activities

Current activities

Overview

The following overview of the key findings of the audit is organised into two key headings: Organisations and Areas of Work, Specialisms and Interests.

Organisations

The questionnaire used seven categories to cover organisations represented in the UK disaster community: charity/NGO, private company, academic/research body, consultancy, individual consultant, government department and intergovernmental agency. Such division into categories is useful in understanding the community as a whole but in real life distinctions are less clear: a large, diverse and multi-disciplinary community cannot be captured neatly within a series of rigid compartments.

In reality it is possible for a single organisation or individual to fit into more than one category. For example, an NGO or academic institution may also provide a consultancy service in some shape or form (indeed, may have to in order to survive financially); an individual consultant may also be involved as a regular researcher with another agency or with an academic link. The division between consultancy firms and private companies is particularly fluid. Replies to the questionnaire demonstrate this issue clearly, with several respondents ticking more than one box. Cambridge Architectural Research (CAR) is a case in point: it identified itself as an academic/research body, consultancy and private company.

Nonetheless, the figures are revealing. They show the disaster community to be split broadly into four groups: the voluntary sector (charities and NGOs), academic and research institutions, the 'commercial' sector, and the state sector. In numerical terms the first three categories account for roughly a third of respondents each. The fourth group is influential but small in number. Looking within the categories we find a rich diversity:

Charities and NGOs

The range of agencies here mirrors the variety within the voluntary sector generally. They range from large development and relief organisations with annual budgets running into millions of pounds, for example Oxfam and Christian Aid, to much smaller agencies focusing on single issues or locations

Academic and research institutions

A wide range of academic organisations and departments are involved with disasters. They include a diversity of disciplines, including architects, planners, economists, environmental scientists, health experts, geographers, civil engineers, anthropologists, nutritionists and ecologists. Organisations include centres for regional studies, specialist units focusing on individual hazards such as earthquakes or floods, and development studies departments.

The 'commercial' sector: private companies

The small number of entries under the heading *private company* was surprising although this may indicate that commercial operations attach relatively little importance to this kind of survey and therefore did not reply to the questionnaire. Insurance companies were most likely to appear in this category.

University departments were prominent among the *consultants*, making up well over a third of respondents in this category. The remainder largely comprised commercial firms and a small number of individuals. Most of those who marked themselves as *individual consultants* were fully freelance although several were linked to academic departments.

The state sector

The group of *government departments* included sections of two government ministries (the ODA and Department of the Environment) and other national bodies (the Meteorological Office and National Rivers Authority). However, it is recognised that there are additional government ministries and agencies with an involvement in this field such as the Building Research Establishment.

There were two entries under the category *intergovernmental agency*. One was the Natural Resources Institute, which might equally well be deemed a government department and is in any case being privatised in effect. The second was the UK Committee for UNICEF.

Only one organisation, the Crown Agents, described itself as a *public corporation* (a category not used in the questionnaire).

Areas of work, specialisms and interests

This data can be understood best from the accompanying tables, to be found in each of the audit sections, which plot types of organisations against links with other agencies, work in different geographical regions, expertise in hazards, the nature of their activities and the skills they possess. A limited commentary is provided here to highlight some of the main features revealed in the figures.

Regions

The audit identified ten global regions. The region most recorded for activity was unsurprisingly Africa followed by South/South East Asia. Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union countries showed up as an important area for UK NGOs, consultancies and government departments (reflecting the current emphasis in international aid policy and hence in funding priorities). In contrast, the regions most 'neglected' were The Caribbean (traditionally a strong area of activity for the UK), Latin America including Mexico, East Asia (China) and the South Pacific.

For Africa, disasters addressed were recorded in order of priority as being:

1. Drought (especially in South Eastern Africa)
2. Complex Emergency (mostly in Rwanda, the scene of enormous activity, especially by NGOs and intergovernmental agencies)
3. Famine¹
4. Flood
5. Disease and Epidemic

Most organisational types (NGO, consultancy, etc) followed this pattern.

Commercial and consultancy interest was more pronounced in the more developed regions such as Australia and the Pacific, and the USA and Canada. Here other categories were not greatly involved. However, Western Europe appeared to be significant for several types of respondent. Latin America was of average significance for most categories, yet there was a reasonable level of involvement in the region by all except individual consultants. It is interesting to speculate on the likely picture in that region in a few years time, since local capacity and regional co-operation are growing rapidly.

