The lack of involvement in certain fast-impact disasters is *not* due to declining need, it is more a reflection of three factors:

1 Diversion of resources to cope with unprecedented demands in Africa, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union,

2 A lack of disaster preparedness/mitigation figuring in NGO funding policy statements, hence their absence from projected budget lines;

3 A lack of awareness that preparedness/mitigation is part and parcel of responsible development in hazard prone areas.

The spread of work by consultant organisations is remarkably even, reflecting the diversity of activity within the various sectors It is also apparent that consultant activity is similar for both organisations and individuals relative to various hazard types

One area of British consultancy that is particularly strong in this field concerns the extensive work by civil engineering consultants on a global basis in the areas of flood prevention, earthquake resistant building construction, soil stabilisation relative to landslide risk etc. For example the most extensive flood mitigation programme in the world, the Bangladesh Flood Action Plan (FAP) continues to receive major inputs from British consultants which is totally disproportionate to the minor scale of our domestic flood problem.

The academic research community is extremely active in the drought/famine/complex emergency field with attention to hurricanes and volcanoes but with reduced concern for flood, earthquake, disease, epidemic and landslide hazards. It is possible that this priority range reflects the academic emphasis within the UK field of development studies The UK has an international reputation for academic studies in this field and many of these centres have a strong emphasis on rural development/food security issues. It is surprising however that volcanic hazards attract the level of attention within British universities relative to a reduced concern for say floods which is a far more significant hazard than volcanoes in terms of loss of life and damage to property. It would be useful for further study in the academic/research community in risk reduction to determine the ratio of activity to basic and applied research.

Oxfam Emergency Aid Department

Oxfam has been working in emergency aid and disaster relief since its founding in 1942. In recent years the greatest part of Oxfam's funds have been spent on emergency work: in 1993-94 nearly 60 per cent of it was deployed in Africa. 'Conflict has been the main cause of our emergency and rehabilitation work. Most of Oxfam's emergency spending has gone to cope with the effects of human conflict, rather than natural disasters.' (Marcus Thompson, Emergencies Director). Oxfam is active in Africa, South and South East Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and in parts of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Much of Oxfam's emergency work is in assisting refugees, displaced people and host communities, providing relief supplies, particularly water and sanitation facilities, other public health measures, shelter materials, other subsistence needs (clothes, cooking pots, etc) and recently some psycho-social support to women in distress.

Marcus Thompson feels that there should be a 'more holistic approach to emergency relief, so that improvements in one sector are not undone by neglect of others'. Emergency preparedness should have a higher priority, and awareness of the needs for mitigation measures needs to be raised with major donors. The urgency of assisting the victims of high-profile and on-going conflicts is overshadowing the need to develop preparedness work for natural disasters.

Work and skills

The audit questionnaire identified two overlapping and complementary groupings: work content and skills. These have been combined into the following section.

Work content

Chart four below illustrates the proportion of activity stated in returned questionnaires in relation to the thirteen identified areas of 'work content'.

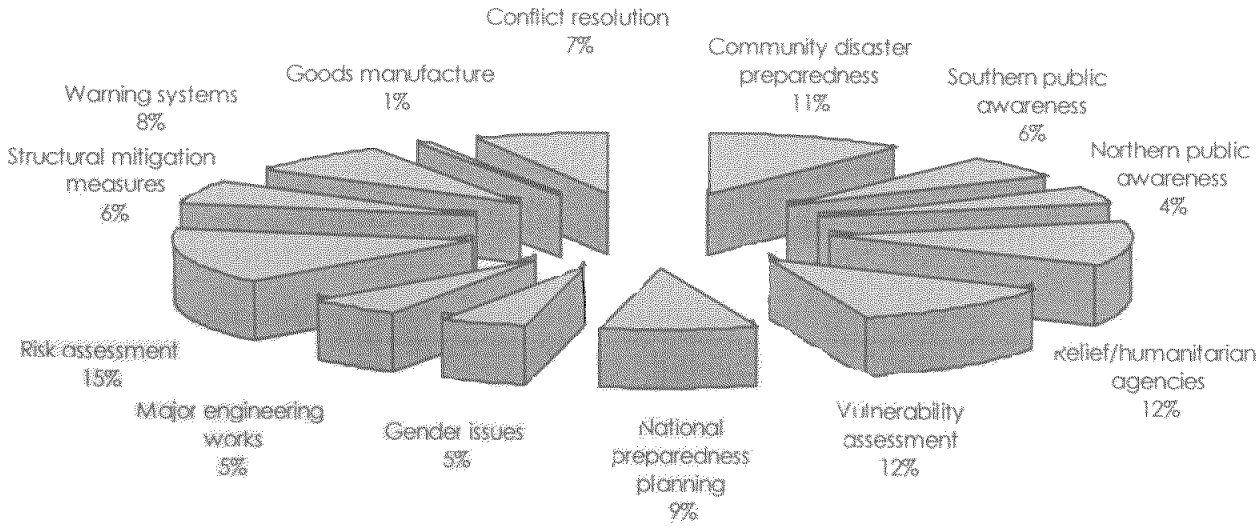

Chart Four Percentage of work content according to organisation

The three highest areas of activity according to chart four are relief/humanitarian agencies (12 per cent), vulnerability assessment (12 per cent) and community level disaster preparedness (11 per cent) respectively. Two of these three relate to pre-disaster activity whilst relief clearly is post-disaster. It is surprising that relief did not rate higher, especially bearing in mind the large amount of relief activities, especially by NGOs, currently in progress.

