Coordination

Self Study Module

Distance Learning with UNHCR and the University of Wisconsin Disaster Management Center

Prepared by UNHCR e Centre and ESS in collaboration with InterWorks and the UW-DMC

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Cover photograph
The Humanitarian Information Center (HIC) meeting room in Freetown, Sierra Leone. The HIC is supported by the Sierra Leone Information System (SLIS)—a joint project of UNOCHA and UNHCR. SLIS photo, 2002.
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Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to this self-study course on Coordination (EP-07). This course is divided into two units.

Unit One examines the basic need for and constraints to the coordination of international humanitarian response. It provides an overview of many of the current key actors in the “international humanitarian system” and explains their mandates, and operational norms for interacting with other organizations. Several of the existing coordination arrangements established within the UN system and among other actors are also examined.

Unit Two is a more personalized approach to coordination that is designed to help you, regardless of your job description or role in an emergency response, help to coordinate the overall response in a better and more efficient way. Advice is provided in practical analysis of existing coordination arrangements, personal listening and facilitation skills, meeting planning and management, and a look at some of the ‘lessons learned’ from previous coordination experiences.

Learning Objectives for this Course

After successfully completing this self-study course, you should be able to:

♦ Present clear arguments for the benefits of coordination
♦ Understand the constraints on achieving greater coordination
♦ Better understand the roles and mandates of the key players in the international response community as a basis for achieving more efficient coordination with them
♦ Discuss some of the established coordination bodies and arrangements within the UN system and among other stakeholders
♦ Analyze existing coordination arrangements in order to use them more effectively and improve them where necessary
♦ Practice and improve your own skills in listening to and facilitating others involved in coordination
♦ Plan, facilitate, and attend better coordination meetings
♦ Discuss several ‘lessons learned’ from past coordination experiences with colleagues

Although there is an international coordination focus to this course, it is intended to provide guidance for anyone involved in humanitarian response. The illustrations and examples provided provide lessons for anyone interested in better understanding coordination, at local, national, or the international level. The information in Unit 2 is specifically designed for local, national, and international staff who are operational at the field level.
Organisation of this Course

This course is divided into two units, each containing chapters related to the overall theme of the unit.

Unit One — Understanding Humanitarian Coordination — focuses on understanding the existing coordination arrangements within the international humanitarian response system and some of the reasons behind them.

Chapter 1: International Humanitarian Coordination — Benefits and Barriers illustrates the need for greater and more efficient coordination. It also describes some of the common barriers to achieving coordination and proposes some methods to overcome them.

Chapter 2: Who Is Involved? provides an overview of the key players in the international humanitarian response system and highlights some of their recent roles in coordination.

Chapter 3: Existing Coordination Structures reviews some of the “standard” coordination arrangements within the system.

Unit Two — Improving Humanitarian Coordination — provides specific tools and advice for individuals involved in coordination.

Chapter 4: A Framework for Analysis of Coordination guides the reader through the systematic analysis of coordination initiatives using 5 key factors that affect their efficiency.

Chapter 5: Practices, Skills and Tools for Better Coordination presents a motivational approach to improving coordination along with a concise primer on better listening and facilitation skills.

Chapter 6: Making the Most of Coordination Meetings provides guidance and tools for running better coordination meetings that will have a more positive influence on the humanitarian operation.

Chapter 7: Ten Ideas That Work reviews a compilation of 10 important ‘lessons learned’ about coordination and the ideas behind them.

How to Use this Course

Self-study is more demanding than traditional classroom instruction in that each learner has to provide her or his own framework for study instead of having it imposed by the course or workshop timetable. One of the problems with self-study courses is that people begin with great enthusiasm at a pace that they cannot sustain. The best way to undertake this distance education course is to plan your own study schedule over a pre-set period by thinking ahead, and making your own schedule for study.

The course is designed to take approximately 16 hours to complete. This includes the time for reading, reflecting, answering the questions in the text, and taking the final exam.
Pre-tests

The pre-tests included at the beginning of each unit allow you to test your general knowledge about coordination of refugee and displaced population emergency responses. These two tests consist of 20 True/False questions each. Taking these tests before beginning each unit should stimulate you to compare your own thoughts about coordination to those presented in the text. Also, the pretest allows you to quickly determine how much you already know about the ideas presented here, and can help you see which parts of the course you can move through more quickly or those you may want to spend more time on. If you score very well on all of the pretests, it is likely that you do not need to take this course for the purpose of learning new information, although it may be a useful review.

Instant Feedback: Self-assessment questions, exercises and worksheets

A drawback to self-study is that instant feedback from the instructor or your colleagues is not possible. To address the need for feedback, each chapter has five true-false questions and five multiple-choice questions. Exercises are found throughout the chapters to help you get the most from the materials. Each chapter concludes with a summary of key points as a review.

Final Examination

As a final complement to the self-assessment tests and problems which are included in the course text, there is a final examination administered by the University of Wisconsin–Disaster Management Center (UW–DMC). When you have completed all the self-assessment tests and activities to your satisfaction, you may request a final examination package.

Using the REQUEST FOR FINAL EXAMINATION form which accompanies these course materials, you will nominate a proctor to give you the examination and make arrangements for scheduling the time and place. Anyone in a position of educational or academic authority (for example, a registrar, dean, counselor, school principal or education officer) may serve as your proctor. Librarians and clergy are also acceptable proctors. For these UNHCR/UW–DMC courses, your immediate supervisor or someone else of authority in a disaster/emergency management organisation may also be your examination proctor.

The UW-DMC will mail the examination papers with instructions to your proctor who will monitor your taking the test. After your proctor returns your examination to the University of Wisconsin-Extension, it will normally take 1-2 months for grading. Upon successful completion of the exam, the University will record your continuing education units (CEUs) on a university transcript and prepare your Certificate of Completion. Your certificate will be mailed to you along with current information about other distance learning opportunities.
Understanding Humanitarian Coordination

UN on site coordination centre (OSOCC) in Kigali, Rwanda for coordination of the relief efforts of NGOs and UN agencies in the aftermath of the 1994 conflict.

FAO photo #17614
Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. One reason why effective coordination is not achieved is simply because individual responders often perceive more barriers than incentives for coordination activities.

2. Organisations generally do compete for recognition, respect, and funding.

3. Advocacy is one area of humanitarian action where coordination is seldom beneficial.

4. Organisations are generally more effective when they act alone to gain confidence of belligerents to allow access.

5. The evaluation of humanitarian coordination should be concerned mainly by how well the affected population has been served.

6. Some of the benefits of setting and using standards are the resulting predictability of actions in humanitarian operations and greater accountability.

7. A coordinated approach to security generally helps non-UN agencies better manage their own security needs that the UN system cannot address.

8. Most UN agencies and NGOs tend to adhere to predictable preset modes of operation and are strictly limited to work within their core missions or mandates.

9. The UN General Assembly has given IOM the right to draw on the resources available in the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF).

10. UNICEF does not typically provide direct field services, but rather funds partner NGOs to carry out this work.

11. The 1997 Seville Agreement defined within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement the respective roles and responsibilities of the ICRC, the International Federation, and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

12. OCHA manages the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF).

13. When governments provide soldiers for peacekeeping duties, the authority over them is completely handed over to the UN.
14. Donors almost always agree among themselves about programme priorities and objectives.

15. Generally, the greatest limitation to the effectiveness of an ad hoc-Special Emergency Office or Coordinator appointed by the national government is a lack of understanding about national priorities.

16. The ERC is always the head of OCHA.

17. One problem with the Lead Agency coordinator model is the perception that its specific mandate will dominate all other relief activities.

18. The UN has no standing army.

19. The general goal of international NGO coordinating bodies such as InterAction and ICVA is to set policy and work towards larger advocacy issues that affect their memberships.

20. An SRSG is always appointed by the UN Secretary General in emergencies.
By studying this chapter you will learn about:

- The objectives of coordination — why it promotes the objectives of humanitarian action
- The benefits of coordination — why it facilitates organisations in meeting their own objectives
- The barriers that make coordination so difficult

“What good does coordination do anyway?”

All actors do not always hold coordination in high regard. There is often resistance to what is perceived as the heavy hand of coordination — where actors are forced to comply rather than take voluntary steps to “cooperate”. Many people fear that coordination will inflict a greater bureaucratic burden and will limit their freedom to act when and where they want to. The sentiment is usually, “I don’t really want to be coordinated by someone else.”

In major responses to crises, organisations frequently meet at various levels of management and routinely form partnerships to share resources and enhance their capacities. These meetings and partnerships, however, do not always result in a more sensitive coverage of needs, better sharing of resources, and more sustainable practices. Why do stories of poor practice in coordination constantly reappear despite the efforts to coordinate and years of analysis on how coordination should work?

This chapter discusses the objectives and benefits of coordination. It illustrates the difference between simply “going through the motions” of coordination for the sake of “appearing coordinated” and using coordination for humanitarian results. The emphasis, however, is on the barriers to coordination that must be tackled by all actors in humanitarian action. You will have the opportunity to analyse your organisation’s contribution to a coordinated system and pinpoint areas that can be improved.
Accomplishing the Objectives

The objectives of coordination relate closely to the objectives of humanitarian response. Before reading on, reflect on the following list of objectives and then answer the two questions.

Primary objectives of humanitarian action indicated in the mandates of UN organisations

1. To build healthy populations and communities and to combat ill health (WHO)
2. To support economic and social development and provide logistics support necessary to deliver food (WFP).
3. To advocate for humanitarian issues with political organs, notably the Security Council (OCHA)
4. To lead and coordinate international action for the world-wide protection of refugees (UNHCR)
5. To protect children’s rights and expand their opportunities (UNICEF)

What are the top five objectives of humanitarian action as expressed by your organisation?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

What are your personal top five objectives in your role as a humanitarian?

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

Compare your answers to the objectives listed above. This exercise illustrates that, even in stating broad objectives, actors within the international humanitarian system have different philosophies. How do stated objectives overlap between organisations? Where do your objectives fit in? Can any of the actors reach their objectives by themselves?

Of all the possible objectives, most people and organisations can usually agree on at least one: To meet the needs of the affected population. Relating this overall goal to the need for better coordination can be found in the definition of coordination (as applied to humanitarian assistance):

Coordination is the systematic use of policy instruments to deliver humanitarian assistance in a cohesive and effective manner. Such instruments include strategic planning, gathering data and managing information, mobilizing resources and ensuring accountability, orchestrating a functional division of labor, negotiating and maintaining a serviceable framework with host political authorities and providing leadership.

In fact, this definition of coordination can also serve as a definition of humanitarian action, or even better, coordinated humanitarian action. It is the systematic nature of coordination that promotes desirable outcomes in humanitarian action.

The results of coordination will be demonstrated in how well the affected people have been served. Common criteria for evaluating the results of humanitarian action are especially valuable when looking at the effectiveness of a coordinated humanitarian operation. These criteria reflect the need for actors to be accountable for their decisions. Consider the following criteria and the evaluative questions associated with each.

- **Efficiency**  Were the resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) efficiently converted to outputs?
- **Effectiveness**  Did the intervention attain, or is it expected to attain, its relevant objectives efficiently and in a sustainable way?
- **Impact**  What are the positive and negative, primary and secondary effects produced by an intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended?
- **Relevance/Appropriateness**  Are the objectives of an intervention consistent with country needs, global priorities and partners’ and donors’ policies?
- **Coverage**  Are the major population groups facing life-threatening suffering reached and provided with assistance and protection proportionate to their need and devoid of extraneous political agendas?
- **Sustainability/Connectedness**  Are activities of a short-term emergency nature carried out in a context that takes longer-term and inter-connected problems into account?
- **Protection**  Are all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. human rights, humanitarian and refugee law)?
- **Coherence**  Have security, developmental, trade and military policies as well as humanitarian policies been assessed to ensure that there is consistency? Do all policies take into account humanitarian and human rights considerations?

### Practical and Mutual Benefits of Coordination

There is little doubt that coordination requires extra effort, commitment and, sometimes, compromise. However, the positive effects of coordination for all concerned—the affected people in need of assistance, individual organisations and the “humanitarian system” as a whole—demonstrate that the investment is worthwhile. The benefits of coordination include:

- Improved efficiency, cost effectiveness and speed of humanitarian assistance
- A framework for strategic decision making in areas of common concern
- A unified strategic approach to humanitarian assistance
- Elimination of gaps and duplication in services in meeting the needs of the affected populations
Where Does Coordination Add Value?

Coordination adds distinct value in several areas of a humanitarian operation. The following paragraphs describe only some of the areas where coordination contributes toward better humanitarian assistance. Use the questions in the text as a basis for analysing your organisation’s policies on coordination as well as your own involvement.

**Information Sharing** When information is shared, time is saved and higher levels of analysis can be achieved. The Reindorp/Wiles study (2001) of OCHA’s coordination function found that high value was placed upon information services provided to the entire humanitarian community rather than just for the UN or NGOs. These services include producing products such as maps, matrices of who is doing what and where (gap identification worksheets), directories of contacts, translation of local press stories, and access to completed assessments. Affected people also need this information. Consider the three requirements for success of the Humanitarian Coordination Information Centre in Pristina, Kosovo, described below.

### Accessibility
With no security checks and no IDs required for entrance, the (Humanitarian Coordination Information Centre (HCIC) was possibly the only international office in Pristina freely accessible to all. HCIC services were available to anyone who needed them—including local people, who could come in off the street to ask for advice on where they might receive shelter assistance or food aid.