Such a breakdown of priorities of Africa and Asia as the top two areas might be attributed to colonial ties/influence. Of the 'neglected' regions (by the UK), Latin America including Mexico has traditionally been the domain of the USA for aid. The shift in activity away from The Caribbean could be attributed to global shifts in need and aid distribution over the last decade, for example to Africa, Former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe.

¹ A distinction has been made between famine and drought, since famine is usually a consequence of a series of events of which drought may be only one factor.

Hazards

The returns show that UK organisations and individuals are involved in dealing with a wide range of hazards. Interest and expertise are well distributed, though the influence of the commercial categories is more pronounced in 'technical' hazards such as floods and earthquakes while NGOs and academics are mostly involved with drought and famine.

Complex emergencies dominate the figures, with all categories being extensively involved. For NGOs/charities, academic/research bodies, consultancies and individual consultants this was the single most important area of current work

Work and skills

The audit questionnaire identified two overlapping and complementary groupings: *Work Content* and *Skills*.

Work Content

Of the thirteen identified areas of work content, the four key categories of work being undertaken in order of reported activity were

- 1 Risk assessment
2. Relief and humanitarian aid
3. Vulnerability assessment
- 4 Community level disaster preparedness

Conversely the lowest levels of involvement were in major engineering, structural mitigation measures and public awareness raising (North and South). Also it appears few organisations are carrying a torch for gender issues!²

For NGOs and other voluntary sector organisations, relief work and community-level preparedness were the main areas of interest, with national-level planning and engineering work among the lowest priorities. NGOs still attach relatively little importance to raising public awareness of disaster protection opportunities even though this is surely a prerequisite of promoting disaster mitigation and effecting changes in policies

As a whole, the commercial group of companies, consultancies and individual consultants were most interested in risk and vulnerability assessment. Among private companies national-level preparedness planning was relatively significant, while for consultancies of all kinds relief and community-level preparedness were more important. Engineering and structural mitigation measures were of greater interest among this group than in other categories, but not to a vast extent. Academics had similar priorities: risk and vulnerability assessment, and community-level preparedness.

Among government and intergovernmental agencies warning systems assumed much greater significance and, with the others, risk assessment was a high priority³ Community-level work was not prominent here. Conflict resolution is perhaps going to be the fastest 'growth industry' in disaster work in the next few years. Most categories of respondents appeared moderately interested but only consultants (groups and individuals) appeared to be particularly involved as yet ⁴

However, it appears that expertise and experience, if it is as substantial as indicated by the findings, is not being documented to reflect the level of activity. If this is the case, then greater attention to

² NGOs and academic organisations, who one would expect to be more concerned about this area, were more heavily involved than others but even so the level of involvement was low within the groups as a whole.

³ The high number of organisations and individuals that have cited 'risk assessment' as a key area of work is rather perplexing since the literature available on this topic, particularly vulnerability assessment, is scarce. If risk assessment has a high profile, then this would presumably be reflected in current writing/conferences

⁴ This finding was also reflected in the replies to the question on skills (see the following section).

documentation and dissemination of experiences is needed. Such a request is in particular addressed to the NGO sector which, often at the forefront in grassroots initiatives, does not always disseminate its findings, even though internal reports are produced

Skills

The questionnaire identified 26 'skill areas', ranging from forestry, training, physical planning and remote sensing to volcanology, geomorphology and anthropology. The clearest finding was the stated prominence of training in every responding group, confirming the UK disaster community's extensive commitment to this activity.

The commercial group identified in 'skills' was particularly active in what can broadly be termed technical specialisms: research (technical and social science), building and architecture, engineering, energy, insurance and physical planning. In general their expertise was well spread but least in the specialist scientific areas such as volcanology, seismology and meteorology, which remain the province of academics and researchers.

Individual consultants were the most active group in food security work which, with health and training, were the areas where the NGO sector was best equipped. Activity in agriculture and forestry was also most marked among NGOs. Academics' main skills included those most relevant to wider development issues: food security, health and nutrition, agriculture, anthropology, conflict, indigenous knowledge and appropriate technologies, and economics. NGOs and consultancies/consultants recorded particularly high responses to training, possibly indicating a high commitment to skills transfer. Training included UK-based courses (of which there are a variety in content and length, see below) and in-country courses, in which many organisations were involved.