In contrast to the high scoring areas of work content, low ratings were recorded for both southern and northern public awareness (6 and 4 per cent respectively), usually thought to be the domain of NGOs; gender issues and major engineering works (both 5 per cent) and, lowest of all, goods manufacture (1 per cent) registered as an activity only by government departments

	Community disaster preparedness	Southern public awareness	Northern public awareness	Relief/humanitarian agencies	Vulnerability assessment	National preparedness planning	Gender issues	Major engineering works	Risk assessment	Structural mitigation measures	Warning systems	Goods manufacture	Conflict resolution
Charity/NGO	38	12	19	50	17	12	19	12	13	10	17	0	19
Private Company	31	23	23	15	38	38	15	8	54	23	15	0	15
Academic/research body	40	9	13	26	45	19	19	11	53	15	23	2	23
Consultancy	43	21	14	43	50	32	25	29	61	32	25	0	36
Individual Consultant	42	16	16	42	47	21	11	5	42	21	16	0	32
Government Department	14	29	0	43	29	43	0	29	57	14	57	14	14

Table Three Percentage of activities of organisations according to work content

Table three indicates the percentage of activities in different organisations according to work content. Striking statistics can immediately be seen. For instance, half of NGOs state activity in relief/humanitarian work (the highest percentage for any of the organisations, yet surprisingly low bearing in mind the growth in relief work for many of the larger agencies), and a high rating (38 per cent) is given to community disaster preparedness. However NGOs rate lowest in risk assessment at only 13 per cent. It is difficult to understand the low figure given to assessment; possibly regarding relief it may be argued that there is no time for such forward-planning activities.

Only 19 per cent of NGOs ranked northern public awareness as work content, lower than private companies at 23 per cent However for the latter an interpretation may have been more to do with advertising of commercial concerns, whereas the former would regard advocacy and lobbying. Such a low NGO figure could be interpreted as disappointing when there are no other groups providing northern advocacy on fundamental development issues (which of course affects mitigation and preparedness).

NGOs also rated gender issues at 19 per cent, again surprisingly low when considering NGOs to be at the fore of advocacy. Interestingly consultancies placed gender issues highest at 25 per cent: possibly (if slightly cynically) a funder-led move, where funders require increasingly high profile adherence to gender issues. Again consultancies rated higher than all other organisational types for conflict resolution (possibly relating to long term post disaster activities)

A comparison of the four highest ranking areas of work content according to organisation is illustrated in Chart Five overleaf From the chart it can be seen that the highest reported activity for consultancies was risk assessment followed by relief/humanitarian actions In contrast returning NGOs recorded risk assessment as their *lowest* area of activity. Does this mean NGOs on the whole hire consultancies to carry out risk assessment?

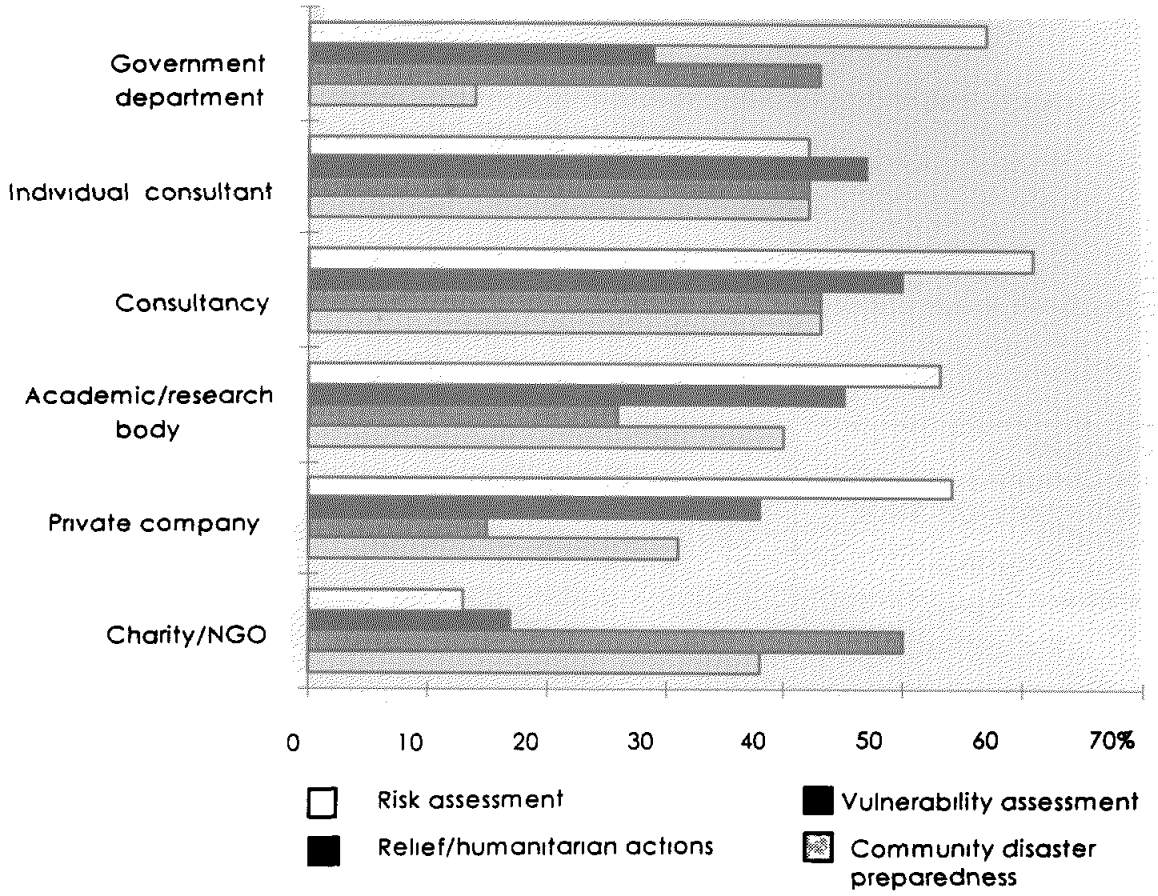

Chart Five Four key areas of work content according to organisational activity

Ove Arup Engineers

Founded in 1946, Ove Arup is one of largest international firms of engineering consultancy. It currently employs a total staff of over 3 500 in 21 countries all over the world. They design buildings, bridges and other structures to withstand earthquakes, tropical cyclones, fire and other natural forces in many parts of the World.

Earthquake resistance is a major aspect of design in over 50 current projects, including many new buildings around the Pacific rim, retrofitting of buildings in California and Japan, provision of power stations in the Philippines, a centre of pilgrimage in Italy and a major transportation project in Bangkok. The company is also involved in seismic hazard and risk assessment for the Philippines, Hungary and the UK.