### Service
People using the HCIC were not seen as ‘beneficiaries,’ but as customers. The HCIC attempted to facilitate the work of these customers, providing support, advice and technical assistance.

### Neutrality
The HCIC tried at all times to be neutral in its dealings, and to address all customers upon equal terms.


**Standard Setting** Experience has demonstrated that common standards contribute to better coordination. When actors strive together to set and use standards, humanitarian action can be guided in a predictable way that contributes to accountability. Based on consensus, NGO umbrella groups have developed a widely used set of standards, called “The Sphere Project — Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response”, or simply—Sphere. The Sphere standards have provided valuable benchmarks upon which to plan and implement programs. The UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies provides a guideline that can be used as an operational standard for all coordinating organisations in response to a refugee emergency. A multi-agency forum, Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (AlNAP), has developed standards for evaluation of humanitarian action. Standards for human resources management have been established by People in Aid.

A key element of an integrated and principled response is that all actors agree on the nature and scale of the required response, they work towards shared objectives, and they strive to achieve the same standard of response. As the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) recipe of how to work emphasises, along with a clear moral framework and the use of legal instruments, conducting humanitarian activity in a stable, predictable manner is central to fostering respect for humanitarian principles and practice. Striving for shared standards of response is vital to ensure impartiality.

— Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons Learned From Recent Field Experience, Nichola Reindorp and Peter Wiles, OCHA 2001.
Which standards are used by your organisation in its operations?

Negotiating Access  One of the most important tasks is gaining access to areas where affected people are cut off from assistance. Organisations are rarely effective at the operational level in acting alone to gain access since belligerents (or simply opportunists) can easily play actors against each other. Recognizing this, the coordinated system can find skilled negotiators and prompt complementary diplomatic and political action. Most importantly, it helps the humanitarian organisations involved negotiate with “one voice.”

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) played a key role in access negotiations and securing agreement to principles, although much of the access negotiation was done locally by NGOs. NGOs were particularly grateful to OCHA for using the ‘UN umbrella’ to renegotiate access after NGOs left operations in Bunia due to security incidents in 2000. Several interviewees stressed the value of OCHA’s approach of establishing Humanitarian Liaison Committees. These committees, formed by members of the community, were the key interlocutors with whom the UN could engage to negotiate safe access to the beneficiaries.

As one interviewee said: The message [to the committees] is “you give us the heads up on what is happening. We do not want to be surprised—and we shall deliver.” Thus the committees became a local accountability structure, held responsible by local community members for deciding whether humanitarian assistance was provided or not. This has mitigated some of the access and security problems encountered by NGOs.


Dialogue with Affected People and Local Organisations  Joint efforts in any aspect of a humanitarian operation are likely to lead to a more coherent approach to communication and collaboration with the affected people. Beneficiaries often feel confusion and fatigue when approached by too many separate actors—each wanting information. They might be unsure of what the outcome of these interactions will be and not feel part of the decision making processes, causing mistrust. A coordinated dialogue with community leaders, affected people and support groups makes them a central part of the coordinated effort to solve the problems.
In 1999, in Kosovo, during the months leading up to the first winter after the return of the Albanian Kosovars, there were hundreds of non governmental organisations (NGOs), all looking for humanitarian niches and programmes to work in. As organisations spread throughout Kosovo, they began assessing needs for immediate response and preparation for winter. The pressure of multiple assessment teams on small villages became so great, that at one point even when critical information was still needed, some NGOs refused to go back to the villages to ask for additional information for fear of being threatened by the local population who were reaching new levels of “assessment fatigue”.

— Jim Good, consultant USAID/OFDA shelter specialist, recollections from Kosovo, 1999

Security  Humanitarian organisations can enhance security measures through development of common strategies, plans and advisories. The best security strategy is based on building relationships with other actors, including local communities, to take advantage of various perspectives and to share advice on security matters. When staff members are trained in security routines, optimally in joint training exercises, security is very effectively enhanced. Through a coordinated approach, non-UN agencies understand the security and evacuation arrangements that the UN system can and cannot provide, and can act to fill in the gaps.

UNHCR also developed staff security systems for NGOs and formed a security committee for UN and NGO personnel. Its formation was another unusual aspect of the coordination system in Ngara (Tanzania). The committee shared information on security concerns for aid staff members and developed an evacuation plan. UNHCR officials emphasised that ‘this was a joint agency system’ involving UN agencies and NGOs working in a consolidated security information system. Hence the divisiveness on matters of security coverage between UN and other aid personnel that characterised the situation in Sierra Leone and elsewhere did not arise.

— The Dynamics of Coordination, by Marc Sommers, 2000

Does your organisation share in security training and measures with other actors? Do you understand the UN security and evacuation arrangements?

Logistics  Important collaborative efforts include: creation of a UN Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC) in large-scale emergencies, agreed procedures for joint logistic operations and the sharing and donation of logistics services. Frequent and well-structured meetings between logistics actors have helped to strengthen information sharing and problem solving. The logistics coordination priority list for the future includes common communication facilities, induction and training services, and global information system (GIS) databases and mapping services.
The UNJLC concept is operational in Afghanistan (as of 2003) and operates at several levels from Rome to Kabul to field-located centres in each sector of the country. It serves to help set priorities for the use of limited logistical support in the face of very large needs. The explanation below is from the 2002 operation in Afghanistan.

The UNJLC is to coordinate the joint logistics planning and operations of participating UN agencies, IOs and NGOs, rather than conducting logistics activities itself. Nevertheless, the UNJLC is mandated to direct the use of military aircraft for UN humanitarian operations. In principle, each participating organisation will continue to operate its own transport facilities but will jointly plan the prioritisation and use of the limited transport infrastructure to avoid competitive bidding that could cause price escalation. If applicable, the UNJLC will coordinate pooling of respective transport resources, including the use of military aircraft which support humanitarian operations, and coordinate any other common convoy and/or air operations that are required.

— The United Nations Joint Logistics Centre home page, Terms of Reference, paragraph C.1. See http://www.unjlc.org/

Does your organisation participate in centrally coordinated logistics operations? If not, how could it coordinate its activities and resources with others?

Resource mobilisation  Donors often require coordinated appeals before funding an operation. Funds simply must be found to cover gaps and common funds are often needed to ensure this coverage. The Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP—described in Chapter Two), by virtue of bringing many people together, has the potential to encourage production of system-wide integrated strategies and plans. A recent trend toward more decentralised funding decisions means that more funding coordination will be needed in the field.

Does your organisation participate in a coordinated appeal process? If not, how do you work towards filling important gaps?
Advocacy  Advocacy is critical to promote solutions to the causes of complex crises, for example, to push for: policy changes, observance of human rights principles, concern over humanitarian situations, access, funding, among others. As humanitarians, we need to be able to influence warring parties, governments, donors and the media to uphold their responsibilities to humanitarian principles. To do this, we must be able to analyse the problems, propose actions, seize opportunities to act and press difficult issues. As a system, we are still weak in the area of advocacy and need to work as a more coordinated force to be more effective.

Does your organisation participate in advocacy activities with other organisations or the affected people? What deliberate advocacy steps can you take personally or what steps does your organisation take?

Technical sectors  Sectoral coordination works well when connected to the overall response strategy and where the sector coordinator, whether a person or an agency, is technically competent and able to convince other actors to uphold their part of the operation. Provision of shelter, water and sanitation, health, etc. can be state of the art when properly coordinated, which means that it also can contribute to the body of knowledge on how standards can be achieved under various conditions.

Whom does your organisation rely on for leadership in the technical sectors? How do you (or could you) coordinate with other technical sector coordinators in cross-cutting issues?

“Everyone wants coordination, but no one wants to be coordinated.”

The following discussion touches on the most common reasons why coordination efforts fail or even fail to get started. Each problem is addressed in the seven chapters in this module and the chapter references (some of the issues cut across all of the chapters) are given for each issue. For each problem, take a few minutes to brainstorm some solutions and add your answers to those mentioned here and in the next six chapters. Chapter 7 concludes this module with ten important lessons learned about coordination and best practices.
Seven Common Barriers to Coordination

1. Those involved, their information and processes are not always transparent or accessible.
2. An ever-growing number of organisations require coordination—making the job more difficult.
3. Multiple actors organise duplicate initiatives in order to feel more ownership of the process.
4. Responders fail to build relationships, define their own roles, establish predictable procedures and set standards.
5. Individual personalities often outweigh other organisational factors—making coordination a personal, rather than systematic issue.
6. “Natural competition” between humanitarian organisations dependent on donor funding overrides the motivation to coordinate.
7. Coordination meetings are seen to take up too much time.

Problem 1. The actors, information and processes are not always transparent and accessible

Coordination is about people and meeting people’s human needs as well as their planning needs. All actors in a coordinated effort need to understand the system and feel comfortable operating within it. Coordination mechanisms often serve the coordinators’ needs but those being coordinated often do not understand the direct benefits to themselves. Consider the following example from Afghanistan.

One initiative to enable the UN to coordinate has been the development of the Afghanistan Information Management Service (AIMS), which is basically an electronic database placed on the web (www.hoic.org.pk), showing (or supposed to show) a picture of who is doing what, where, and when. AIMS is under severe pressure from higher UN levels to produce this picture, since there is not a very good understanding among the decision-makers in Kabul of who is doing what and where. As a result, AIMS has not been able to function as a coordination tool for the time being.

One reason why AIMS has found it difficult to provide a comprehensive picture may be because humanitarian actors, including the NGOs, do not see its value. A practical issue is probably that AIMS is web-based, while an internet connection in Kabul, let alone in other Afghan cities, is hard to find these days. Moreover, for the NGOs to buy-in to such a system, the operational UN agencies need to show that they are committed to it, and are working with it. Practice, however, points the other way. While, for example, senior UNHCR Staff were found to be interested in it, given that AIMS could, in theory, provide an integrated picture of which areas are suitable for return, based on the security situation and the presence of basic services, operational staff have not been made aware of the system and do not fill in basic forms that AIMS issued for data collection.”

— NGO Coordination and Some other Relevant Issues in the Context of Afghanistan from an NGO Perspective,” by Ed Shenkenberg van Mierop, ICVA Coordinator, 9 April, 2002
What can be done to make a coordination process more transparent and accommodating to its stakeholders?

Some possible answers are:

♦ Understand the benefits of coordination as well as the indispensable nature of coordination in humanitarian operations. (Chapter 1 of this module)
♦ Know the other actors, their mandates, resources and areas of expertise. (Chapter 2)
♦ Know what coordination mechanisms exist in your situation, understand their strengths and build upon them. (Chapter 3)
♦ Know what works best in coordination practice. (Chapter 4)
♦ Understand how the needs will be met and the resources will be used, as well as the roles and responsibilities of each actor in the coordinated effort. (Chapter 5)
♦ Promote collaborative efforts such as joint assessments and evaluations. (Chapter 5)
♦ Improve your own skills in relationship building, networking and facilitation. (Chapter 5)
♦ Conduct or contribute to coordination meetings that are well planned and implemented. (Chapter 6)
♦ Use lessons learned and best practices from past operations. (Chapter 7)

In February 1999, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) ministers met in Geneva to discuss emerging NATO Civil Military Operations (CMO) doctrine where a U.S. Army officer presented a briefing on the Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC) concept. When asked how he would ensure participation in the process, he replied that he would “. . . provide open working and meeting areas, basic office supplies, local communications systems, clean bathrooms, hot coffee and donuts.” Some of the NATO officials seemed upset by the flip response, but NGO, IO, and military representatives in the audience nodded in agreement.

— Personal recollection, LTC Michael M. Smith. “I was that officer.”
In The CMOC: A Journey, Not a Destination LTC Michael M. Smith, USA, and Ms. Melinda Hofstetter, 2001

Problem 2. Growing numbers of organisations require coordination

There is an ever-increasing number of NGOs operating at the field level, as well as a wider range of responses by UN agencies, donors and local community groups than ever before. The sheer number of organisations to be coordinated often makes the task unwieldy.
With the large numbers of organisations, it is difficult to judge reliability, strengths and weaknesses. An organisation’s reputation from previous emergencies is not always a good indicator. An organisation’s performance may vary, for example, between countries. Among the mix of organisations, some will tend to inflate their images. All have strengths, resources and perspectives to offer. While there may be a need to restrict numbers to improve coordination, a window must be left open for qualified organisations to offer assistance in a coordinated way.

The NGO universe is bewildering in its size and complexity. At present, some 380 NGOs (international and local) are now registered with the Afghan Ministry of Planning, rendering the situation thoroughly “dysfunctional,” in one person’s view. Another commented that NGOs are conducting “business as usual,” with the exception of the fact that donors are now more willing to underwrite coordination activities. Few NGOs, however, had taken advantage of available funding for this purpose.”


As just one of many actors, how can you help to facilitate a coordinated response? How can a coordinated response include a wide representation of organisations while maintaining a manageable coordination body?

♦ Learn about the size, recent areas of activity, competence, etc. of other organisations. (Chapter 2)
♦ Be realistic about your own capacity and the contribution that you can make. (Chapter 2)
♦ Form partnerships with other organisations that share mandate, sector, or ideology. (Chapter 3)
♦ Support coordination mechanisms that exist and their ability to direct organisations working in the humanitarian operation. (Chapter 3)
♦ Understand the implications of membership on the effectiveness of the coordination effort. (Chapter 4)

The Great Lakes scramble left some asking whether agencies will ever get their act together. The exception was Tanzania, where teamwork took the place of the agency overlap and competition in Zaire, Burundi and Rwanda. ECHO and USAID put all funding through UNHCR, which also had full authority from the Tanzanian government to approve agencies. It rejected 40; successful agencies were unanimous that cooperation had never been better. Coordination triumphed.