What was surprising however was the very low levels of NGO activity in research: 15 per cent for both technical and social science research. In contrast 46 per cent of consultancies claim to carry out research in these areas.

The lowest recorded responses of listed skills were in forestry, meteorology and energy. NGOs reported the highest activity in forestry, whilst private companies and consultants were highest in energy; government departments were highest for meteorology.

One finding regarded a bias of NGOs towards rural areas: NGOs reported a low level of activity in built environment, yet much higher in agriculture, forestry, etc. It may be extrapolated, in tandem with anecdotal knowledge and reports of current activity, that NGOs' work is mostly in rural areas, and that they have been slow to develop strong urban-based work. This split may suggest the skills and training of UK NGO staff or the rural bias of NGOs' southern partners, but it could also be argued that rural areas contain the worst poverty (as well, of course, that the majority of people still live in rural areas). There are however strong developing pockets of urban expertise (for example IIED and Homeless International); also some larger NGOs are claiming an increasing focus on urban need.

Links

The analysis shows that UK-based organisations and individuals have their strongest links with international and national NGOs, government departments and academic/research institutions, while the weakest links across the board are with private companies, individual consultants and networks.⁵

Most categories of respondent were, not surprisingly, likely to work most closely or frequently with agencies of their own kind. NGOs' strongest links were with other international, national and grassroots NGOs, and it seems that grassroots organisations depend particularly on external NGOs for their contacts with expertise in other countries. The main exceptions to this 'like with like' emphasis were in the commercial group: companies did liaise with other firms but consultants, individual and collective, placed other consultants and private companies low on their list. It may be speculated that professional rivalry is a factor here, with small consultancy operations feeling particularly threatened by competition.

⁵ Regional networks are relatively new and this may explain the limited contact. NGOs are best linked to them, followed by academic and research organisations.

Networks/information technology/information sources

The audit found that, for the majority of questionnaire respondents, the use of formal networks is neither widespread nor seems to be of great importance.

The formal networks most frequently cited were:

- Specific disaster networks, such as the Relief and Rehabilitation Network (RRN) of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
- Development networks, for example the Development Studies Association (DSA)
- Professional associations, such as the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) - and the associated body of SECED
- Geographical interest groups, for example the European Network of Bangladesh Studies

However from anecdotal evidence it is clear that, in such a relatively small community, informal networks are essential in maintaining information flow, knowledge of current activities, 'who is doing what', etc. Networking, a critical need for rapid information sharing, could be enhanced by adoption of the following

- Information sharing between individuals, organisations and professions
- The setting up of meetings and the development of partnerships
- The creation of institutional focal points, (i.e. an *institutional base* for networks)

The IDNDR National Co-ordinating Committee and its working groups are already fulfilling a role in promoting the growth of networking, and there is potential here to take this further.

The Internet

The Internet is the fastest growing form of national and international communication, information exchange and networking. Already there exist 'home pages' for the IDNDR, as well as disaster 'discussion groups' in most if not all hazard types

Resources

Libraries

Information and knowledge is located in various locations, both accessible and private. Of the latter, consultancies and private companies may have built up substantial bodies of knowledge which remain inaccessible to researchers; of the former, universities/academic institutions such as the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) in Brighton or the Refugee Studies Programme (RSP) in Oxford are more accessible. There is currently, however, no single central body organising literature mitigation/preparedness regarding disaster expertise or information. The development of such a centre would be of great benefit to the DMP community

Academic courses

The audit gathered information only on those development courses (of which there are a number) which offered hazard-related options as part of a course. The findings were that the majority of course were pitched at graduate and postgraduate (MSc, MPhil and PhD) level; undergraduate courses components often featured as part of geography or related degrees. A new course beginning in September 1995 is a BSc (Honours) degree course in International Disaster Engineering and Management offered by The Fire Service College at Coventry University. Of the course components offered, either in training or academia, the editors could find no comprehensive dedicated list. Hence the list compiled in this audit is a contribution to the assembling of such knowledge.

Although there have been recent new course components developed, (for example the complex emergency option as part of the MSc in Development Practices offered at Oxford Brookes University) there are no courses offered with hazard studies as the key focus.

Funding

The audit found that, apart from money made available as a result of humanitarian appeals, eg Rwanda, there are very few available sources of funds or dedicated budget lines for funding bodies. Two principle sources that do exist include the Emergency Aid Department of the Overseas Development Administration and the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) of the Economic Union.