The partnership publishes the quarterly *Arup Journal*, and produced the recent textbook *Concrete Construction in Earthquake Regions* (Longman)

Skills

The skills section comprised twenty six categories, listed in table four on page 19. The skills listed were broad in coverage and definition Chart Seven below illustrates the percentage of activity of organisations according to the five highest ranking skill areas These are in order of ranking:

1 Training
2 Social science research
3 Technical research
4 Conflict prevention/tension reduction
5 Health/epidemiology/nutrition

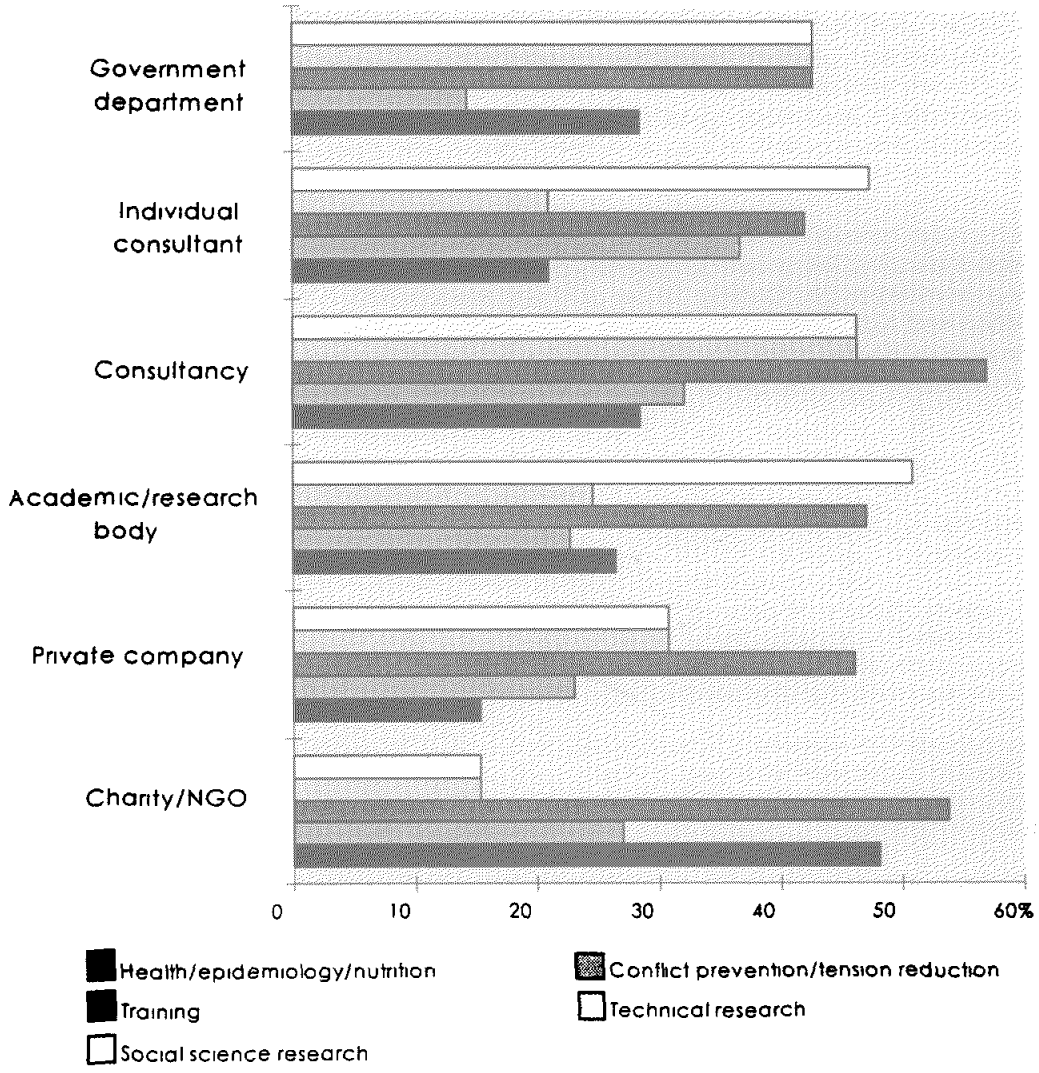

Chart Six Bar chart showing the five highest scoring skill areas according to organisational activity

All organisation types except for academic/research bodies and individual consultants ranked training as their highest category With 'training' as such a broad category this is not surprising, also bearing in mind the current emphasis of developing local know how, often seen to be best achieved through training programmes. By referring to table four it can be seen that over half (57 per cent) of consultancies registered training as a skill area, whilst individual consultants were lower at 42 per cent, rating only social science research higher at 47 per cent 54 per cent of NGOs registered training as a skill, whilst the second highest NGO category was health/epidemiology/nutrition at 48 per cent These two categories were much higher than any other, no NGOs registered volcanology as a skill area

What was surprising 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. A possible explanation of this could be that NGOs do not consider research a 'direct action' activity benefiting the poor, cannot afford it (for the smaller NGOs) or learn enough from southern partners to need not to attach the label research to their accumulating knowledge.

37 per cent was recorded for agriculture, possibly reflecting the traditional rural base of activity of most NGOs This was the highest percentage for all organisational types: others were all below 30 per cent. Similarly low percentages, all 27 per cent and below were recorded for forestry. This is surprisingly, and possibly an area to be addressed amongst the DMP community, at a time when deforestation and food production are such critical issues.

Unsurprisingly private companies registered highest in building and architecture (38 per cent) and physical planning (46 per cent)' activities often with high capital expenditure and technical expertise. Private companies also ranked highest in energy, the lowest scoring skill category, again a highly specialised activity Government departments' key skill areas were in research (technical and social science) and communications. Hydrology and volcanology scored high (29 per cent) Almost one fifth (18 per cent) of consultancies stated activity in insurance/reinsurance; only 4 per cent of NGOs stated activity in this area

Academic/research bodies ranked highest for social science research (51 per cent), followed by training (47 per cent), possibly indicating the growth of academic departments carrying out consultancy work at a time of diminishing university public funding 26 per cent recorded activity in health/ epidemiology/nutrition and AT/indigenous knowledge, followed by anthropology at 25 per cent. Academic departments tended to have a niche, eg London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine for Health and the Development Planning Unit at the University of London for physical planning.