— “Coordination, Cooperation, Liaison—and Getting it Altogether,” IFRC World Disasters Report, 1997
Problem 3. Actors organize their own parallel initiatives in order to feel more ownership of the process

Organisations sometimes resist joining a new or existing coordination body if there is a perception that it represents the lead or host agency. Organisations may not wish to be perceived as ‘endorsing’ other agencies or organisations that have mandates (or perceived mandates) that are not in agreement with their own. For example, some UN agencies might resist joining a government-led coordination body if they do not agree with government policies. Or, NGOs might resist joining a military-organised coordination body.

UNHCR ended up largely sidelined in the central coordination effort. Whether this was by circumstance or by design, UNHCR was slow indeed in embracing the Emergency Management Group (EMG) concept. This weakened both UNHCR’s own and Government of Albania (GoA) coordination efforts.

Irrespective of cause, UNHCR’s coordination role was not clear vis-á-vis the EMG. Neither did it become integrally involved in, nor committed to the EMG as a coordination mechanism. Tensions clearly existed as to who was attempting, or actually did coordinate the operation—both between the GoA and UNHCR, and also within the UN itself.

— “Coordination of the 1999 Kosovo Refugee Emergency—The Emergency Management Group (EMG), Albania” by John Telford

How can you help strengthen existing coordination bodies in the field and reduce the number of parallel coordination structures?

♦ Join existing coordination bodies and give them a chance to work. (Chapter 3)
♦ Use relationship building skills to promote trust before an emergency and facilitation and consensus building skills to ensure that actors feel ownership of the process. (Chapter 5)
♦ Include all actors in your own meetings and advocate for a “rotational” hosting mechanism so that ownership is shared. (Chapter 6)
♦ Ensure that the coordination mechanisms and practices are appropriate for the situation. (Chapters 4 and 7)
♦ Use common tools such as “Information Centres” as described below.

The Humanitarian Community Information Centre (HCIC)—Pristina, Kosovo, 2000

Information is not neutral; in humanitarian emergencies, it can be a tool with which to gain donor funds, win media attention or accrue political influence. The question of who has access to different types of information—the location of minorities, refugee numbers, donor allocations and food-security assessments, for example—
can become a real issue. Ideally, in a complex emergency clear levels of information would be established, accessible to different parties at different levels, and agreed focal points set up to channel that information.

The HCIC dealt solely in public information that was available to all. While individual staff members within the centre frequently had access to restricted information, this was not processed or distributed through the HCIC. The role of honest broker enabled the HCIC to request information on the understanding that it would be used not to further a particular agenda, but to help all actors in their work.

Perhaps the HCIC’s single greatest asset was its perceived neutrality. This did not just refer to its physical space, but extended to almost every area of HCIC activity. As an example, the Centre fielded a two-person Field Liaison Unit (FLU), tasked with providing a means of communication between Pristina and organisations based outside the city. The FLU travelled to regional and municipal inter-agency meetings on a weekly basis, gathering and disseminating information. One NGO representative commented that the FLU was seen as an ‘intermediary not beholden to any agency’—no mean feat given the often tense relations between the actors in Kosovo.

— Learning from Kosovo: the Humanitarian Community Information Centre (HCIC), Year One – This report by Paul Currion for The Overseas Development Institute (HPN)

**Problem 4. Actors fail to build relationships, define roles, develop procedures and set standards**

The emphasis on coordination suddenly increases at the crisis response stage, even though good coordination is often the result of relationships, understandings and agreements built up over time. In many emergencies coordination is very slow to get underway, partly due to lack of preparation and foresight. For example, incompatible administrative requirements between agencies or governments that must coordinate with one another often seem to be “suddenly” discovered only at the onset of an emergency.

Too many aspects of humanitarian coordination are not made clear to many humanitarian field workers: what everyone’s role should be, how and when reporting gets done, what skills staff need to work with one another, and what standards they are working toward. Lack of agreed upon standards for assistance hamper coordination efforts and make accountability difficult. Organisations often do not declare their own goals for coordination or make coordination a responsibility of their own staff.

Both the Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) cases highlighted the practical significance of striving for consistent standards in humanitarian response in terms of minimising accusations of political favouritism that could have dire implications for the security of aid workers and access to beneficiaries. Yet in both Somalia and the DRC, and despite efforts at Nairobi level for Somalia, the team found little evidence at the field level of attempts to standardise the response among agencies beyond their expressed commitment to the Sphere standards. (However, in the DRC, NGOs in North Kivu, had agreed salary scales for local staff, and OCHA proposed to organise a workshop with every provincial inspector to discuss the technical issues of a national health plan).

The availability and quality of performance data and reporting by official agencies and NGOs involved in emergency relief operations were highly variable. In some locations, such as in Goma, the situation was more satisfactory but in others, such as within much of Rwanda, availability of data was patchy and frequently not comparable between agencies due to a lack of standardised survey methods and inadequate technical coordination. In such areas the information available did not provide a sufficient basis for assessing impact or performance, or—just as important—for adjusting programme activities to improve performance. A tendency by some official agencies and NGOs to emphasise or inflate positive accomplishments and play down or ignore problems resulted in distorted reporting. Even basic data on staff, finances and activities were difficult or impossible to obtain from a number of NGOs.


How can you facilitate relationship building, defining the needed roles and skills, and the establishment of procedures and standards for coordination?

♦ Know who will be involved (see Chapters 2 and 3) in humanitarian operations, their mandates and resources and the coordination mechanisms.
♦ Have procedures with all actors (assistance agencies, governments and communities) well established ahead of an emergency, including standardised reporting formats. (Chapter 5)
♦ Be active in standard setting and standard usage. (Chapter 5)
♦ Share information consistently and update procedures. (Chapter 5)
♦ Set coordination goals, objectives and indicators for programs and activities. (Chapter 5)
♦ Set your own personal and professional goals for coordination. (Chapter 5)

Problem 5. Personalities often outweigh organisational systems

Without a clear system and enforceable norms for coordination, individual personalities can wield significant power on the system, for better or worse. Coordination mechanisms or initiatives may be modelled on one success, only to be found unsatisfactory in another instance, primarily due to the particular personalities involved.

Many aid officials believed that such a structure (the Committee on Food Aid—CFA in Freetown, Sierra Leone) was applicable to other humanitarian emergencies. It was replicated, to some extent, in Liberia. An official familiar with CFAs in both countries commented that ‘the Sierra Leone CFA works better than that in Liberia mainly because the Sierra Leone World Food Programme (WFP) Director—WFP being the largest CFA partner and the CFA chair in both countries—encourages coordination, while the Liberia WFP director does not.’ To ensure success, the official believed that
‘unless a director sees the need for coordination, no one . . . will push for it.’
A donor official in Sierra Leone agreed that the CFA in Liberia was ‘not nearly as effective as in Sierra Leone.’

— The Dynamics of Coordination, Marc Sommers, 2000.

How could you help balance the effects of individual personalities on the coordination system?

♦ Everyone can develop the skills of a good coordinator and know when to use the appropriate tools. (Chapter 5)
♦ Be transparent about organisational policies that shape field agreements. (Chapter 5)
♦ Attend coordination meetings with decision-making authority and the information needed from your organisation to promote coordination. (Chapter 6)

Problem 6. “Natural competition” overrides the motivation to coordinate

Competition is a fact of life. Organisations always compete for recognition, respect, and, of course, funding. Organisations often fear that a competitor’s success will lower their own standing in the eyes of donors. This competition often overrides other organisational motivations to coordinate. Because their reputations and funding are at stake, organisations often place their own success as the most important goal of humanitarian operations. Even as donors request better field coordination and often cite wasteful practices resulting from a lack of coordination, they themselves are also competitive and do not always coordinate well with other donors, thereby setting a poor example for the rest of the system.

Unfortunately, there seem to be more barriers than incentives to coordination. Most agency staff are rewarded for performance within their own organisations and in ways that further their own agency’s mandates. The Reindorp/Wiles study (2001) found that UN agencies preferred to keep their best staff “in house” rather than to second them for a coordination assignment, a trait that is likely shared by all organisations. These attitudes detract from the feeling that “we are all in this together” and that the success of the system as a whole benefits everybody. Most disconcerting is the fact that the mutually-held, overarching goal of serving the beneficiaries seems to get lost among these other organisational objectives.

Response to the Burundian Refugees in Tanzania, 1993

The Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (JEEAR), a comprehensive study, identified the tendency ‘for staff of one agency to attribute blame for a problem to the other agency’ in the Central Africa region. It reported that ‘the worst example encountered of such blaming-the-other concerned the very high rates of mortality experienced by Burundian refugees in Tanzania in late 1993.’ In this case,
‘whilst WFP personnel saw the principal cause of mortality being dysentery resulting from UNHCR’s tardiness in the provision of adequate water and sanitation, UNHCR personnel saw inadequate supplies of food by WFP as the principal cause.’


What can you do about “natural competition”?  

♦ Keep the beneficiaries at the center of operations. Admit that you cannot meet all humanitarian needs on your own. (All Chapters.)
♦ Look for ways to assist other organisations’ efforts at coordination rather than finding fault (Chapter 3)
♦ Develop or clarify motivators for coordination for yourself and within your organisation (Chapter 5)
♦ Evaluate projects for positive achievements as well as lessons learned—and then share the spotlight of success with others. (Chapter 7)

A UNHCR mission report from Ngara (Tanzania) characterised agency relations generally as ‘excellent’, and attributed much of this to the agencies’ shared desire to shed territorial concerns and work together. The report said: The size of the problem facing everyone on the ground led to an agreement that we would work as a group instead of strictly within agency boundaries to ensure that resources were utilised fully and that coverage in all life-saving areas was as great as possible.

— The Dynamics of Coordination, Marc Sommers, 2000.

Problem 7. Coordination meetings take up too much time

Many field practitioners have learned, through exposure to poorly planned and poorly implemented coordination meetings, that these can take up too much time without producing worthy results.

One shelter specialist working in Pristina, Kosovo, arrived to replace another expatriate who had just returned home. On arrival, team members showed him his work area, files, shelter programme proposals, assessment reports, and finally the ‘meeting matrix’. On the wall above the desk was a poster dividing the week into seven days and each day into scheduled meeting times for various important coordination groups, task forces, interagency meetings, shelter specific meetings, donor meetings and ‘emergency winterization’ meetings to be held regularly in various parts of Kosovo. The meeting schedule accounted for 50% of the available time!

— Personal account, Jim Good, InterWorks LLC
How can you deal with the time pressures of coordination meetings?

♦ Run meetings more efficiently and schedule them to match the task at hand. (Chapter 6)
♦ Prioritise time and attend only those meetings that are critical both in terms of what one can learn and share. (Chapter 6)

During 1995, meetings were held fortnightly or weekly, and the few agencies on the ground worked closely and well together. The UNHCR staff consisted of one international member (compared with 40 in Ngara). During 1996, refugees fleeing continuing violence in Burundi began to fill up the Kibondo camps. Meanwhile, in December 1996, after the forced repatriation of the Rwandans from the Ngara camps, international NGOs came south to Kibondo seeking work. Also in December, the war in the Congo was generating increased instability throughout the region, and an additional 40,000 refugees crossed over the Tanzanian border into Kibondo. UNHCR increased its international staff to 4 and its national staff from 3 to 29. Meetings were held twice a day—at 7am and 7pm—to discuss issues and coordinate activities. For the most part, the NGOs cooperated well together, brainstorming ideas regarding malaria control, among other things, and gathering in the evenings at their shared quarters in town.

Coordination promotes the objectives of humanitarian action and facilitates organisations in meeting their own objectives by contributing to efficiency, effectiveness, relevance/appropriateness, impact, coherence, protection and sustainability. Coordination adds value in numerous areas including information sharing, standard setting, dialogue with affected people, negotiating access, resource mobilisation, logistics and advocacy.

There are seven common barriers that plague coordination of international humanitarian assistance. This module will help you to mitigate all of these.

Neglect of the human side of coordination is unsustainable. Coordination is built upon relationships and knowledge of other actor’s mandates, resources and strengths.

There is a constantly growing number of organisations requiring coordination.

Actors who don’t feel ownership of the coordination process may start their own parallel and redundant processes.

Actors don’t prepare for coordination in emergencies by setting in place working agreements, standards for performance and their own clear goals and objectives.

There is a natural tendency toward competition rather than coordination in humanitarian operations.

In the absence of coherent structures, personalities often determine whether coordination will be successful or not.

There is often too much valuable time spent in meetings that don’t add enough value to the response.
Chapter 1
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Advocacy is one area of humanitarian action where coordination is seldom beneficial.  
2. Organisations are generally more effective when they act alone to gain confidence of belligerents to allow access.  
3. The results of coordination should be evaluated mainly by how well the affected people have been served.  
4. The major benefit of setting and using standards is the greater predictability of actions and organisational accountability.  
5. A coordinated approach to security can help non-UN agencies better manage their own security needs by identifying security actions that the UN system can and cannot address on their behalf.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. One good way to prepare to coordinate in a large emergency response is to:
   - A Start your own coordination body
   - B Lower your standards and goals
   - C Understand the mandates and resources of other actors
   - D None of the above.

7. The best pro-coordination argument to use against inter-organisational competition is:
   - A Coordination is a natural process and will work out eventually
   - B Actors need to ensure the success of their own organisations first
   - C Coordination helps the organisations to better achieve their own goals—helping those in need
   - D Time spent in coordination reduces the time available to compete.
8. Strong personalities seem to influence the coordination process in which of the following ways:
   A. The organisational leaders prefer to be aggressive and domineering
   B. They prefer coordination over independent action
   C. They may politicize the coordination process.
   D. They often determine whether coordination will be successful or not.