The ODA is by far the largest source of funds in the UK for all activities related to disasters. A significant feature of the British Government's aid programme, and of official development assistance generally, is the increasing proportion of humanitarian aid in the total. The same trend is visible within the ODA's country programmes. The European Union gives massive amounts of humanitarian aid⁶, nearly ECU 605 million (£465 million @ £1 = ECU1.3) in 1993, and over ECU760 million in 1994. Its funding in this area has risen seven-fold in the last four years. Funds are contributed by member states.

Charitable trusts formed the bulk of the funding organisations sent questionnaires by the audit team (160 specific funding questionnaires were sent). They were selected because their directory entries indicated an interest in disasters. Hardly any of these were prepared to divulge details of their work and it is likely that they are interested in relief rather than preparedness and mitigation.

NGOs and funding

Some operational NGOs are also grant makers, the most significant such as Oxfam and Christian Aid being multi-million pound organisations which run their own emergency projects, support local NGOs, and may need consultants for technical assistance, studies and evaluations. Other NGOs, on a smaller scale, have similar aims and act in similar ways. Corporate giving in the UK is on the increase although the levels of funding and strategic planning have a long way to go to catch up with practice in the United States.

The relative difficulty of assuring long-term *consistent* funding, especially for NGOs undertaking relief programmes, leads to a recommendation for the education of funders in disaster response, ie to promote an awareness of the need to support long term recovery, thus reducing risks of disaster recurrence. Linked with this is the need to create long term partnerships and collaborations.

⁶ Its definition of humanitarian aid comprises food aid, emergency aid and aid to refugees

Regions of activity

The audit questionnaire identified ten regions of activity: Africa, the Middle East, East Asia (including China), South/South East Asia (including India and Bangladesh), Eastern Europe/former Soviet Union, Western Europe (including former Yugoslavia), the Caribbean, Australia and the Pacific, Latin America including Mexico, and the USA and Canada

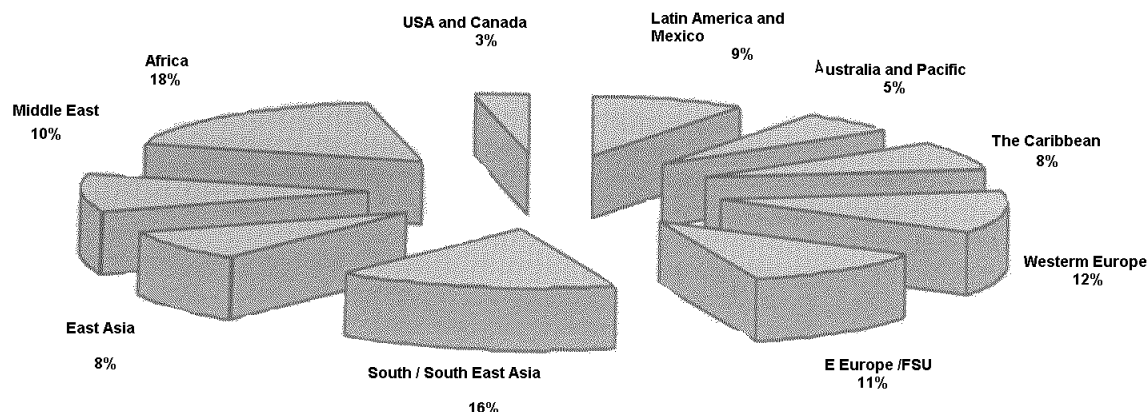


Chart One Proportional relationship of organisational activity according to region

The above pie chart indicates the proportional relationships of organisational activity according to region. Hence, of all the questionnaires returned, 18 per cent indicated activity in Africa, the highest region, followed closely by South/South East Asia (16 per cent). Western Europe⁷ is the third with 12 per cent followed by Eastern Europe/Formal Soviet Union with 11 per cent. The Middle East is the fifth highest area with 10 per cent.