Rob Stephenson

Independent Consultant

Rob has been in disaster related work since 1975 but now finds he has been increasingly shifting away from disaster and emergencies towards information science and library work. He finds that he is also shifting very rapidly towards more commercial clients outside the traditional emergencies network as he is assured of quicker responses in project development.

As an individual consultant Rob needs high-value, short-term work. He uses the gaps in-between projects either to expand on his previous project or to take stock of what he is doing. Proposals are developed 'on spec' with the understanding that sooner or later he may have a project. 'To be realistic this is a great deal of what goes on in terms of project proposals: repackaging.'

'The structure of this business has changed dramatically in the last year. There is a tendency for major donors to go through larger institutions and develop a cluster of consultants around them. The competition in these clusters is intense. The key thing now is to step out and look elsewhere for funding. There are many new consultants coming in from development, business and military backgrounds, looking towards relief work for employment. There seems to be very little collective attempt to develop strategic forecasting. A collective idea of where we might be going and what the world might look like in two or three years from now is largely missing. It is very difficult to lobby and influence the system when you are an individual.

'Overall the whole system looks like a Rubik's Cube and few people can see a good way in which to improve it.' Rob feels there is a need for more collective activity with an environment in which people from different groups feel more confident about exchanging information. Above all there is a need for access to project results and evaluations.

	Food Security	Engineering	Seismology	Building and architecture	Physical planning	Health/epidemiology/nutrition	Agriculture	Forestry	Hydrology	Geomorphology	Volcanology	Anthropology	Conflict prevention/tension reduc	Meteorology	Insurance/reinsurance	AT/indigenous knowledge	Energy	Remote sensing	Development economics	Transport	Training	Information management	Technical research	Social science research	Communications
Charity/NGO	35	19	8	21	12	48	37	27	13	6	0	13	27	8	4	21	8	2	15	21	54	25	15	15	25
Private Company	8	23	15	38	46	15	15	8	15	23	15	15	23	8	31	15	23	8	15	8	46	38	31	31	31
Academic/research body	28	15	8	21	13	26	21	8	11	13	13	25	23	8	8	26	4	13	23	6	47	15	25	51	9
Consultancy	36	39	14	32	32	29	29	4	18	14	7	25	32	7	18	29	21	4	25	18	57	36	46	46	25
Individual Consultant	37	5	5	16	26	21	21	5	11	21	5	26	37	11	11	26	0	0	11	5	42	11	21	47	21
Government Department	14	29	29	14	14	29	14	0	29	14	29	29	14	29	0	0	0	29	29	14	43	29	43	43	43

Table Four Percentage of skills according to organisation

The table indicates as a percentage the skills registered as present in specific organisations: for example, 35 per cent of all charities/NGOs returning the questionnaires indicated skills in food security.

Education and training courses

UK based academic courses

The audit aimed to gain an overview of development courses offering hazard/disaster elements as part or all of their course. The audit found a total of 31 UK-based courses or modules being taught with hazards offered as a topic within the course[9]. Of these there are 16 Master/Diploma courses, two institutions offering specialist PhD and MPhil programmes, whilst for undergraduates one new BSc course and four disaster-related modules within existing degree courses. A list of academic courses returned on the questionnaires is provided opposite

Courses offered include agricultural management, nutrition and environmental assessment, engineering for structural damage, earthquakes, complex emergencies, built environment and health. The average length of postgraduate courses listed are one year, of which the diploma is taught and the masters dissertation is based on research

A new undergraduate course offered by The Fire Services College at Coventry University, a BSc in International Disaster Engineering and Management, is due to begin in September 1995. The course 'will cater for those whose talents are directed towards solving social, technical and economic problems in disaster zones and for those aspiring to be future leaders in this field'. The three year course will include Engineering and technology, construction engineering, emergency management and courses in field skills.

The Centre for Urban and Regional Studies at the University of Birmingham is currently planning a course on Conflict and Complex Emergencies An MA by research is also available for study in this area at the Post-War Reconstruction and Development Unit (PRDU) at York University. Remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) appears to be a growth area in the geography discipline and it appears will occupy a significant proportion of education and research development. Institutions offering distance learning courses include The Open University and the International Extension College.

Oxford Brookes University

Complex emergencies and humanitarian aid

The Centre for Development and Emergency Planning (CENDEP) has developed an area of specialisation in Complex Emergencies as part of their Diploma/MSc Course in Development Practices. It is an example of the type of course being introduced in other academic institutions and it reflects the growing concern in this area.

CENDEP offers special study in this field consisting of four modules, each 10 weeks in duration. These include: an *Introduction to Complex Emergencies*, series of lectures and seminars exploring the main international policy issues involved in response to complex emergencies; *Methodologies in Emergency Practice*, a course of ten seminars led by visiting experts which look in depth at the main methodologies for effective UN and NGO practice in complex emergency, a terms project which is based on two weeks fieldwork; and *Environmental Hazards and Disasters*, a study of the response to natural and technological disasters in selected developing and developed countries. In addition students may take options in refugee studies at Oxford University

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It is recognised however that many geography courses not included in the audit may contain hazard-related components

UK based hazard related academic courses

The following list comprises UK based academic hazard related courses and modules as indicated by returned questionnaires.