9. Which of the following are “value added” aspects of coordination?
   A. Standard setting
   B. Negotiation of access
   C. Dialogue with affected people
   D. All of the above

10. The Humanitarian Community Information Centre (HCIC) in Pristina, Kosovo, described in this chapter is a good example of:
    A. A source of information for UN agencies only
    B. A neutral source of information that offered access to all actors
    C. A highly controlled environment where politically sensitive news was cleared for publication
    D. A and C
Who is Involved?

By studying this chapter you will learn about the main actors involved in the coordination of international humanitarian assistance. The organisations, institutions and groups highlighted for comparison are:

- Refugees, displaced people, and the local community
- Host governments and national military and civil defence groups
- United Nations—offices, programmes, organisations and agencies
- International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
- Intergovernmental organisations
- Non governmental organisations
- International military forces
- Donor governments

“What are all of these people doing and who is in charge here, anyway?”

Better coordination among organisations depends largely on each organisation having a better understanding of all organisational roles in the emergency response. In principal, all organisations have unique missions, mandates, and approaches. However, many organisations and groups do not rigidly adhere to a pre-set mode of operation, or limit themselves to their core missions or mandates when confronted with widely varying field realities.

Many humanitarian workers have vastly different impressions of the roles and responsibilities of other organisations based on the specific emergency response(s) they have been involved in. Organisations, directed by the people in them, constantly evolve, try new approaches, and test new roles related to their core missions. Organisations sometimes work far outside of their “normal” roles in order to find solutions to problems that others are not addressing. Also, many organisations and agencies have overlapping, and in some cases, ambiguous mandates that are not easily sorted into distinct roles during an actual emergency. It is critical that the humanitarian community understands and uses the potential of each organisation in a coordinated response.

This chapter contains basic information about certain actors, their mandates, missions, and recent modes of operation. The selection of actors is far from comprehensive but provides a picture of many of those you are likely to be working with. Many other actors may be involved in any given situation. Where specific operational roles and coordination relationships are cited, please remember that these are illustrations from a wide range of possibilities rather than rigid “standard operating procedures”.
Most of the following information is taken from the organisations’ own sources, for example, their websites or their annual reports. Information about very diverse groups (refugees, host communities, and donors, for example) has been synthesized from a wide range of situations. All data on organisations is from the year 2000 unless otherwise indicated. To supplement this information further on your own, use the organisational websites or contact the organisations and groups directly.

**Refugees, Displaced People and the Local Community**

**History and experience** The local community has always been available as the first source of humanitarian response to those in need.

**Location and coverage** The local community is involved in all large-scale humanitarian emergencies in every country of the world.

**Resources** Of all actors involved in emergencies, these groups comprise the largest segment in terms of human resources, with the greatest presence in the affected areas, the most substantive knowledge of local cultures and, importantly, with the largest amount of human and (often) material resources to contribute. It is well established that local communities are the first responders to emergencies, particularly to natural disasters. Due to their proximity and understanding, they are typically quick to share their resources in a culturally appropriate manner.

**Mandate or mission** The mission of affected people and civil groups is usually to save lives and preserve social and cultural assets while protecting the more vulnerable members of their own community.

**How they work** The local communities, both the displaced as well as local hosts, have organised elements of civil society that can work to coordinate their activities with those of other responders. There are both formal and informal networks such as refugee and IDP leaders and councils, as well as indigenous and special interest groups such as those with religious, political, and business interests. These types of civic organisations can draw attention to minority groups, bringing divergent groups together; and can wield significant political influence. Civil groups can build or rebuild institutions and networks that foster social cohesion and protection, including families, clans, neighbourhoods, places of worship, recreation, and schools.

**Specialised emergency unit or section** While too variable to describe in global terms, many refugee and displaced communities include police, emergency responders, and others with emergency knowledge, management and leadership qualities.

**Coordination issues** The potential for affected people to participate as partners in coordinated operations is being realised by international and national agencies and their direct participation is generally encouraged. There is still a danger, however, that local civil groups can be overrun (or forgotten), by other actors who coordinate themselves at a different (perhaps institutional) level and in distant locations. The leaders of these local community groups (or in many cases those with the best international language skills) generally serve as contacts for coordination with other actors. In such cases, those that coordinate with these focal points should be careful to determine that they speak for the community, and have the appropriate level of authority within their own community to function as a leader.
Illustration of role — IDPs in Eritrea - 2000  “The scope of the emergency in Eritrea is massive. Including war- and drought-affected persons, as well as those hosting IDPs, the total number of Eritreans in need of emergency assistance is 1,665,000 or a staggering 47.5 percent of the population. . . In view of Eritrea’s humanitarian needs, the international donor community response has been poor. An earlier modest UN appeal for $42.7 million in January was met with a tepid response, with donor contributions reaching only 39 percent. . . The Eritrean people are not waiting passively for the international community to mobilize. One of the most moving aspects of the emergency is the extraordinary generosity of people hosting displaced people in their own homes.

In Halai, RI (Refugees International) observed many local families sharing all their resources with IDPs from other regions of Eritrea. Some households are hosting up to five displaced families.”

— Eritrea: More than 1.5 Million People at Risk,
REFUGEES INTERNATIONAL BULLETIN, July 27, 2000
http://www.edfonline.org/News/July2000/27.htm

For more information  Many of these groups can only be contacted in person via face-to-face meetings—particularly during the immediate emergency phase. However, many “grass roots” and local interest groups have internet access and their own websites. Some global internet sources to start with are:

* for refugee groups: http://www.unhcr.ch/
* for IDP groups: http://www.idpproject.org/global_overview.htm
* for civic groups: http://www.itu.int/wsis/links/

Host Governments, National Military and Civil Defence Groups

History and experience  Host governments may be well established, dating from several centuries of tradition, or may be newly founded based on recent independence or on the outcomes of war, revolution, or other radical changes. Even long-standing governments and government systems often have total changes in certain ministries and personnel, making them functional newcomers.

Location and coverage  Almost all areas of the world are governed by recognized, functioning governments.

Resources  Extremely variable. In general, countries with significant resources require little or no international humanitarian assistance, except in instances where the country is engaged in civil war or where political forces constrain the use of government funds for humanitarian response to those in need within its recognized territory.

Mandate or mission  One of the primary functions of government is to protect citizens and others who are within the national territory. Nevertheless, there are occasions when governments are unwilling or unable to carry out this responsibility. In such cases, the willingness of humanitarian agencies to coordinate with local and national government will be adversely affected.

How they work  When governments are functioning properly, they are in charge of national development strategies and preparedness measures for natural disasters and humanitarian crises. They can draw on human and capital resources and the knowledge of national systems and population groups to identify and address the root causes of conflict and disasters; they can also strengthen national institutions to promote good governance and human rights. Governments typically use their military and civil defence assets for emergency response, due to the “stand-by” capacity and logistical ability of these organisations to organize and move relief supplies. In some states, there is no recognised government and civil defence or these systems have broken down, such as in Somalia in the 1990s. These are sometimes called “Failed States”.

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Specialised emergency unit or section  Generally, specially designated ministries serve as focal points for disaster and emergency management and refugee affairs. Resources are usually funnelled through these ministries to regional and local offices. In some cases high-level “special offices” or committees on refugee or other humanitarian emergencies may be formed on an ad-hoc basis and report directly to Ministers, or in some cases, to the national executive office directly.

Coordination issues  Where there is an internationally recognised and functioning government, it has the final authority as well as the responsibility to coordinate international assistance within its sovereign territory. Functioning governments sometimes exclude from the operation those organisations that they do not wish to work with. In the case of “Failed States”, national and international NGOs, the United Nations bodies, the Red Cross, and foreign donors may carry out the responsibilities of protecting and serving the civilian population and may take a lead role in coordination.

Illustration of role — Albania and the Emergency Management Groups (EMG), 1999
From mid-March to early June 1999, the Republic of Albania faced a massive influx of refugees crossing into the country from the neighbouring Yugoslav province of Kosovo. The Government and people of Albania initiated a large-scale relief operation. This was supported by a diverse array of partners including UN agencies, Albania Force (AFOR), international organisations, bilateral donors, and non-governmental organisations.

In order to coordinate this relief effort, the Albanian Council of Ministers established the Emergency Management Group (EMG). The EMG is the central coordination body responsible for providing an overview of the humanitarian situation in Albania and for co-ordinating relief efforts, which target refugees and host populations. The EMG is chaired by Special Government Co-ordinator Kastriot Islami, and has been co-managed by staff seconded from a number of international organisations—OSCE, UNHCR/OCHA and OFDA.

— Coordination in the 1999 Kosovo Refugee Emergency—

For more information  Most governments provide statistics and description of their countries and governance information via the internet.

UN Offices, Programmes, Organisations and Agencies
Since its first involvement in relief operations in Europe following World War II, the United Nations has responded to both natural and human-made disasters when national governments did not have capacity to meet emergency humanitarian needs alone. Today, the United Nations, working with a wide range of partners, provides both international emergency relief and longer-term development assistance through its various offices and agencies.

The United Nations once dealt only with Governments. By now we know that peace and prosperity cannot be achieved without partnerships involving Governments, international organisations, the business community and civil society. In today’s world, we depend on each other.

— Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, 2001
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

**History and experience** OCHA was created in 1998. (Its predecessor organisation, UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), was established in 1992.)

**Location and coverage** OCHA was involved in field coordination arrangements in 16 countries and one autonomous region in 2000. Coverage varies annually and is dependant on emergency situations requiring their presence and available funding levels. Its Headquarters are in both New York and Geneva.

**Resources** OCHA administers the preparation of the Consolidated Interagency Appeal Process (CAP). The CAP is based on an overall strategy that enables the UN system to set clear goals and define priorities for the humanitarian programme in a given country. The CAP provides a framework for joint programming, common prioritization and joint resource mobilization. OCHA supports the participating organisations in preparing the appeal, following up with donor countries and monitoring the receipt and use of contributions. The funds, however, are donated directly to each agency concerned. Globally, the total numbers of CAPs average 10 per year in the late 90s and 2001. While the funding levels requested and received through the CAPs are high, receipts often fall short of requests. By mid-year in 2002, only 38.5% of the US$ 3.7 billion budget had been received. OCHA also manages the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF). CERF is a cash-flow mechanism, under the authority of the ERC (Head of OCHA), to enable an immediate response to an emergency. CERF has been used at the very outset of emergencies and, in exceptional cases, during later phases to assist agencies with cash-flow problems before donor contributions are available.

OCHA also maintains information systems in support of the wider international humanitarian response community. Three of the key systems are Relief Web, the Humanitarian Early Warning System (HEWS), and the Integrated Information Network (IRIN) along with monthly financial tracking on response to appeals.

**Basic mandate or mission** OCHA is an office of the United Nations Secretariat. It has the mandate to coordinate (primarily UN) international response to “complex emergencies”. Typically, OCHA works in situations where the crisis is complex, large-scale, violent and/or political, and is beyond the mandate and capacity of any single UN Agency to manage.

**Specialized emergency unit or section** The entire Office is emergency-oriented. The most visible and directly operational emergency-related elements from a field perspective are the Field Coordination Units (FCUs) and Humanitarian Information Centres (HICs) that are often established with partners.

**How they work** OCHA functions in three core areas at the organisational headquarters level:

1. policy development and coordination in support of the Secretary General of the UN
2. advocacy of humanitarian issues with political organs, notably the United Nations Security Council
3. coordination of humanitarian emergency response through the InterAgency Standing Committee (IASC).

OCHA discharges its coordination function at headquarters level primarily through the IASC, which is chaired by the Head of OCHA under the title Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), along with the participation of other UN humanitarian partners, elements of the Red Cross Movement and NGO umbrella groups. In the field, specially designated Humanitarian Coordinators liaise with field partners and OCHA headquarters. FCU staff may coordinate particularly through development of the CAP, hosting and chairing various coordination meetings, and offering technical and informational support to other local coordination efforts.
Illustration of role — Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2001  The DRC was plagued by conflict for several years and repeatedly divided by multiple front lines of fighting. OCHA maintained a field office, headed by a Humanitarian Coordinator. OCHA was one of the key liaison points with government authorities in the east and west of the country. It convened weekly meetings for information exchange, produced analytical papers and situation reports, played a key role in negotiation of access, advocated for fundraising and an increased humanitarian presence, conducted trainings and was instrumental in management of an interagency Emergency Humanitarian Initiative Fund as well as the CAP.

For more information  http://www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

History and experience  UNDP was founded in 1965.

Location and coverage  UNDP maintained offices in 131 countries in 2000. Its headquarters are located in New York.

Resources  In 2002, total UNDP resources world-wide totaled $2.2 billion. Of this, approximately half was from donors, and half from National Governments’ own resources, channeled through UNDP-supported development projects and programmes.

Mandate or mission  UNDP provides development advice, advocacy and grant support to governments. Programmes focus on democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, information and communications technology, energy and the environment, and HIV/AIDS.

How they work  UNDP is a development organisation, and therefore, has a longer funding cycle (about 5 years) than many other humanitarian and emergency—oriented agencies. It is unique in that its funding must be used to support National Government projects and initiatives directly. UNDP works closely with national government to design projects and policies. It then distributes project funds to governments, who then spend the funds to achieve project goals. UNDP country offices are usually located in the national capital.