	Latin America inc Mexico	Australia and Pacific	The Caribbean	Western Europe	E Europe/FSU	South/South East Asia	East Asia	Middle East	Africa	USA and Canada
Charity/NGO	29	13	21	23	44	54	27	35	65	6
Private Company	31	23	23	38	23	46	31	23	46	15
Academic/research body	34	13	21	40	32	42	21	30	57	13
Consultancy	36	29	29	36	50	68	46	46	75	18
Individual Consultant	11	5	21	37	26	53	21	53	63	11
Government Department	43	29	43	71	57	71	29	29	71	0

Table One Percentage activity of organisations according to region

⁷ The high percentage of activity for Western Europe is assumed to be accounted for by respondents including Former Yugoslavia in this region

Table One indicates as a percentage the activities of specific organisations according to identified region. Hence it can be seen that, of the data collected, roughly 2/3 of NGOs (65 per cent) were active in Africa, whilst just over half (54 per cent) were active in South/South East Asia. However the third key area of activity for NGOs was Eastern Europe/Former Soviet Union at 44 per cent, just over double the activity of the Caribbean at 21 per cent. Similarly whilst for the overall breakdown Latin America including Mexico accounted for only 9 per cent of overall activity, 43 per cent of Government Departments were active in that region (the key actor for all organisational types). To view Africa as a case in point, it can be seen from Table One that three quarters of all consultancies registered activities in Africa, followed by government departments (71 per cent), charities/NGOs (65 per cent) and individual consultants (63 per cent). According to returned questionnaires, the five main hazard types addressed in Africa were

- 1 Drought (35 per cent)
- 2 Complex emergency (34 per cent)
- 3 Famine (34 per cent)
- 4 Flood (25 per cent)
- 5 Disease and epidemic (22 per cent)

Of drought, the main hazard type addressed, 40 per cent of NGOs registered activity, compared to 31 per cent of academic/research bodies and 37 per cent of consultancies. Examples of current projects by academic/research bodies include the development of recommendations for drought response in Kenya by the Food Studies Group and disaster management training throughout southern Africa for UNDP/DHA by the Disaster Preparedness Centre at Cranfield University; whilst NGO activities include a series of drought/food security training of training workshops in southern Africa by Tear Fund, funded by ODA and ECHO. In contrast to drought, over half (56 per cent) of the consultancies returning questionnaires stated their involvement in complex emergency issues in Africa, compared to only 25 per cent of academic/research bodies and 37 per cent of charities/NGOs.

Most current complex emergency activities of NGOs are focused on Rwanda, for example relief and rehabilitation from Christian Aid, a major review of the relief effort on behalf of ODA by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), healthcare and rehabilitation (medical supplies, restoration and health structures training) by MERLIN and emergency relief to displaced communities by ACORD. A comprehensive overview of the Rwandan crisis, *Rwanda: Dilemmas of a Total Disaster* is provided in the *World Disasters Report, 1995*; International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, 1995 Pages 59-68

Organisations and regions of activity

Chart two on page 10 indicates the activities of organisations in the three highest rated regions of Africa, South/South East Asia and Western Europe. Therefore for instance it can be seen that approximately 70 per cent of government departments who returned questionnaires stated activity in Western Europe, South/South East Asia and Africa

Academic/research bodies stated high percentages of activity in both Africa and South/South East Asia. For instance the ODI, as well as carrying out consultancy work in Rwanda (see above) is currently carrying out research into the economic and financial aspects of drought on sub-Saharan African economies for ODA/World Bank, and the economic impact of natural disasters in South East Asia and the Pacific

It can be seen that whilst all rated highly for Africa, charities/NGOs registered a lower level of activity for Western Europe. This may reflect the relative recent of conflict in Western Europe compared to the long term involvement of NGOs in Africa. Also, the lowest region of activity for consultancies was Western Europe, whilst private companies ranked South/South East Asia and Africa the same for intensity of activity.