Organisation	Course/Module Title	Duration
Centre for Arid Zone Studies, University of Wales	MSc Water Resources; MSc Rural Resource Management	1 year
Centre for Developing Areas Research (CEDAR)	Module of MA/MSc Ecology and Land Management in Latin America; Environmental Risk Assessment, module of undergraduate degree course, Tropical Ecological Systems, undergraduate degree module	1 year
Centre for Development and Emergency Planning (CENDEP), Oxford Brookes University	Diploma/MSc Development Practices Areas of special study in environmental hazards and emergency practices	1 year
Centre for Urban & Regional Studies, University of Birmingham	Planning a course on conflict and complex emergencies	Planned
Climate Research Unit, University of East Anglia	MSc Climate Change	1 year
Department of Geography, University of Cambridge	MPhil in GIS and Remote Sensing	1 year
Department of Civil Engineering, Imperial College London	BSc/BEng Engineering Seismology/Soil Mechanics; BSc/BEng Earthquake Engineering and Structural Dynamics; BSc/BEng Structural Steel Design	1 year
Department of Geography, Chester College	BA Module in Natural Hazards and Environmental Management	15 weeks
	Research Studentships (MPhil/PhD)	2/3 years
	BA Module in Disaster and Development	15 weeks
Durham University Business School	MBA Module in Crisis Management	
Earthquake Engineering Research Centre, University of Bristol	MEng in Earthquake Engineering	1 year
ETC (UK)	BA Modules in Local Management of Natural Resources and Sustainability and Development Training; BA Module Natural Disasters	12 Weeks
Fire Services College, Coventry University	BSc (Honours), International Disaster Engineering and Management	3 years
Hazard and Risk Management Studies (HARMS), London School of Economics	MSc/BSc Options in Hazard and Risk Studies	1 year
London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine	MSc Nutrition and Needs Assessment in Emergencies; MSc, Conflict and Health module; MSc Human Nutrition	
Natural Resources Institute with University of Greenwich	Diploma/MSc Grain Storage Management	4-24 months
Post -War Reconstruction and Development Unit (PRDU), University of York	MA Post-Conflict Reconstruction	Planned for Oct 1996
School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)	MSc Remote Sensing and GIS	1 year
Sheffield University	MSc Human Nutrition	
Systems Group The Open University	BA Module Complexity, Management and Change (part of Systems Failures Course)	1 year Part time

UK based training courses

The table on the following page summarises UK-based short courses and training seminars as entered on the returned questionnaires, resulting from the 30 per cent of questionnaire respondents who stated that they organise UK-based training courses. Some courses are one-off whilst others are held regularly. Length ranges from one day to several weeks Most of the courses do not offer a qualification but do present an attendance certificate

The table illustrates the breadth of courses offered, including hazards, risk and safety, water supply techniques, refugee issues and codes of practice for wind loading. One of the longest and largest courses is the annual four-week Summer Disaster Management Training Course offered by the Disaster Preparedness Centre at the University of Cranfield

Overseas training capacity

Overseas training is clearly a large area of activity for all organisations, as discussed in the *Work Content and Skills* section In answer to the direct question on the questionnaire of whether respondees were involved in training, 43 per cent of respondents considered themselves training providers either in the UK and overseas, whilst 44 per cent of respondents listed training as a skill in their organisation. These results confirm that the training capacity in the UK maintains a high priority. This could be related to recent funding trends and the belief in local capacity building as a key activity.

Only a few organisations specifically specialise in training. One recently-formed organisation, the Oxford based International NGO Research and Training Centre (INTRAC), provides training both in the UK and overseas From the current activities listed from the respondents it is clear that there are numerous projects which are training related or have it as a component part of their project in the form of seminars and workshops (the *Current Activities* section provides an indication of this).

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Research and Education in Conflict, Nutrition and Health

The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine's (LSHTM) work in the field of emergencies began in the early 1980s with the establishment of the Refugee Unit. Today it works widely in research, consultancy and academic and training courses. Current research and consultancy projects include post-conflict health policy issues in Africa (Ethiopia, Uganda, Eritrea), Palestinian Territories and El Salvador; political violence and the maintenance of services during political unrest; transport and traffic disasters, for example bus crash disasters in Zimbabwe; and community-level nutritional needs assessments.

A key strength of the LSHTM's involvement in conflict and health is that it has staff members who come from a wide variety of different disciplinary backgrounds: public health, nutrition, epidemiology, water and sanitation, health economics, health services research, social policy and policy analysis.

LSHTM also runs a variety of in-country training courses including a two-year programme of short field courses for NGOs in nutritional needs evaluation, and the rehabilitation of malnourished children (for CIDA). In-house education courses include five-week modules in Conflict and Health, and Nutrition and Needs Assessment in Emergencies. Both modules form part of an MSc programme. Last year LSHTM inaugurated a fortnightly open seminar on current issues regarding conflict and health. Past talks have included NGO roles in refugee camps following the Rwandan Crisis, land mines and population displacement in Mozambique.

LSHTM has an accessible library with a large body of information on conflict, health, famine and drought. It is currently developing a two-year project for the placing of this information on CD ROM.

UK based hazard related training courses

The following list comprises UK based training courses as indicated by returned questionnaires.

Organisation	Course	Duration
AIDS, Care and Training (ACET)	AIDS Awareness and Training	variable
British Association for Immediate Care	Medical Management of Major Disasters; Basic Training Course for Overseas Delegates, First Aid Training	2 day, 3 and 7 day courses
Cargil Attwood Consultants	A wide range of communication skills courses including Project Management and Teamwork	variable
Catastrophe Reinsurance	Various conferences and seminars	variable
Centre for International Health	Working in Emergency and Disaster Relief	1 week
Climatic Research Unit	General climate change analysis/modeling	variable
Cranfield Disaster Preparedness Centre (CDPC)	Disaster Management: introduction and focus on Slow & Rapid onset & Technological Hazards and training.	6 Weeks
Cranfield School of Management	Strategies for Change: Managing NGOs	3 Sept - 6 Oct 95
Earth Resources Centre	Hazardous gases	
ETC (UK)	Sustainability and Development Management	14 days
Geology Department, University of Bristol	Geological Fluid Mechanics	4 weeks
Hadley Centre Meteorological Office	Meteorological Training Courses	variable
Institute of Development Studies (IDS), University of Sussex	Food Security Short Courses	variable
International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC)	Organizational Assessment for NGO Capacity Building; Financial Management For Non-Financial Managers; Participative Techniques for Monitoring and Evaluation	Jun-Oct 95
Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine	Short Courses	variable
Mott MacDonald Group	Hazard, Risk and Safety	1 day
Oxford Centre for Disaster Studies (OCDS)	Disaster Management Training of Trainers	August/ September
Overseas Development Group	Visiting Professional programme Short Courses	variable
Post War Reconstruction & Development Unit (PRDU), University of York	Practical Lessons on International Disasters Interventions	1 week
RED R Registered Engineers for Disaster Relief	Water Supply and Survey - inc simple intake	27-30 Jul 95
	Field Construction - Temporary shelters, etc	6-8 Oct 95
	Needs Assessment - Needs after disasters	27-29 Oct 95
	Refugees, Agencies and Relief Workers	12-17 Nov 95
Responding To Conflict	Group Development and Problem solving Working with Conflict (5 Modules) Facing Violence: Strategies for Social Change Towards Just Outcomes	11 weeks
Wind Engineering Society	Use of code of practice for wind loading	1 day
World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine	Medical Management of Major Incidents (at The Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith Hospital)	3 days