Specialised emergency unit or section  The Bureau for Crisis Prevention & Recovery (BCPR)—formerly known as the Emergency Response Division (ERD)—is UNDP’s in-house mechanism designed to provide a quicker and more effective response in UNDP’s Country Offices in Countries in Special Development Situations (CSDS).

Coordination issues  In each country office, the UNDP Resident Representative normally also serves as the Resident Coordinator of development activities for the country-wide UN organisations. Particularly in response to natural disasters, the Resident Coordinator is the head of the UN Disaster Management Team (UNDMT). The Resident Coordinator may also be simultaneously named as the Humanitarian Coordinator, in complex emergency situations, and in this capacity would be responsible to the Head of OCHA as well as UNDP.

Illustration of role — The UN Country Team Response in Batken, Kyrgyzstan, 1999  The 1999 events led to a large displacement of the civilian population in the area: the number of registered Internally Displaced People or IDPs in Batken province amounted to 5,421 at its peak (though if one adds the non-registered IDPs this might have been as high as 6,000). In addition, there were 2,410 IDPs in the Alay region (Osh province), bringing the total number of registered IDPs to 7,831.

— Figures of the Ministry of Emergencies and Civil Defense and the UNDP Disaster Mitigation and Preparedness project
From the first days of the 1999 emergency, UNDP, UNHCR and UNICEF, in cooperation with field advisors of UNHCR and the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Aid (UNOCHA) from Tajikistan, have been monitoring the situation in South Kyrgyzstan, producing and disseminating situation reports. Under its UN Resident Coordinator mandate, UNDP has also taken up a coordinating role among the UN Country Team agencies (UNDP and UNV, UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF and UNFPA) and, through the UN Information-Sharing and Consultation (UNISC) meetings, the donor and international NGO community in general. UNICEF and UNHCR delivered a cargo of humanitarian assistance to the IDPs.

— Preventive Development and Emergency Management in South Kyrgyzstan: The Case of Batken, UNDP, 2002
http://www.undp.kg/english/programs.phtml?4#3

For more information
General information http://www.undp.org/

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

History and experience UNHCR was created in 1951 to deal with the problems facing European refugees in the aftermath of World War II. In the following decades, the mandate was widened to all refugees world-wide, and has included others in a “refugee-like” situation.

Location and coverage In 2000, UNHCR maintained 274 offices in 120 countries. UNHCR headquarters are located in Geneva.

Resources UNHCR is almost entirely funded by direct, voluntary contributions from governments, non-governmental organisations and individuals. There is also a very limited subsidy from the regular budget of the United Nations, which is used exclusively for administrative costs. As such, the budget generally increases in response to refugee emergencies.

Mandate or mission UNHCR’s mission is to lead and coordinate international action for the protection of refugees and resolution of refugee problems. UNHCR advocates for and works to protect the right to seek asylum and to return home voluntarily. UNHCR is mandated to seek lasting solutions for refugees (based on the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol).

How they work UNHCR works on issues of advocacy, national legislation, and individual case management to provide international protection for refugees. Operationally, UNHCR manages agreements with several providers to arrange large-scale logistical and material support to emergency operations on short notice in response to emergencies. Specially trained emergency staff are available from a standing roster to supplement field offices or to open new offices as required.

Generally, UNHCR conducts operational activities through grants to implementing partner agencies and institutions, mainly international and national NGOs. UNHCR funds, oversees, and coordinates the work of their implementing partners directly, and further works to coordinate with other actors responding to the needs of refugees. UNHCR has developed a global network of suppliers, specialist agencies and partners. Projects can range from dispatching emergency teams to the scene of a crisis, providing emergency food, shelter, water and medical supplies and arranging airlifts and other logistical support.
Emergency unit and resources UNHCR maintains a full-time Emergency Preparedness Section in-house, and manages a continuous dialogue and program of support for their NGO partners called Partners in Action (PARinAC). UNHCR also provides training in emergency response planning and management globally, and hosts the eCentre for capacity building in Asia and the Pacific. Two key references are the Catalog of Emergency Response Resources, and the UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies.

Coordination issues UNHCR typically coordinates international humanitarian assistance in response to refugee crises. In complex emergency situations UNHCR may be named as the “lead agency” of the UN family of agencies and organisations. UNHCR’s closest operational partner within the UN is the World Food Programme (WFP), with whom UNHCR maintains several agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) that help to regulate the way these two organisations coordinate their activities in emergency response.

Illustration of role — Afghanistan, August 2002 The number of returnees flowing in from Pakistan surpassed 1.3 million in the months following the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Returnees continued to receive transport assistance ranging from $5 to $30 per person, family kits containing a plastic tarpaulin, soap and hygienic items, and wheat flour from the UN World Food Programme (WFP). UNHCR consolidated remaining aid supplies (including blankets and jerry cans) to ensure a stand-by stockpile for a quarter of a million people. UNHCR took 80 representatives of the more than 25,000 Afghans stranded just inside Pakistan’s border at Chaman to see a new temporary camp being set up west of Kandahar, Afghanistan.

To shelter the most needy returnees, UNHCR and its NGO partners distributed an estimated 41,000 shelter kits. As the number of returning Afghans exceeded expectations, the shelter programme had to be reduced to ensure adequate funds for travel assistance. Challenges also arose in finding partners to implement the ambitious programme. To get the shelter kits into the field, UNHCR made agreements with 15 NGO partners to identify needy families and distribute the kits.

For more information http://www.unhcr.ch

United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

History and experience UNICEF was created in 1946.

Location and coverage UNICEF had 126 offices in 2000, covering more than 160 countries, territories and areas. The organisational headquarters are in New York.

Emergency unit or branch UNICEF has a dedicated Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS), and an OPSCEN, the Operations Center, which has a 24 hour monitoring capacity.

Mandate or mission UNICEF’s primary mission is the protection of children’s rights, helping to meet their basic needs and expanding their opportunities to reach their full potential. The organisation is guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

How they work Working with national governments, NGOs, other UN agencies and private-sector partners, UNICEF provides services and supplies and advocates to change policy agendas and budgets in the best interests of children. UNICEF does not directly provide field services, but funds partner NGOS to carry out this work.
Coordination issues As an organisation mandated for children’s welfare and concerns, UNICEF’s coordination interests are not easily divided along technical/sectoral lines. However, UNICEF does typically take the lead in coordination of school and education programs, and is often closely involved in the coordination of vaccination and immunizations programmes along with WHO. It often works closely with WFP and UNHCR in carrying out nutritional assessments among affected communities.

Illustration of role — Southern Sudan, 2001 - Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) was established in April 1989. It is a consortium of UNICEF and the World Food Programme and also involves more than 35 NGOs. In conditions of devastating famine resulting from drought and civil war, OLS negotiated with the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) to deliver humanitarian assistance to all civilians in need, regardless of their location in the country.

Almost 3,500 children who as recently as 2000, were acting as soldiers in Sudan’s civil war, were to be returned to their communities and families in southern Sudan. A massive move home was completed in a few days and marked the end of a five-month transition period in which these children were cared for by UNICEF and a coalition of aid groups. The majority of the children were flown over a six-day period to airstrips in Bahr el Ghazal aboard transport aircraft operated by the World Food Programme.

UNICEF and partner organisations are working to improve conditions in the home areas so that the return brings benefits for all children. Additional resources have been allocated for education, health and water in these districts. Partner agencies operating in the communities are following up to ensure that each child is being cared for in a home. A program to immunize 77,000 children against polio was launched in the Nuba Mountains region of Sudan as part of a campaign to vaccinate all children under five throughout the country, supported by UNICEF and WHO.

For more information http://www.unicef.org/

World Food Programme (WFP)

History and experience WFP was created in 1963.

Location and coverage WFP had a total of 82 offices in 2000. Through these offices they distributed 3.7 million tons of food to 83 million people. Organisational headquarters are in Rome.

Emergency unit or branch WFP maintains Rapid Response Teams for fast deployment to emerging crises and a Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit (VAM) that provides food security (and insecurity) alerts to partner agencies and donors.

Basic mandate or mission WFP is the food aid arm of the UN and uses food provided by donor governments to meet emergency needs and to support economic and social development. WFP also provides the logistics support necessary to deliver the food. WFP plays an advocacy role on issues relating to hunger through awareness campaigns and promotion of policies, strategies and operations that directly benefit the poor and hungry.

How they work More than 90% of all WFP food aid is moved by ship. In 2002, WFP maintained continuous operations involving more than 40 ships at sea daily. In response to emergencies, food can be diverted from other ongoing operations to meet emergency needs. When an official request is made for WFP food aid in response to a humanitarian emergency, the WFP draws up an Emergency Operation (EMOP). WFP responds to 4 types of food emergencies: (1) Sudden disasters:
natural or technological disasters which affect food access and/or cause population displacements, and which require special UN coordination procedures. (2) Slow-onset disasters, notably droughts and crop failures. (3) Refugee crises and (4) Complex emergencies, involving such elements as conflict, widespread social and economic disruption and large population displacements, and requiring special UN co-ordination procedures.

**Coordination issues** WFP is always involved in coordination of large food aid programmes. WFP coordinates closely with two other UN agencies: the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and other organisations concerned with food, food security and recovery programs. In refugee emergencies WFP has agreed to coordinate with UNHCR in specific areas and protocols as described in the UNHCR/WFP MOU relating to their respective roles in refugee emergencies. WFP supports and participates fully in United Nations Joint Logistics Centers (UNJLCs) where they exist.

**Illustration of role — Afghanistan, 2002: Assistance to IDPs, Returnees, and the Hungry**

As part of the overall food response to the situation in Afghanistan, WFP provided 150 kilograms of wheat to each family of refugees returning to western Afghanistan from Iran via Herat. The rations were given to the returnees at UNHCR distribution centres in Herat six days per week at an anticipated rate of 1,000 families per day. Vulnerable groups received high-energy biscuits to sustain them during the journey back to their home villages. From October 2001 to early April 2002, WFP delivered more than 400,000 tonnes of food aid into Afghanistan.

WFP conducted over 60 rapid assessments in the rural areas of Afghanistan using helicopters to reach inaccessible areas in the rugged mountainous parts of the country.

WFP started its first school feeding projects outside of the Afghan capital of Kabul as part of an effort to feed one million school children in Afghanistan.

A pilot project was launched in Kabul providing nan (bread) baked by women, mainly widows, to some 5,000 students in three primary schools. WFP reopened 80 bakeries in the northern city of Mazar-I-Sharif to assist some 20,000 families.

WFP also participates in the operation of the United Nations Joint Logistics Centre, UNJLC) together with other UN agencies in an effort to improve information-sharing and planning capacities relating to emergency logistics needs for the entire humanitarian relief community working in Afghanistan.

For more information [http://www.wfp.org/index2.html](http://www.wfp.org/index2.html)

**World Health Organisation (WHO)**

**History and experience** The World Health Organisation was established in 1948.

**Location and coverage** WHO operates 6 regional offices and works through 64 collaborating centers and national institutions. The organisational headquarters are in Geneva.

**Emergency unit or branch** Through the Department of Emergency and Humanitarian Action (EHA) and the Health Intelligence Network for Advanced Planning, WHO has over the last decade increasingly been involved in humanitarian crises as a result of complex emergencies. As the leading global public health agency, WHO is trying to increase the effectiveness and the efficiency in responding to complex emergencies. The practical as well as strategic involvement on country-level work in situations of transition and instability is of utmost relevance for WHO. This work is being coordinated in WHO by the EHA.
Basic mandate or mission  WHO’s objective, as set out in its Constitution, is the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health. Health is defined in the Constitution as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

How they work  WHO works primarily through education and advocacy in promoting healthy lifestyles and reducing risk factors and in developing health systems that equitably improve health outcomes. WHO typically works directly with governments and their ministries of health. However, where there is no functional government, WHO takes a more direct role in emergency response providing goods and services for the health sector, and expertise and partnerships with other organisations. WHO is well-known for provision of highly standardised Emergency Health Kits.

Coordination issues  WHO has taken the lead in coordination of technical health sectors in some emergencies. As the illustration below from Indonesia shows, they may share the coordination leadership role in the health sector with others (such as UNICEF as cited in the example). Through its relationship with the Ministry of Health, WHO generally has excellent access to local health information and references on endemic disease patterns and strategies for response. Due to close relations with government, WHO may be more sensitive to national concerns relating to preparedness (and performance) for emergency events.

Illustration of role — East Timor 1999-2000  The circumstances in East Timor were characterized by the absence of a government, by the lack of basic population and health data, by rapidly changing situations, by an enormous influx of NGOs with no experience in the area and by absence of health and other infrastructure. WHO had little warning to make the necessary preparations for an early presence in post-crisis East Timor. However, WHO staff arrived in the capital of East Timor, Dili, two days after the deployment of the multinational force and took the following initiatives in the first three months:
  • establishing of a disease surveillance system involving all health agencies in the country
  • providing technical advice for malaria and tuberculosis control
  • co-ordination of health agencies, together with UNICEF, and later with East Timorese senior health professionals
  • participation in health needs assessment
  • participation in the UN consolidated appeal.

WHO’s success in responding to the needs in East Timor has contributed significantly to an advanced health sector. These include:
  • the establishment of a communicable disease surveillance and response system in collaboration with NGOs and district authorities
  • provision of quality technical assistance to key partners
  • development of an essential drugs list.