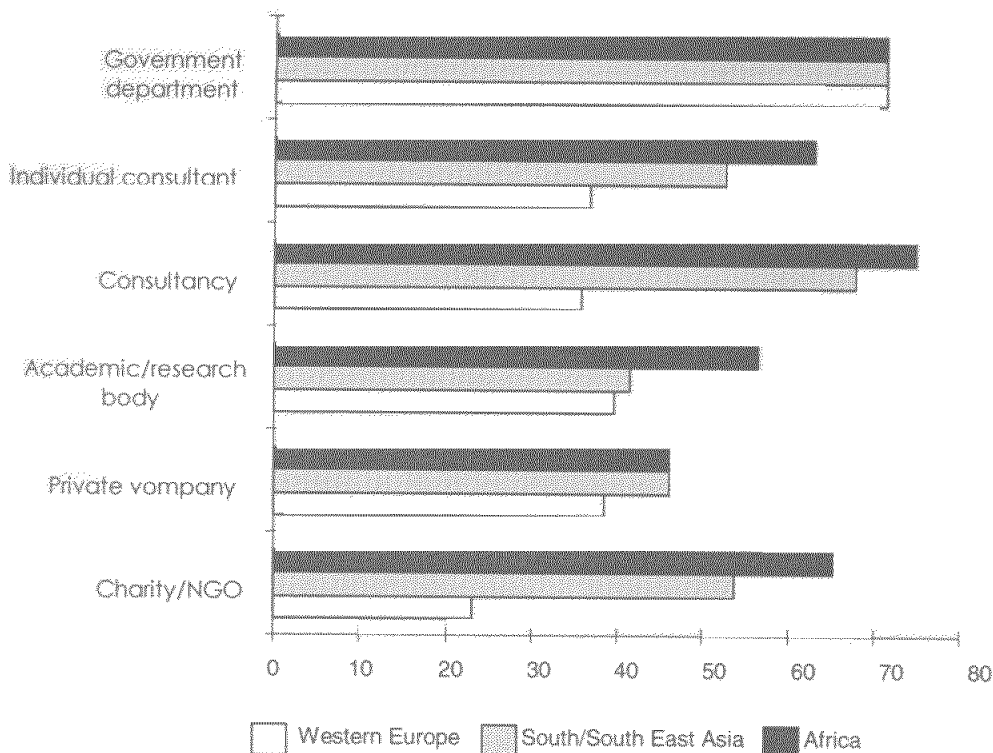


Chart Two Three main regions of activity according to organisations

British Red Cross, International Division

The British Red Cross has been working in emergency relief since 1870. The International Division of the British Red Cross currently has 97 delegates working overseas in a variety of relief and development roles with local Red Cross Societies. In 1994 they responded to over 40 major emergency operations, of which the largest were in and around Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

Mike Adamson, the Head of the International Development Department, believes that the strength of the International Red Cross movement lies in its network of local Red Cross Societies: 'In almost every country in the world we have a local partner and we work through them. This is what makes the Red Cross special. In essence the Red Cross is an international network of local emergency organisations. Volunteers at the community level and at branch level address the silent and day-to-day emergencies that never catch the headlines as well as being in a better position to respond to larger emergencies when they occur. The Red Cross's long term work is about improving emergency preparedness and reducing vulnerability to risk and hazards. This is achieved through a range of measures: from emergency shelter in Bangladesh to community health projects and water programmes in Ethiopia. The institutional development of local Red Cross Societies through management training and organisational development is also contributing to emergency preparedness, a key activity.'

The British Red Cross is facing a dilemma similar to other organisations: how to protect longer term projects like disaster prevention and mitigation in the face of rapid onset, large scale emergency response needs. Mike Adamson states, 'we are developing a portfolio of longer term programmes which contribute to disaster preparedness and mitigation while also bringing a development philosophy into our emergency work so that programme beneficiaries and our local partners come out of an emergency operation stronger than before it happened.'

Hazard expertise

The audit identified nine major hazard types. These are represented in chart three below:

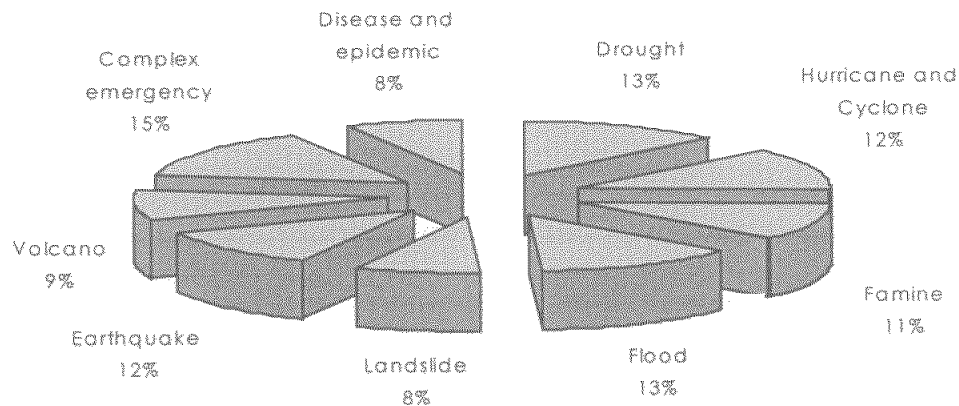


Chart Three Breakdown of organisational activity according to hazard

	Drought	Hurricane and Cyclone	Famine	Flood	Landslide	Earthquake	Volcano	Complex emergency	Disease and epidemic
Charity/NGO	40	40	42	37	19	33	21	48	33
Private Company	23	54	23	38	46	62	38	38	8
Academic/research body	34	21	28	17	9	17	23	40	17
Consultancy	43	43	39	46	21	39	21	57	29
Individual Consultant	42	37	37	42	32	32	21	63	32
Government Department	71	43	43	71	29	43	43	43	29