Networks

Formal networks, professional or electronic, do not play an important role in the life of the British disaster community, or so the replies to the questionnaires indicate. Although over a hundred respondents were involved in a network, a similar number of different networks was listed, and few organisations or individuals were linked to more than one [10]

Questionnaire results

However, the returns should be handled cautiously. Those who replied to the question about professional networks interpreted it in many various ways.

When filling in the questionnaire form, respondents took a very broad definition of the term 'professional network'. This was understandable given that the form itself did not define the term any further and that the expression 'network' has always been used fairly loosely to cover a number of activities from sharing information to collaborative ventures and lobbying. The result, then, was a very diverse list of networks based in the UK and overseas (a full list of their names is attached in Appendix Two).

The British networks or associations listed can be grouped under the following main headings:

- Those focusing on disaster issues or themes such as the ODI's Relief and Rehabilitation Network, the Institution of Civil Defence and Disaster Studies or the UK Working Group on Landmines;

- Professional/technical associations whose members' interests may encompass disaster work. This category includes such organisations as the Royal Meteorological Society, Institution of Civil Engineers, British Nutrition Society and Association of Geoscientists in Development;

- Geographical interest groups (sometimes with a disaster angle), for instance, the European Network of Bangladesh Studies at Bath University and the British Agencies Afghanistan Group;

- Networks of agencies working in development, including British Overseas ngos for Development (BOND) and the Development Studies Association, as well those focusing on particular development issues such as structural adjustment or pastoralism.

Because the question was open, respondents were left to make their own decisions about which networks to mention Some thought they should refer to disaster networks only or at least to networks whose areas of interest covered disasters specifically, whereas other lists covered a much larger field.

While the returns certainly underestimate the extent to which organisations and individuals are involved in networks of all kinds they may be more accurate in pointing to the degree of participation in disaster-related networks Even here, though, the replies referred to formal networks. Informal networking arrangements (and there are certainly some, perhaps even many) remain invisible.

The replies also included some electronic networks. Although electronic systems were covered separately in the questionnaire, the apparent inconsistency of the responses here probably reflects the impossibility of drawing a neat distinction between professional and electronic networks.

Meaningful statistical analysis of the results is clearly not possible. Therefore, the discussion here concentrates on a few seemingly significant facts and key issues, outlining some significant disaster networks in operation and making suggestions about needs and opportunities in this field.

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10 The questionnaire format appeared to leave room for three entries only but this does not appear to have been a constraint

Disaster networks

From the replies to the survey, three disaster networks appeared to be important in terms of the number of respondents who were members. Outlines of these are given here. As noted, the replies may undervalue the importance of other networks.[11]

UK network on conflict, development and peace (CODEP)

CODEP was established in 1991 in response to the growing need for NGOs working in conflict to share information and identify areas of particular concern. Its main focus is on analysing conflict, development and peace as they relate to NGO operations in the field, and hence on determining effective strategies for working in conflict and contributing to peace. Dissemination of these findings, and advocacy among the development community, are essential adjuncts to this work.

CODEP currently focuses on Africa but does not rule out a wider sphere of interest in the longer term - and certainly welcomes information and ideas from those dealing with conflict elsewhere

It has a mailing list of nearly 40 'members', although the active membership attending meetings is smaller. Most are NGOs operating in the field or campaigning on issues but academic institutions, researchers and other specialists can also take part CODEP does not produce a formal newsletter or publications but it did help organise a major workshop on conflict and development held in Birmingham in November 1994.

Taking a sensibly pragmatic approach it has chosen to evolve gradually in response to members' needs, beginning with sharing information and moving on when appropriate to synchronising work more efficiently and then, perhaps, more formal co-operation. Recently it has discussed the desirability of setting up a secretariat.

For further details contact

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Society for Earthquake and Civil Engineering Dynamics (SECED)

Professional network

SECED is the British branch of the European Association of Earthquake Engineering. In addition to the Society's interest in earthquake engineering, its activities embrace the wider sub-discipline of civil engineering dynamics. The society plays an active role in building code issues, research and education in the field. To fulfil its diverse role SECED has four technical reporting groups covering civil engineering dynamics, engineering seismology, earthquake engineering and soil dynamics. Each technical reporting group is responsible for monitoring and reporting progress in the relevant field and making proposals for action by the society.

The activities undertaken by SECED include the SECED Newsletter, monthly technical meetings, *biennial Mallet-Milne Lecture, triennial technical conference, occasional workshops and seminars.* SECED's most notable assets comprises an extensive directory of practitioners.

The SECED membership comprises professionals from industry and academia. It is associated, in the UK, with the Institution of Civil Engineers, Mechanical and Structural Engineers, the Geological Society and with the Wind Engineering Society.

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11 The UK Working Group on Landmines, for instance, has some 30 members, including NGOs, pressure groups, funders and others, several of whom replied to the questionnaire but only one of whom noted its membership.