— Review Of WHO’s Emergency Response In East Timor
7-27 May 2001, Thomas van der Heijden and Kerry Thomas

For more information  http://www.who.int/about/overview/en/
The Red Cross Movement

The Red Cross Movement incorporates 3 elements that are all related by commitments to the Red Cross concepts and mission but which are constituted separately, each with distinct roles. The 3 elements of the movement are: The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Organisations (IFRC), and the various national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies that operate primarily within their own countries.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

**History and experience**  Created under the Resolutions of the Geneva International Conference held in Geneva, Switzerland, 26-29 October 1863. It is one of the oldest humanitarian organisations operating today.

**Location and coverage**  The ICRC maintained a permanent presence in 69 countries and conducted operations in about 80 countries in 2000.

**Resources**  For 2002, the ICRC’s total budget was 915.6 million Swiss francs, (534.81 million US dollars). The field budget is 83% of this amount. More than 1,200 people were on field missions for the ICRC in 2000. Over half of these were specialized staff—administrators, secretaries, doctors, nurses, interpreters, engineers, etc.—the others being ICRC Delegates, with a variety of skills.

**Basic mandate or mission**  The mandate of the ICRC is to protect the lives and dignity of the victims of war and internal violence and to provide them with assistance, based on the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, the Statutes of the Movement and the resolutions of its International conferences. The ICRC acts as lead agency for international relief operations conducted by the Movement in situations of international and non-international armed conflict, internal strife or their direct results. The organisation takes direct action in response to emergency situations while promoting preventative measures by spreading knowledge of international humanitarian law. In particular, the ICRC staff visit prisoners of war and civilian internees.

**How they work**  Delegates make personal visits to detainees and prisoners of war. ICRC Delegates visited 346,807 detainees held in 1,988 places of detention in more than 70 countries in 2000. Of this number, 24,479 detainees were registered and visited in 2001 for the first time. The ICRC issued more than 32,800 detention certificates.

ICRC also specializes in tracing and communication services for detainees and families separated by war. The ICRC forwards Red Cross messages, enabling members of families separated as a result of conflict, disturbances or tension to be reunited or to exchange news.

The organisation also works to establish the whereabouts of people whose families have filed tracing requests. Operationally, ICRC manages direct assistance programs to communities in need. One other key area of expertise is in support and management of hospitals and surgeries for war wounded and landmine victims.

**Emergency unit or branch**  The entire organisation is oriented to emergency and crisis situations.

**Coordination issues**  The 1997 Seville Agreement defined within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement the respective roles and responsibilities of the ICRC, the International Federation, and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in relation to different situations (such as armed conflict, natural disasters and development), thus contributing to better cooperation within the Movement. This Agreement gave the role of lead agency to the ICRC in situations of armed conflict, internal disturbances and their direct consequences. The lead role in
the event of natural or technological disasters or other emergency situations in peacetime is given to the International Federation and National Societies.

The ICRC cooperates with United Nations-established coordination mechanisms and structures, such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) at the headquarters level. As an organisation that strives to be strictly humanitarian, neutral and independent, the ICRC has consistently held the position that political and military actions ought to be kept distinct from humanitarian operations. While their core respect for neutrality constrains direct coordination with some actors involved in large responses, their familiarity of service in war-affected areas often results in their support to the wider humanitarian community—particularly in the area of security briefings that concern all actors operating in the area.

Illustration of role — Sri Lanka, 2002 In Sri Lanka, the ICRC focuses its activities on areas affected by the conflict, particularly the Vanni, the Jaffna peninsula and the Eastern Province. It assists internally displaced civilians and resident populations whose livelihood, access to medical care or contacts with family members have been disrupted by the fighting. The ICRC also acts as a neutral humanitarian intermediary between the warring parties, works to persuade combatants to respect the rights of civilians, and visits people detained in connection with the conflict.

— Extract from ICRC Annual Report 2001

Since food needs in the country are met by local authorities, the ICRC provides tens of thousands of needy displaced people with other essential supplies from pre-positioned stocks, in close cooperation with the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) and other international relief agencies.

Moreover, in cooperation with the SLRCS, the ICRC tracing service enables family members dispersed by the conflict to remain in touch.

At the request of the security forces and the LTTE, the ICRC has facilitated cross-line transport and escorted food convoys, thus acting in its recognized role as a neutral intermediary.


For more information http://www.icrc.org/eng

International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

History and experience The International Federation was founded in 1919 in Paris in the aftermath of World War I. An international medical conference resulted in the birth of the League of Red Cross Societies, which was renamed in October 1983 to the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and then in November 1991 to become the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Resources The Federation’s Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) represents a pool of non-earmarked money that can be used to guarantee immediate funding in response to emergencies. The fund is managed by the Federation Secretariat Disaster Management and Coordination Division and is a valuable part of the organisation’s overall disaster response capacity. Federation staff and seconded National Society staff from many countries contribute to a pool of qualified staff.

Coverage and location 178 countries have active members of the International Federation. The International Federation ran or supported programmes in more than 150 countries in 2000.
Emergency unit or branch  The Federation’s Emergency Response Units (ERUs) work to improve response time to emergencies. Units are pre-trained teams of specialist volunteers—who already know each other—and pre-packed sets of standardised equipment ready for immediate use.

The Federation’s Field Assessment and Coordination Teams (FACTs) were developed in close cooperation with the UN’s OCHA and the assessment and coordination systems are compatible with OCHA’s UNDAC system. The organisation also maintains a Disaster Management Information System (DMIS) in support of field operations.

Basic mandate or mission  The role of the Secretariat in Geneva is to coordinate and mobilize relief assistance for international emergencies, promote cooperation between National Societies and represent these National Societies in the international field. The role of the field delegations is to assist and advise National Societies with relief operations and development programs, and to encourage local and regional cooperation.

How they work  From a field perspective, the IFRC is represented by country Delegations. These Federation Delegations are the most visible organisational counterparts and are distinct from the local national Red Cross or Red Crescent Society members and the ICRC Delegates. The delegations support the National Society in their response to the crisis through training, capacity building measures, logistical and relief aid material support.

The International Federation’s programmes are grouped into four main core areas: (1) promoting humanitarian principles and values; (2) disaster response; (3) disaster preparedness; and (4) health and care in the community.

Coordination issues  IFRC is a member of the IASC and participates in headquarters level coordination via that and other fora. In the field, the primary coordinating partners of the IFRC will typically be its counterparts within the Red Cross Movement (ICRC and the National Society). Beyond these “natural” partners, IFRC coordinates its field operations using meetings and specific agreements based on the specific emergency.

Illustration of role  Within one month in 2002 IFRC responded to: the volcanic eruption in Goma, DRC, the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, a meningitis epidemic in Burkina-Faso, heavy snowfalls in Albania, earthquake in Afghanistan, cholera outbreak in Burkina-Faso, heavy snowfalls in South Africa, the Afyon earthquake in Turkey, a social crisis in Argentina, floods and landslides in Nepal, communal unrest in Gujarat India, Hurricane Michelle in the Caribbean, an earthquake in Taiwan, a fire in Peru and a food deficit in Tajikistan.

For more information  http://www.ifrc.org/index.asp

The National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Experience and history  The National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society of an emergency-affected country may be either well-established or relatively new and completely lacking in resources.

Location and coverage  National Societies exist in almost every country in the world.

Resources  While the resource levels of the different National Societies vary widely, their greatest resources for emergency response are their volunteers, and close working knowledge of their countries and context. National societies raise money through independent fund-raising activities,
and in some countries through distributions from the government. Additionally, many national societies that have resource deficits receive support from both the IFRC as well as the ICRC to support humanitarian response programmes.

**Mandate or mission** National Societies are founded on the same principles as the ICRC and the IFRC, but are focused primarily on their own national needs. Very strong National Societies share their expertise with other countries, either bilaterally or through the network of the IFRC.

**How they work** A key feature of Red Cross Movement work is that it can use local National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society networks in addition to other aid agencies to advise on relief needs. This helps the wider Red Cross Movement to provide the most appropriate supplies in times of disaster.

The traditional strengths and focus of National Societies has been on volunteerism and widespread training of first aid for immediate emergency response. National Societies are constituted from local chapters, with volunteer structures reaching to the community level. When disasters strike, the local chapters mobilise their volunteers for the first response. As needs surpass local resources the National Society responds to support the local chapters.

**Specialized emergency unit or section** Most National Society work is related to emergency response and training in preparedness for emergency response.

**Coordination issues** For the National Societies, all coordination is local coordination with other field actors, except for the cooperation of other National Societies which is managed by the International Federation.

**Illustration of role — Red Cross Society of Guinea (GRC), 2000** Guinea is prone to droughts and floods, and there were frequent epidemics of cholera and meningitis due to the poor sanitary conditions. During the 1990s, Guinea experienced both political and economic instability. Since 1990, the conflicts in neighbouring Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau have generated an influx of around 600,000 refugees.

The GRC was founded in 1984, and consisted at the time of 13,000 volunteers and 7 permanent staff members. The GRC organized its activities through a network of Prefectoral, Communal, Subprefectoral and District structures. In its refugee operations, the GRC works in close cooperation with the local authorities, particularly in the field of health, and with UN and NGO partners, particularly UNHCR, WFP and GTZ. The GRC is a member of the NGOs in Guinea coordination group.

Following a new influx of refugees in early 1999, the GRC and the International Federation worked in 21 camps in the Gueckedou region on various programme components including distribution of food and non-food items to vulnerable groups, repatriation, social support and income-generation activities among the local population. In the Forecariah region, the GRC/International Federation dealt with construction, distribution of food and non-food items, and social support activities. In Boke, the GRC and International Federation provided assistance to refugees from Guinea Bissau. The GRC ran a health education programme on sanitation and protection of water sources, and on HIV/AIDS. It also managed three health posts at Coyah.

**For more information**

An index of National Society websites  
http://www.ifrc.org/address/rclinks.asp
Intergovernmental Organisations

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

History and experience  In 1951 an International Migration Conference was convened in Brussels, resulting in the creation of the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movements of Migrants from Europe (PICMME) which subsequently became the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM). ICEM became the International Organization for Migration (IOM) upon the amendment and ratification of the 1953 Constitution.

Resources  In 1993, the UN General Assembly gave IOM the right to draw on the resources available in the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF). It is the only non-UN organisation authorized to do so. Financing is through contributions from Member States according to a scale of assessment. In addition, IOM has an operational budget that is based on voluntary contributions from governments and multilateral donors.

Location and coverage  IOM maintained 19 country offices, 100 country missions in 2000. Their headquarters are located in Geneva.

Emergency unit or branch  The IOM Emergency and Post-Conflict Division (EPC) coordinates or assists IOM’s response to migration emergencies, such as population displacement, and large-scale evacuations and returns. It initiates contingency planning for IOM and early intervention action by supporting Field Missions in addressing emergency situations. EPC is responsible for preparing and coordinating the rapid deployment of staff and resources in emergencies.

Basic mandate or mission  As stated in its Constitution, IOM is mandated: (a) to make arrangements for the organized transfer of migrants, for whom existing facilities are inadequate or who would not otherwise be able to move without special assistance, to countries offering opportunities for orderly migration; (b) to concern itself with the organized transfer of refugees, displaced persons and other individuals in need of international migration services for whom arrangements may be made between the Organization and the States concerned, including those States undertaking to receive them.

How they work  In large-scale emergencies such as Afghanistan, East Timor and Kosovo, IOM can organize charter flights, busses, and other transportation for the movement of large numbers of people. After conflict, they can assist in the return and reintegration of both internally displaced persons and demobilized combatants.

When requested, IOM supports displaced populations through the provision of emergency relief and short-term community and micro-enterprise development programmes.

Coordination issues  While not part of the United Nations system, IOM maintains close working relations with UN bodies and operational agencies and does participate in the UN-led CAP process. IOM has a wide range of national and international non-governmental organisations as partners. In emergencies, IOM covers a range of activities such as arranging transport, evacuations and returns and providing health care and temporary shelter. IOM may work closely with UNHCR in the reception, relocation and repatriation of refugees.

Illustration of role — IOM in Afghanistan, 2001-2002  IOM was active in Afghanistan prior to the fall of the Taliban government, so was familiar with the country, and the difficulties of operating large programmes there. With the onset of winter 2001, IOM undertook a shelter “winterisation” and humanitarian assistance program in the North and West of the country. Most
the goods delivered consisted of blankets, clothing and heating fuel. Throughout the next several months, IOM organized and operated over 90 border convoys into Afghanistan for returning refugees from Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Pakistan.

With its 110 truck fleet along with additional locally-hired trucking capacity, IOM provided medical screening, set-up and management of overnight Transit Centres with food and shelter provisions, and distribution of reintegration packages to returnees. Through the Afghani Emergency Information programme, IOM distributed 22,500 radios and supported Afghan journalists, NGOs, and news organisations within Afghanistan. IOM participated as an active partner through its involvement on the Immediate Transitional Assistance Programme (ITAP) appeal initiative. IOM coordinated its activities with UNHCR, WFP, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, and the Afghan Assistance Coordination Agency, and within Afghanistan co-operates in close coordination with the secretariat of the Returns Sector, as overseen by UNHCR.

— IOM-Afghanistan Mission Activities 2002, IOM Kabul, Afghanistan

For more information http://www.iom.int/

Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

Defining the role of NGOs in humanitarian emergencies is difficult because there are numerous similarities and differences among them. The term “NGO” meaning “non-governmental” explains what they are not rather than what they are. In international humanitarian response, NGOs in all their variations are key actors providing most of the on-site organisation, operational services, and links to the local communities. In practical terms, NGOs do the field-level work of both the UN actors as well as often working directly for donor governments as grantees.

