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## Preface

So weary with disasters, tugged with fortune,  
That I would set my life on any chance,  
To mend it or be rid on 't.

Macbeth III, i, 112

In recent years there has been a steady growth of the recognition that disasters are something more than the occurrence of some natural and accidental event and, instead, are the result of a community's vulnerability. This vulnerability is based on social, economic, political, and cultural factors as well as natural and geographic ones. For Third World countries in particular, vulnerability is intimately tied to levels of development. Emergency relief alone does not address these needs and, some would argue, can occasionally exacerbate a threatening situation. How, then, are disaster preparedness, planning, mitigation, and relief related to the development process? What role should international aid organizations play in responding to disaster situations? If particular knowledge, skills and types of social organization are required to deal effectively with disasters, what forms of education and training are appropriate and necessary?

In order to examine these and other related questions an Institute was designed to bring together practitioners responsible for disaster relief in the Third World from private voluntary (PVO) and non-governmental organizations (NGO), leaders from schools of international training, and researchers who examine related theoretical issues. Unlike the murderer in *Macbeth*, quoted above, who would, when faced with disaster, indiscriminately accept any assistance and easily give up his right to choose, this special supplement underscores the determination to do precisely the opposite. It is in the hope that the human community may finally "mend it" that an institute was created to explore these questions and move us all toward a better understanding of their answers and a bit further from setting our lives "on any chance." The Institute on "Education for Development in the Context of Disasters" was held on 15th—20th July 1984 at Harvard University with thirty invited participants.

Funded by a grant from the Exxon Education Foundation, the Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) and the International Relief/Development Study (IRDS) co-sponsored the week-long examination of education's role in development efforts aimed at the mitigation of disasters in the Third World. The collaboration of HGSE and IRDS was preceded by two

years' research undertaken by Mary Anderson and Peter Woodrow of IRDS which included meetings with the staff and volunteers of U.S. and European PVO's, UN organizations, and other international agencies involved in disaster response. The meetings were designed to explore the experience of these agencies in promoting development in their disaster work, and to discover agency needs for additional information and analysis particularly in the area of program design. The education and training aspects of their research led them to Noel F. McGinn, Co-ordinator of the Office of International Education at HGSE, who has had extensive experience studying education in developing countries. His office has access to both the research facilities of Harvard University and a substantial international network of educational research and training institutions. They were joined by Christopher Harris, a doctoral candidate at Harvard whose research was related to the theme of the Institute.

Based on the requirements already identified by the various agencies, an agenda was created for the institute and participants invited. The mixture of PVO and NGO practitioners with researchers and theoreticians was intended to provoke discussion of theory grounded in the knowledge of practice. Basic theoretical issues were explored including definitions of "disaster" and "development." Individuals delivered prepared papers examining the effectiveness of and constraints on outside intervenors, various models of intervention, Third World perspectives on the relief process, different conceptual models of education, and the role of educational institutions in the training and preparation of agency staff. These papers are presented in the pages which follow. Perhaps even more important — but more difficult to capture in the printed word — were the presentations by panel members who brought their experience from the field to important common questions. Jacques Beaumont, Timothy Farrell, Corinne Johnson and Ernesto Rodriguez examined agency opportunities for educational programming in emergencies. N.K. Jain, Kenneth Curtin, Melvin Foote and Stanley Mitton in a second panel explored voluntary agency and host country needs for skills among staff for disaster programs. The question of the potential role of academic institutions in training personnel of both expatriate and host country organizations was addressed by Leon Haley, Lloyd Dakin, and Donald Schramm who represented three very different types of schools.

What follows is a collection of several papers, edited transcripts of talks, and synopses of panel discussions. It is our hope that these words will move the reader to consider again the role of disaster relief in relation to long term development and, perhaps, reshape his/her own practice in the field. The first section titled, "Unconventional Views on Education and the Disaster Context," addresses one of the central issues of the Institute — education. Hans Reiff and Noel McGinn explore and describe the limitations of formal education in disasters and development. Their analyses point to areas of possibility as well as tensions which must be acknowledged.

Failure to consider this information could easily hamper attempts to mitigate crises. Additional failures are pointed out in a "Critique of the Role of Outsiders in Disaster Intervention" where Frances D'Souza and Fred Cuny call attention to the shortcomings of private voluntary organizations in disaster relief. Their observations should be considered seriously by those who are responsible for structuring agency response or for the inservice training of staff.

Possibilities for corrective action occur both in failure and success. The third section includes a presentation given at the Institute and two papers written afterwards by participants and shared with the editors. They describe specific attempts to implement ideas raised during the Institute. Franklin McDonald outlines Jamaica's experience in the creation of a national program of disaster preparedness, mitigation and prevention. Corinne Johnson, Melvin Foote and Robert Gorman view the disaster/development loop through the lenses of two private voluntary organizations and present alternative models of intervention.

The question remains, however, about proper training of agency personnel, especially prior to their active involvement with crisis assistance. In that regard, the fourth collection of articles examines the role of educational institutions in the preparation and training of staff. Leon Haley lays out a model program within a university graduate school while Don Schramm describes an existing disaster management program which utilizes correspondence and self-study courses. Schramm adds an educational component to the Cuny-Beaumont Mobius strip described below.

In his summary comments, Thomas Franklin synthesizes the weeklong Institute. While reminding the participants — and all who read his words — of the serious nature of this work and its human consequences, Franklin outlines important insights and lessons gained from the interaction which occurred during the week. He describes some conceptual tools which emerged from the process of theory informing practice informing theory. He points out several areas of concern which were not adequately addressed and offers advice and guidance for those who would wrestle with the choice of the "next steps."

The Biblical dictum that the last shall be first applies to the final piece. Mary Anderson's "Reconceptualization of

the Linkages between Disasters and Development" is placed last in the order of articles in this publication, but the reader is encouraged to explore it before the others. In this case the last *should* be first. Written well after the Institute, this piece is not only an insightful conceptual overview of the discussions which occurred in July, but more importantly, extends and probes the notion of vulnerability in ways which must be considered by any assistance agency. Anderson examines vulnerability in three areas: material, organizational, and socio-psychological. She focuses on reduced vulnerability in the mixture of these three as crucial for supporting a community's ability to cope with crises — and to keep those crises from becoming disasters. The notion of a disaster/development loop — initiated by Cuny and extended by Beaumont and Schramm — is explained here in detail. Anderson closes her work and this publication with a challenge that we all must heed if we, "weary with disasters and tugged with fortune," set ourselves to the labor of discovering ways which are simultaneously effective, compassionate, and empowering in the mitigation of disasters and the support of self-sustaining development.

Our thanks go to the participants of the Institute on Education for Development in the Context of Disasters for their willingness to engage in critical, candid, and enthusiastic discussion. A complete list of those in attendance may be found at the end. We are grateful to Patricia Albjerg Graham, Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education for her support of the Institute. Billie Jo Joy also deserves thanks for her creative and patient administrative support in the Office of International Education. Recognition, too, should be given to Betsy Stolaroff who shouldered the responsibility for many of the quiet but crucial details necessary for the smooth running of such a gathering. We would like to offer our warm and special thanks to Frances D'Souza and the International Disaster Institute for making this special supplement possible.

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