Refugee participation network (RPN)

Part of the Refugee Studies Programme at the University of Oxford, the RPN is a forum for researchers, refugees and people who work with refugees to exchange experience, information and ideas, and to debate issues It aims to provide practical information to those working in the field, extend their understanding of refugees' needs and aspirations, and encourage refugee participation in the design and implementation of projects that are meant to benefit them. By disseminating research findings in a way that makes them relevant to practitioners, research can serve to influence policy and improve practice

The main medium for this work is the thrice-yearly publication *RPN*, which is sent to 2100 members in 110 countries. A directory of members is also available. Membership subscriptions are encouraged.

The Refugee Studies Programme's documentation centre has over 20 000 documents including both published and 'grey' literature, and may soon be accessible through the Internet.

Information is available from:

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Co-ordinator
Refugee Participation Network
Refugee Studies Programme
Queen Elizabeth House, 2 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA, UK.
Tel: 01865-270722 Fax: 01865-270721 e-mail: rsp@qeh.ox.ac.uk

Relief and rehabilitation network (RRN)

The RRN was set up in 1993 with funding from EuronAid and the European Commission. Recognising that NGOs are not able to learn much from others' experiences, its main objective is to improve the flows of information between NGOs involved in relief and rehabilitation, and between NGOs and researchers.

Its membership is composed mainly of NGOs working in the field. Individual NGOs nominate their *personnel, including those based in head offices, who are directly involved in planning and implementing* relief operations. Individuals and personnel of government and UN agencies are also able to become members, although at a higher fee.[12] By March 1994 the RRN had 132 individual members.

Members receive regular newsletters and network papers, and also commissioned 'state of the art' reviews by specialists of different areas within the relief and rehabilitation field (the first two were on water and sanitation, and emergency supplementary feeding programmes). They can also obtain advice on technical and operational problems from the ODI or other members. A register of members detailing their disciplines, areas of experience and interests has been produced.

For details, contact:

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UK IDNDR committee and working groups

Only three respondents cited these as networks, yet they clearly perform a networking role in transmitting information and perhaps in stimulating collaborative work. Further enquiries among members of these groups might throw more light on this.

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12 The fee structure is graded depending on the type of organization and number of staff within it who are members.

Professional/technical associations

The responses threw up a welter of professional and technical associations and societies, some based around broad themes while others were quite specific in their interests. They covered such subjects as dams, hydrology, nutrition, geography, geology and psychology; and they included professions such as civil and consulting engineers, architects and management consultants. With such diversity it was impossible to group them into a clearly definable category or list

Only three of these 'networks' had more than one member among those who returned the questionnaires: the Association of Geoscientists in Development (AGID), Institution of Civil Engineers and Royal Institute of British Architects. Here too, though, the returns may be misleading. It is probable, for instance, that some individuals working within organisations replied only on behalf of their employers and did not record their personal membership of professional institutions.

Even if we cannot gauge the extent of their importance, it is safe to assume that associations of this kind can play a significant role in transmitting ideas and information beyond the confines of the disaster community itself and out to those whose work may from time to time involve preparing against disasters or dealing with their results. For this reason it might one day be useful to carry out a more detailed piece of research exploring the full range of professional and technical societies and their links with other networks and journals

Geographical networks

Six geographical networks appeared from the survey although two are outside the UK. The four based in Britain are the British Agencies Afghanistan Group (BAAG), European Network of Bangladesh Studies, Inter-NGO Committee on Somalia (INCS-Forum) and Sudan Lobby Group. The two based overseas are the Agency Co-ordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) in Pakistan/Afghanistan, and the Bangladesh Disaster Forum in Dhaka.

The list could certainly be expanded from further research. Networking and co-ordinating associations are often created in response to emergencies, especially conflicts, affecting specific areas. The Gulf Information Project is one: it arose in 1991 at the initiative of the Refugee Council as a result of the war and large numbers of refugees from Iraq. In 1994 agencies came together very quickly to share scarce operational information and co-ordinate actions to address the crisis in Rwanda.

Development networks

There are a number of UK networks for those working in development. Again, there are three particularly important to the UK disaster community, to judge from the returns.

British overseas NGOs for development (BOND)

BOND was formed in June 1993. It is a broadly based network with about 100 paying members, all UK-based voluntary organisations, who are working in 160 countries world-wide The 12-person executive committee is balanced so that small and medium-sized NGOs are adequately represented. Associate membership is open to other types of organisation interested in promotion of or research into issues concerned with overseas development and development education. Its growth in membership and range of activities is eloquent demonstration of its perceived value to the NGO community.

Its aim is to enhance the effectiveness of development assistance from the UK by sharing experience and ideas, among its members and with the British Government. It has produced a directory of members and maintains a database of their interests. A quarterly newsletter is circulated covering all kinds of development themes and events including humanitarian aid and shelter

BOND has set up working groups on key issues (currently project evaluation, ODA funding mechanisms, environmental impact, NGO management and collaboration with southern NGOs) and also runs workshops on these and other topics (among the workshops at the May 1994 general assembly was one on 'emergency assistance and support for livelihoods'). The programme is meant to expand in response to members' interests BOND has also enabled the NGO community to lobby on issues of common interest

For details contact

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Development studies association (DSA)

The DSA was set up in 1978. It exists to advance knowledge of development issues through meetings, conferences and disseminating information about research results, operation and practice, course curricula and training schemes

Its members include academics and development practitioners of different kinds (individuals and organisations). A subscription fee is payable, the amount paid depending on the type of member. Much of the DSA's work is founded upon several study groups of which two are relevant to disasters: international hazards; and development, disarmament and security (incorporating the former war and development group)

For the International Hazards Study Group contact:

Ewan Anderson
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Tel: 0191 374-2448

For the Development, Disarmament and Security Study Group, contact:

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Tel: 01422 842752
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DSA runs a conference of two to four days each autumn around a particular theme: in 1995 this is 'Denying famine a future: new approaches to food security, development and aid'; among earlier themes was 'Conflict and change in the 1990s'. The DSA also publishes a newsletter which reports on discussions at the study groups, is a platform for debate on issues, and contains the usual details of events and publications DSA is also responsible for the *Journal of International Development*

For information, contact the Membership Secretary:

Dr Michael Hubbard
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Tel: 0121 414- 976, e-mail: dsa@bham.ac uk

EC-NGO network

Each member state of the European Union (EU) has its own platform of development NGOs interested in closer links with the EU's institutions The national platforms are represented through the EC-NGO Liaison Committee based in Brussels (see *Funding*).