History and experience NGOs were carrying out humanitarian work before the creation of the United Nations. Some of them are very long-standing with well-known histories, while others may be created on the spot in an ad-hoc way during each new major emergency.

Location and coverage NGOs are powerful forces in humanitarian action. Their role in international emergency response has grown steadily since the early 1970s. Some of the larger international NGOs operate in well over 100 countries, while national or local NGOs may operate only within the boundaries of one country or community. Many international NGOs implement their projects through local NGOs, significantly expanding the overall capacity of the entire NGO community.

Mandate or mission Some NGOs are faith-based, while others have a political orientation, and others are secular and claim to be neutral in activity and mission. The primary mandate of the majority of NGOs is often community development or a sectoral focus, such as health or education. For these NGOs, emergency response may be a secondary activity, but one that emerges strongly in emergencies, with their capacity expanding in an effort to meet the need. A few NGOs, however, are dedicated solely to humanitarian assistance programming.

Resources Some NGOs have annual budgets under one million US dollars while World Vision International has a budget of nearly $1 billion. The percentage of resources that are devoted to humanitarian response is probably about 33-50%. Cash and in-kind resources devoted to humanitarian assistance are often raised after a disaster has occurred and are earmarked for that disaster. Some agencies, however, also have an Emergency Fund that can be drawn on very quickly after a disaster to launch a more rapid response.
How they work NGOs work in many different ways depending on their constitution, and speciality. In general, NGOs raise funds for their projects and programmes in two ways: proactively through public campaigns and funding drives in their home counties, and by receiving grants from donors or via UN or other grant managing organisations. NGOs tend to take a pragmatic approach to their work and emphasize interactions with the beneficiaries of their programmes. The statement below describes the attitude that many NGOs have of their involvement with other partners in international humanitarian work.

“NGOs believed that they had a definite and distinctive role to play in the provision of refugee aid but they also recognized the complementarity and clarity of the role of UNHCR and host governments. At that time we emphasized that NGOs provided a people to people approach, they could act with flexibility, their inputs were pragmatic and task orientated, and they could provide a prompt response. The dialogue has been updated in the UNHCR PARinAC (Partners in Action Process) but the issues are not new nor can they be resolved once and for all if the involvement of NGOs in refugee work is to retain its vitality. “

— A critical difference: an NGO perspective on the role of NGOs as partners in providing assistance to refugees, Brian Neldner, July 2000, http://www.jha.ac/articles/a015.htm

There are several “umbrella groups” that serve as a common voice for larger groups of NGOs. InterAction, the largest consortium of NGOs in the US, has about 180 members (but there are hundreds more that do not belong). VOICE is the largest European network of non-governmental organisations that are active in the field of humanitarian aid. VOICE has 85 members and plans to expand that number to over 100.

Coordination issues Because of the wide variety of NGOs, coordination can be difficult. NGOs often coordinate by geographic area, in essence, “staying out of each other’s way” to avoid duplication and maximise coverage and efficiency of services to those in need. In instances where groups of NGOs are funded by the same source, for example when all funds are channelled through UNHCR in response to refugee emergencies, coordination can be directly facilitated by the funding source or channel organisation. In situations where funding is widely diversified, coordination can only be accomplished by mutual and voluntary agreement to do so between the various actors involved.

Illustration of role — NGOs in Sierra Leone, 2001 The Sierra Leone NGO Directory (researched and published by the International League for Human Rights and the Center for Media, Education and Technology) listed 116 National NGOs and 49 International NGOs operating in several sectors in the country. These NGOs worked in education agriculture, development, child welfare, food security, women’s welfare, appropriate technology, post conflict counseling, public health, civic development, resettlement, environment, poverty reduction, livestock production, social justice, and many others. Many of these are religious based.

For more information Websites for some of the larger international associations of NGOs:
http://www.interaction.org/
http://www.icva.ch
http://www.icva.ch/parinac/
International Military Forces

International military forces routinely address humanitarian emergency situations where armed conflict is the primary cause of the crisis. National military, rogue elements and separatist forces may all be operational alongside NGOs and UN agencies and elements of the Red Cross Movement. Two international forces are illustrated here: the UN peacekeeping forces and NATO, although other regional coalitions and forces may play a role, particularly in complex emergencies.

UN Peacekeepers or “Blue Helmets”

History and experience In accordance with the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is dedicated to assisting the Member States and the Secretary-General to maintain international peace and security. The Department’s mission is to plan, prepare, manage and direct UN peacekeeping operations, so that they can effectively fulfil their mandates under the overall authority of the Security Council and General Assembly, and under the command vested in the Secretary-General. In May 1948, the Security Council decided to establish a field operation to supervise a fragile truce in the first Arab-Israeli war. Two weeks later, an initial group of 36 unarmed military observers arrived in the Middle East as the first United Nations peacekeepers. As of 2000, there have been 53 United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Location and coverage In 2000, some 86 countries sent their national soldiers to take part in UN peacekeeping operations in 15 different countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

Resources The UN has no standing army. Governments voluntarily supply troops and other personnel in response to conflicts that threaten peace and security. The 14 Member States on the Security Council decide if, when, and where to deploy peacekeeping soldiers. The resources for any given UN peacekeeping mission will depend on the situation. Total assessments for all UN peacekeeping operations in 2001 amounted to slightly more than $3 billion—less than 0.2% of global military spending. (For additional information see http://www.un.org/News/facts/setting.htm.)

Mandate or mission Each peacekeeping operation has a specific set of mandated tasks, but all share certain common aims—to alleviate human suffering, and create conditions and build institutions for self-sustaining peace. The substantial presence of a peacekeeping operation on the ground contributes to this aim by introducing the UN as a third party with a direct impact on the political process.

How they work The consent of the government and the other parties involved in the conflict is necessary. Secondly, it is up to the 15 members of the Security Council—not the Secretary-General of the UN—to decide on the creation and scope of each mission. The 5 permanent Council members—China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States—can veto any decision on peacekeeping operations.

When governments provide soldiers for peacekeeping duties, they retain ultimate authority over their own military forces. Peacekeeping soldiers wear their own national uniforms along with the well-known blue helmets or blue berets. Generally, they are only lightly armed for their own self-defence.

Specialized emergency unit or section UN peacekeepers are organised in response to specific crisis situations.
Coordination issues  The 15-member UN Security Council authorises the deployment of a peacekeeping operation, and determines its mandate. As each operation may have a very different mandate, coordination arrangements also vary. The UN Secretary-General chooses the Force Commander and asks Member States to contribute troops, civilian police or other personnel. Supplies, equipment, transportation and logistical support must also be secured from Member States or from private contractors. Coordination with other field-level actors is often concerned with security issues, access to communities in need, and often, mine safety issues.

Military forces deployed by Member States or regional organisations whose primary missions are other than humanitarian support may also provide support to UN humanitarian agencies when requested by the UN Humanitarian Coordinator or other designated officials such as an SRSG. When these forces do undertake activities in support of UN humanitarian agencies or their implementing and operational partners, this support is on a case-by-case basis, subject to a request. The military resources always remain under the control of the military force commander.

Illustration of role — UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), 2001 In June 2000, after two years of fighting in a border dispute, Ethiopia and Eritrea signed an Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities, following proximity talks under the auspices of Algeria and the Organisation of African Unity. In July 2000, the UN Security Council set up UNMEE to maintain liaison with the parties and establish the mechanism for verifying the cease-fire. In September, the Council authorized deployment within UNMEE of up to 4,200 military personnel to monitor the cessation of hostilities and assist in ensuring observance of security commitments. The UNMEE has been in place since July 2000 with a strength of 3,939 military personnel, 209 civilians, and 256 local civilian staff.

For more information www.un.org/Depts/dpko/

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

History and experience  NATO was instituted on April 4, 1949, in the wake of World War II. As of March, 2003, the 19 member nations are Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, the UK, and the USA.

Location and coverage  NATO is primarily operational in Europe, although through partnership programs and its “Mediterranean Dialogue” meetings, it is also concerned with affairs in the Middle East as well as Northern Africa.

Resources  NATO is a powerful military alliance and has tremendous logistical, staffing and monetary resources drawn from the military budgets and resources of its member nations. Typically, once activated and assigned a task, resources are not an operational constraint.

Mandate or mission  The fundamental role of NATO is to guarantee mutual defence of its member countries. Its first task is to deter and defend against any threat of aggression against any of its members. In order to improve security and stability in the area, NATO also plays a role in crisis management, by participating in conflict prevention activities and, in the event of a crisis, responding to help resolve the crisis when there is consensus among the member countries to do so.

How they work  Originally designed as a mutual defence alliance of national military forces, NATO has moved into other areas of activity in the last decade. Following the end of the Cold War and of the division of Europe, the Alliance has been restructured to enable it to contribute more
effectively to the development of cooperative security structures for the whole of Europe. It has also transformed its political and military structures in order to adapt them to peacekeeping and crisis management tasks undertaken in cooperation with countries which are not members of the Alliance and with other international organisations.

It was mobilised to provide the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in Bosnia Herzegovina and later in Kosovo as (KFOR). NATO forces can provide security in dangerous field situations that require armed protection of humanitarian workers. Their engineering units can also quickly repair roads and bridges and help provide access to war-damaged areas.

**Specialized emergency unit or section** The primary humanitarian relief element of NATO is typically identified as CIMIC (Civil/Military Coordination) branch or unit.

**Coordination issues** Based on experience in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo, NATO has developed policies to improve field coordination and created working relations with the key CIMIC-oriented international organisations and NGOs, such as the European Union, the ICRC and UN agencies. Moreover, a more comprehensive CIMIC doctrine document has been drafted, setting out in detail how CIMIC should operate in the field.

**Illustration of role — NATO in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1995-2002** After the signing of the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, NATO helped implement the agreement. Its primary role was in establishing and leading a multinational, military Implementation Force, known as IFOR, and subsequently by dispatching a similar Stabilisation Force (SFOR) to help to build the basis for future peace in the region. It has effectively prevented renewed fighting and created a successful precedent for coordinated multinational efforts, involving NATO and non-NATO countries.

For more information [http://www.nato.int/home.htm](http://www.nato.int/home.htm)

**Donor Governments and Agencies**

Donors to humanitarian assistance operations include governments, foundations, corporations and the general public who contribute to NGOs, and, of course, the taxpayers of donor governments. Donors almost always have an agenda or series of specific objectives about what should be done with the resources they contribute (either money or in-kind contributions).

**History and experience** Governments have always involved themselves in the affairs of their neighbours, either defending themselves from their attacks, attacking them, or working to maintain peace and mutual support in times of need. The history and experience that affects donor's role in international humanitarian responses today dates to the end of World War II and the establishment of the United Nations system.

**Location and coverage** Donor governments are involved in all international responses as they fund both the UN agencies as well as many of the NGOs involved in those responses. In general terms, governments will fund preferentially humanitarian operations in countries in their immediate geographic area or where they have cultural, colonial, or economic relationships.

**Resources** Determining the total amount of donations given to any one actor is difficult because donations may change hands many times before being converted into commodities or services used by the beneficiaries. For example, governments often give their contribution to UN agencies or IGOs, which implement their programs through NGOs, which in turn might combine resources with other NGOs. These relationships may cause funds to be double or even triple counted.
Specialised emergency unit or section Typically, donor funds which are earmarked for foreign aid are further divided into development and humanitarian relief funding streams. Depending on the country these two types of foreign aid may be very closely linked or completely separate. Many donor governments field emergency-oriented teams to large international emergencies in order to provide themselves with direct assessment as well as guidance on how to spend their money.

Mandate or mission Governments exist to protect their own citizens and to further their own national interests in the world. Within this larger mission many governments maintain specialised units and budgets dedicated to international humanitarian response.

How they work Statistics on humanitarian assistance show that the management of resources is increasingly bilateral (funding by donor governments directly to field organisations) rather than multilateral (funding by donor governments through the UN system or an intergovernmental organisation such as IOM). Donors are channelling more resources through NGOs. For example, ECHO channelled 30% of funds in 1990 and 65% in 1999 directly to NGOs. As a coordination issue, this complicates field-level coordination, when donors and other funding channels (including funds from these same donors) are not in close agreement themselves about programme priorities.

Coordination issues Government donors involved in international humanitarian responses both call for and expect good coordination between the organisations they fund. At the same time they also have their own international agenda, and may or may not actively coordinate their funding with those of other donors. Coordination on the part of donors can be complex since, from a field perspective, IGOs also act as donors to usually NGOs or local government agencies when they transfer funds from their member governments to support field programmes.

Illustration of role — Donor Effort in Liberia 1998 In early 1998, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Ms. Sadako Ogata, announced that at least 26,000 Liberian refugees had returned home from Ghana, Guinea and Côte d’Ivoire since December of the previous year. Expressing support for Liberia’s national reconstruction efforts, bilateral and multilateral donors pledged $230 million at a special donors’ meeting held in Paris in April. The pledges, which fell short of the $438 million requested by Liberia for its two-year national reconstruction programme, came as a contribution towards rebuilding the country’s infrastructure and revitalizing its institutions.

Co-chaired by the World Bank, UN Development Programme (UNDP) and Netherlands’ Ministry for Development Cooperation, the meeting was a major follow-up to the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Special Conference on Liberia, held at UN headquarters in New York. It was part of a continuing effort to provide political and economic support to Liberia following completion of the peace process led by the Economic Community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). However, the country faces the daunting task of reconstruction, which severely taxes the capacity of a government that inherited a virtually empty treasury.

— Africa Recovery, Vol.12, #1 (August 1998), page 26
You cannot coordinate well unless you understand who you are coordinating with. This chapter presented a simplified overall “snapshot” of some of the key players, grouped according to organisational type or affiliation.