Table Two Percentage of organisational activity according to hazard

From chart three and table two above it can be seen that, whilst there is a significant emphasis on certain hazard categories (often termed slow-onset disasters), there is a surprisingly even spread of hazard involvement across all the organisations that returned questionnaires.

It can be seen that major concentration of effort is being extended to drought, famine and complex emergencies, whilst less involvement is being devoted to landslides and volcanic hazards. This focus reflects both the frequency of hazard events, their social, economic and political impact and their relative importance to such fast impact disasters as landslides and volcanoes in terms of 'loss of life potential'.

In the recently published *World Disaster Report*⁸ statistics are quoted that in 1993, 250 000 people were killed in war, 17 million fled as refugees and up to 26 million were displaced within their own countries. In

⁸ Cater N & Walker P (eds) *The World Disasters Report 1995* International Federation of Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies, IFRC, Geneva, 1995

contrast the most powerful volcanic eruption of the past fifty years (Mount Pinatubo in The Philippines) has accounted for approximately 450 deaths.

Thus the UK response to hazards is largely driven by need. It may also be stated that an additional factor is a combination of geography and history in that most of the major drought/famine/ complex emergencies of recent years have been in Africa where the UK has such extensive post-colonial links.

Inevitably the respondents to the questionnaire have provided answers which cover both their involvement in hazards in pre and post disaster contexts since it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate such matters. Therefore some of the concerns noted may not be specifically related to preventive activity

General comments

The NGO response is rather deceptive: whilst they report involvement in disaster mitigation/ preparedness across all hazard categories, the audit did not attempt to quantify the extent of this commitment. It is likely that if this audit had been undertaken a decade earlier there would have been a greater proportion of NGO effort in preparing and mitigating fast impact disaster events such as floods, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. The emphasis now is clearly on large-scale relief efforts in the areas of drought and complex emergency.

A further encouraging trend has been the growth of national *self sufficiency*, where countries are managing their own disasters without the need for large scale international appeals for aid. Examples include India, The Philippines, China and Colombia. This increasing self reliance particularly applies to 'localised' disasters such as earthquakes and landslides

Current priorities for NGOs include food security work by Oxfam's partner organisations in the Indian subcontinent and South East Asia and cyclone warning systems and cyclone shelters by Save the Children Fund in Bangladesh. In contrast the widespread involvement in food security/early warning systems for drought have been given attention by most major NGOs.

However the issue of whether or not NGOs have been working in disaster mitigation is partly a question of definition. The *Oxfam Handbook for Development and Relief* states that: 'The best form of disaster mitigation is through equitable social and economic development, that builds on people's strengths and tackles the causes of their vulnerability' (page 835). In this sense, most of Oxfam's work could be described as disaster mitigation. Thus, if all disaster mitigation is seen as occurring under a development umbrella then most of the development NGOs are active in this field.

It may be worth noting here that the frequently stated view that all development work inevitably covers mitigation is not accurate. Whilst it is broadly true that vulnerability to disasters relates to poverty, and therefore as poverty is reduced, exposure to risk will diminish, nevertheless, this argument does not address the fact that mitigation measures can be highly specific and require sustained attention from NGOs as well as governments. For example, California, one of the richest places on earth, gives detailed attention to disaster preparedness and mitigation, and this is one of the primary reasons why recent disasters have caused so few casualties.

It is hoped therefore that NGOs will progressively develop policy statements, technical expertise, and dedicated funds to ensure that preparedness and mitigation measures take place in the hazard prone countries in which they work. Projects of course also need to be sustainable, ie that they do not get wiped out in future disasters

Disasters have been described aptly as 'unsolved development problems'. Therefore it is of critical importance to regard disaster problems as well as intervention within a developmental rather than relief culture. One of the achievements of the IDNDR has been to reinforce this concern.