The UK platform holds three general assemblies a year. Many if not most British development NGOs are now members. There are working groups on development policy, development finance and development education. There is also an ad hoc group on VOICE; this brings together NGOs who have significant dealings with the European Community Humanitarian Office, VOICE and the ODA. The network has lobbied repeatedly on food aid issues over the years.

For further information contact:

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UK representative, EC-NGO Network
Save the Children Fund, Mary Datchelor House, 17 Grove Lane, London, SE5 8RD, UK.
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Conclusions: problems and potentials

What can we deduce from the apparently low level of formal networking among the UK disaster community? That it is not necessary or not thought to be necessary?

Interpretation

One explanation may be that because informal, less visible networking is widespread there is no need for networking institutions. Another is that the community is more interested in smaller, specialist groups than in multidisciplinary networks; or that it is happy to see disaster issues included within other associations' spheres of interest

It is more likely that the root of problem lies in the diverse membership of the disaster 'community' itself. This is not really a community at all but a large collection of individuals and institutions specialising in particular aspects of disasters. The diversity of hazards is matched by the range of specialist skills needed for mitigation and relief work. It is not surprising that successful networks have focused on single themes such as refugees, conflict or particular complex emergencies. Nor should we be surprised that attempts to create more wide-ranging discussions (such as the International Hazards Panel) have had a chequered history [13]

The need for networks

The rational argument in favour of networking remains unanswerable. Two main reasons are:

- At one level networking improves access to and exchange of information and expertise;
- Beyond that, it can help network members to maximise their impact through partnerships and greater co-operation, what is commonly called 'synergy'.

To this we can add a third overriding aim

- To support vulnerable communities by responding to their needs. With the growing frequency, impact and complexity of disasters internationally, especially in the South, there is an ever more pressing need to make interventions as informed and effective as possible.

Everywhere in the world networks are establishing themselves and flourishing, with encouragement from governments, international agencies and donors - especially for multi-disciplinary activities. Even in the UK, where there is not a strong culture of sharing and co-operation across the disaster community, the networking urge is growing Two meetings organised over the past year by the IDNDR Working Group on Application and Implementation, both designed to encourage information sharing and debate, drew good audiences from many parts of the community.

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13 The International Hazards Panel was set up by Intermediate Technology and others in 1980 as a forum to bring together people with separate interests and engaged in varied disaster-related activities Diminishing interest and commitment from the community finally forced it to wind up in 1991, when it was absorbed into the DSA's Hazards Study Group

The way forward?

The main question that should concern us is not the need for networking itself but the most appropriate means of meeting the different needs that networks fulfil. Many options are open. Here we suggest a three-phased programme (the phases may overlap) This is emphatically pragmatic. It allows the network to develop in response to demand and also represents a cautious approach to the question of financing. The phases would certainly take years to complete

Phase 1: sharing information

This should start now For exchanging information an electronic networking system may be sufficient at this stage. This would consist of a bulletin board open to all or creation of a more restricted user group. The power of such a system would be greatly increased if documentation centres now extant were on line

The kind of information disseminated would include news of publications, papers and other materials; meetings, workshops and conferences; skills and capacities available; current and planned projects; partners or expertise needed; job vacancies, sources of funds, recent grants made, funders' policies and deadlines; and new developments within major agencies. To follow up on a given item users would *contact the organisations or individuals concerned.*

Electronic systems are the most flexible and adaptable method of sharing information, and responding to interest and demand. It is also the best, possibly only, way of embracing the multidisciplinary nature of disaster work. This arrangement might have to be supplemented by distribution of printed information in the short term until use of the Internet becomes more widespread.

At this stage the network could become parasitical and try to attach itself to somebody else's newsletter or to an existing network or information service In any case it should make links to existing facilities from the outset.

Phase 2: meetings and partnerships

To debate and discuss ideas it will be necessary to arrange meetings, workshops and the like. This requires some kind of co-ordinating mechanism but may only need to be fairly limited.

It is impossible to envisage particular activities to stimulate partnership at this stage, since it is assumed that partnership will grow out of information sharing and a change in culture towards co-operation. This could include joint projects in the field or concerted lobbying efforts. Should the network (or indeed networks) reach this stage a more substantial institutional home will be essential

Phase 3: institutional

From the beginning the network(s) will need some kind of focal point; just where does not matter much as long as it has the requisite infrastructure and communications links. As it develops a more substantial programme of activities and even a more formal, institutional identity it will need to find a home.

The difficult question, faced by every network at some point, is when to become an institution of this kind. At what point does a secretariat become necessary or desirable? In every case the functions of a secretariat (liaison with members, organising meetings, distributing information) have to be taken on by somebody. The debate is around the status of that support. formal or informal, temporary or semi-permanent?

NGOs and other institutions can provide homes for networks that begin as ad hoc, limited or temporary arrangements but then need a secretariat or other formal structure.[14] In most cases, embryonic networks need some support from one agency or another in order to establish themselves: this usually takes the form of staff time, meeting rooms and communications. The most suitable home for a multidisciplinary disaster network in the UK would be an organisation that is already sufficiently large, well established and equipped to take on organisational, information storage and information-sharing functions.

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[14] The Refugee Council hosts the British Afghan Agencies Group, for instance, while ACORD has provided CODEP's administrative support

Beyond the IDNDR

Networks are born to meet needs and evolve or die according to the extent they can adjust to changing circumstances. Such are the needs at present that we can expect there to be a multi-disciplinary network for a long time. Its sustainability can be guaranteed in part by the strength and flexibility of its organisational arrangements but the real key is the involvement of network members.

The IDNDR Committee and its working groups could play a valuable role in maintaining the networking momentum during the rest of the decade. Perhaps the UK IDNDR structures are in themselves an embryonic network, in which case it may be time to consider how they will develop during the rest of the IDNDR and what will succeed them.