The general types of organisations and groups of organisations discussed included:

- Refugees, displaced, and the local community
- Host Governments and National Military and Civil Defence Groups
- United Nations—Offices, Programmes, Organisations and Agencies
- International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
- Intergovernmental Organisations
- Non Governmental Organisations
- International Military Forces
- Donor Governments

While this is a necessary starting point, and key to understanding the organisations that are usually present in large-scale international emergencies, you should be aware that things do change over time—sometimes quickly—particularly in emergencies. Also, in any overview presentation of such a diverse group of actors, much of the complexity and nuance of field level-relationships cannot be presented in a way that will prepare the reader for all situations. You are encouraged to enter this higher level of analysis as you continue your work in preparation for better coordination in your own area of expertise, region, or situation.
Chapter 2
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Humanitarian organisations tend to systematically adhere to pre-set modes of operation and are strictly limited to work within their core missions or mandates.

2. UNICEF does not typically provide direct field services, but funds partner NGOs to carry out this work.

3. IOM is not an official part of the UN system but maintains close working relations with UN bodies and operational agencies.

4. When governments provide soldiers for peacekeeping duties, the authority over them is completely handed over to the UN.

5. Donors almost always agree among themselves about programme priorities and objectives.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. ICRC specialises in which of the following areas:
   - A Visiting detainees and prisoners of war
   - B Management of hospitals and services for the war wounded
   - C Tracing and Communications services
   - D Food aid

7. Which of these is generally true for disaster- and war-affected populations:
   - A They have likely been coordinating among themselves formally and informally prior to the emergency.
   - B There is a danger that their own coordination potential will be overrun by the international network.
   - C They should be included in international coordination efforts.
   - D All of the above.

8. Which of the following does not apply where national governments are functioning and are recognised as legitimate:
   - A National governments have the authority as well as the responsibility to coordinate international assistance within their sovereign territory
   - B National NGOs and other civil groups may be needed to support this role
   - C The UN must take a lead role in coordination
   - D Generally, specially designated ministries serve as focal points for disaster and emergency management and refugee affairs.
9. Three emergency mechanisms and services managed by OCHA include:

A) CAP, ITAP, Relief Web
B) HEWS, IRIN, SFOR
C) CAP, CERF and HEWS
D) CERF, CIMOC, ERC

10. The UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) is involved in coordination particularly in relation to:

A) Security, access and mine safety issues
B) Ensuring that each country’s troops conform to a unified image
C) Political policies of the member states
D) Local leaders and civil society

1. UNHCR’s closest operational working partner in refugee emergencies within the UN is ________________________________.

2. The two largest groups involved in humanitarian assistance are ___________________________ and ____________________________.

3. OCHA’s most visible and directly operational emergency-related elements from a field perspective are _________________ and _________________ that they often establish together with other partners.

4. UNDP’s ___________________________, formerly known as the Emergency Response Division (ERD) is designed to provide a quicker and more effective response in UNDP Country Offices in Countries in Special Development Situations (CSDS).

5. From a field perspective, the IFRC is represented by _________________ which are distinct from national ________________________________.

6. The common acronym _______ is the only one used in this text that basically describes what these organisations are not - rather than what they are. Some may have access to very large resources and are often able to respond quickly to emergencies.

7. _____________________________ is a military organisation primarily operational in Europe, although through partnership programs and its “Mediterranean Dialogue” meetings, it is also concerned with affairs in the Middle East as well as Northern Africa.
1. F 6. A, B, C
2. T 7. D
3. T 8. A, B, D
4. F 9. C
5. F 10. A

Exercise Answers

1) World Food Programme
2) Displaced/refugees and local communities
3) Field Coordination Units (FCUs) and Humanitarian Information Centres (HICs)
4) The Bureau for Crisis Prevention & Recovery — BCPR
5) Federation Delegations, distinct from the local national Red Cross or Red Crescent societies
6) NGOs
7) NATO
Existing Coordination Structures

By studying this chapter you will learn about some of the principal coordination arrangements for international humanitarian assistance to refugees and displaced populations. The focus is on:

- Host/National Government structures/Response offices
- UN structures and arrangements
- Civil/Military structures
- NGO coordination bodies

“Now that everyone is coordinating everything, who coordinates the coordinators?”

It is an undeniable fact that virtually all sectors, groups, and affiliations in the international response community have created systems and mechanisms for coordination. For example, almost every major NGO deploys “coordination officers” to a crisis. When the military are involved, they usually relies on its own coordination services and mechanisms to better relate to the non-military responders. The UN system has a number of its own mechanisms for coordination.

Coordination is now regarded by most organisations as a vital element in almost any humanitarian operation. There is a risk, however, that despite this “coordination friendly” atmosphere, competing coordination efforts may lead to confusion and inefficiency. Thus, humanitarian actors often need to analyse the use of existing coordination mechanisms and work together to simplify and consolidate them.

This chapter advises you not to “reinvent the wheel” if possible. Many coordinating structures and mechanisms already exist, or can be developed quickly. When possible, it is important that actors join existing structures for the sake of efficiency and effectiveness. To do this, however, one must first seek them out and understand how they work.
Host/National Government Structures

A functioning and recognised national government always holds primary responsibility for coordination of international relief assistance within the country. However, if the government lacks the required capacity or interest, international responders must assume some or all of the responsibility. In any case, external actors should support government-hosted coordination bodies where they exist and are functional.

Generally, there are several types of national emergency coordination bodies, and some may be active at the same time. There are three typical government models:

- An ad hoc committee, or special representative of the government for the specific crisis
- Formal standing committees of Ministers or heads of line agencies which are activated when disasters are declared
- A special Ministry or line agency dedicated to emergency planning and response full-time.

The Emergency Management Group in Albania, 1999

The EMG (Emergency Management Group) was a relevant and appropriate tool for national-international coordination at a central level. Provided that international standards of protection are adhered to, it is appropriate that the country of asylum take a lead in coordinating humanitarian response on its own soil in conjunction with the international community. Compared to other crises where national authorities have been smothered by the international presence, this was a laudable initiative in that it sought to combine national and international resources, expertise and authority.

Strong arguments were made, however, by international aid workers that the Government of Albania should not have had such a high profile in the coordination of international aid. They proposed a model more akin to what occurred in the town of Kukes, whereby national and international coordination mechanisms are linked but operate separately—the authorities through one mechanism, and the internationals through another (under UNHCR). On a daily basis, the Prefect and UNHCR met to link the two and to coordinate relevant action. Despite significant tensions, international and national sources alike are virtually unanimous in their recognition of how well national/international coordination worked in Kukes compared with the capital city, Tirana, level.

It has been pointed out, however, that the Kukes reality and concerns differed significantly from those of Tirana and the central government. While this model seems to have been effective in Kukes, the EMG was also an appropriate mechanism, particularly given the UN and other international participation. Looking to future crises, and assuming that the host government would be in favour, such a mechanism could be even more appropriate if the lead UN agency participates more whole-heartedly than was the case in Tirana. Thus both national and international responsibilities (i.e. international protection) can be linked to the benefit of refugees and host populations alike.

Describe the coordination arrangements at the national level in the country where you now live.

Which, if any of the three arrangements above most closely resemble the existing structure in the country you live in?

What are the possible strengths and weaknesses of these particular arrangements?

Compare your answers with the analysis below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COORDINATION ARRANGEMENTS</th>
<th>STRENGTHS</th>
<th>WEAKNESSES</th>
<th>TIPS FOR INTERACTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ad Hoc — Special Emergency Office or Coordinator</td>
<td>Decisions generally carry political weight because of closeness to executive bodies.</td>
<td>Decision makers may be located far from field operations; response to and from the field may be slowed by decision-making hierarchy.</td>
<td>For major issues, request head of delegation, or higher officials from HQ to communicate directly with office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Committee or Council of Ministers</td>
<td>Has the ability to directly order response within each ministry.</td>
<td>Ministries may have the responsibility and/or authority to act in emergencies, but not have funds or resources.</td>
<td>May not have regular meetings. Organisations should send input to the Minister for action when committee meets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Agency or Ministry</td>
<td>Full-time professionals available for planning and responding; generally have local to central level staff.</td>
<td>May not have authority/influence over other Ministries and is therefore limited to its own budget and resources.</td>
<td>Staff at all levels should be able to interact with appropriate-level staff from the Ministry.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Coordination and Liaison Efforts

Other arrangements within national government may also provide opportunities to improve coordination. These may be called focal points, special liaison officers, or refugee departments, among others. Actors should take the time to research these options before presuming that there is not an adequate body or forum for coordination.

The creation of special focal points within government to deal with displacement issues facilitates communications and saves actors from having to deal with a number of bureaucracies. For example, in Tajikistan in 1996, the existence of the Tajik Central Refugee Department made it easier for UNHCR, together with government officials, to provide assistance to the internally displaced people.

In Sri Lanka in 2002, the focal point is the Ministry of Reconstruction, Rehabilitation and Social Welfare (the MRR&SW) which coordinates the relief effort by the government and international community for internally displaced people and returnees. Bureaucratic obstacles have sometimes undermined the effectiveness of the MRR&SW, however, it generally offers a good example of an effective national institution.

In most cases, the international community can support and encourage governments to develop and strengthen national institutions and, where possible, monitor the activities of these institutions. Georgia’s Coordination Bureau for International Humanitarian Aid (CBIHA) was established in 1995, with funding from international organisations, to assist all categories of needy people in Georgia. The agency is mandated to coordinate all international organisation and NGO programmes, and with the support of the IOM, OCHA, and the Norwegian Government publishes a monthly report which reviews aid programmes in Georgia and includes useful commentary on current assistance.

Coordination for Capacity Development in the CIS, 1996

The Programme of Action produced at the May 1996 CIS regional conference on displacement discusses the importance of establishing high-level migration agencies to “develop policy and coordinate all relevant governmental bodies.” It emphasises that such bodies could be of great help in targeting humanitarian assistance and facilitating the work of international organisations and NGOs. International organisations are invited to develop technical cooperation programmes to assist CIS governments in strengthening their management capacities and developing their information systems.

The situation of internally displaced people will obviously be affected by a government’s motivation in creating national institutions, and the political will for implementing the mandates of these institutions. The international community has a clear stake in persuading nations to improve their response to crises of internal displacement and also to assume greater responsibility for their own IDPs. Stronger national institutions would reduce the risk of dependence on external assistance and ease coordination difficulties between governments and international agencies.

Above all, more responsible institutions would help ensure that internally displaced people are not overlooked.

— Forced Migration Review, Jennifer McLean, 1 January 1998
http://www.fmreview.org/fmr013.htm
UN Coordinating Arrangements— “Some Permanent Fixtures”

The six major UN humanitarian agencies FAO, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO each have separate missions and operating arrangements. Efforts have been made since 1971 to coordinate these organisations, their partners, and other actors in emergency response with some success. Currently, OCHA is the main UN office with a mandate for coordination, advocacy and policy development.

UN coordination mechanisms include forums and offices as well as positions for specially appointed people. Permanent fixtures in the UN coordination system include the agencies: Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the positions: the Secretary General, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, and the Resident Coordinator. Appointed on an “as needed” basis include: the Humanitarian Coordinator, the Special Representative to the Secretary General and the Lead Agency.

A Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG)

Description of the mechanism An SRSG is sometimes appointed by the Secretary General in emergencies which are complex or of exceptional magnitude, particularly where UN peacekeeping forces are deployed or which involve the UN in major political negotiations.

Operates where/how This person assumes overall responsibility for UN-system wide action and coordination in the country. The Resident or Humanitarian Coordinator will report to the SRSG.

Examples of operation The position of SRSG has been active in emergencies in Afghanistan, Somalia, Angola, and Liberia at different times.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)

Description of the mechanism The IASC was established in 1992 in response to General Assembly Resolution 46/182 to serve as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination relating to humanitarian assistance in response to complex and major emergencies under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (see below).

Operates where/how It is a high-level, headquarters-oriented forum in New York for inter-agency interaction and has a broad membership including NGOs and the Red Cross Movement.

Example of operation Through working groups the IASC addresses policy issues of special concern such as internally displaced persons, security for relief personnel, and field coordination.

For more on the IASC: www.reliefweb.int/iasc/Website/Background/Backround%20Top_2.htm

OCHA

Description of the mechanism The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is charged with strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance of the UN in complex emergencies.¹

¹ A complex emergency can be defined as a humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing UN country programme.
OCHA has three main functions: coordination of humanitarian response, policy development and advocacy on humanitarian issues.

**Operates where/how** OCHA is a part of the UN Secretariat with headquarters in New York, a small office located in Geneva, and regional representatives.

**Example of operation** OCHA is responsible for delivering coordination services. It also plays an important advocacy role as an advisor on humanitarian action to the Secretary General.

**The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC)**

**Description of the mechanism** The head of OCHA is simultaneously the ERC and the Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs. As the ERC, this post is responsible for coordination among humanitarian entities.

**Operates where/how** The ERC chairs the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in New York.

**Example of operation** 30 May 2002—The United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, in concert with the UN country team in the Republic of Congo, which includes the World Food Programme, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children’s Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, the International Organisation for Migration and the World Health Organisation, today called on the warring parties in that country to enter into negotiations to guarantee safe humanitarian access to the most affected regions of the Republic of Congo, where tens of thousands of displaced people are believed to have found refuge in forests or small villages.

The humanitarian community is ready to deliver food, medical supplies, and non-food items to the displaced population most in need. The Emergency Relief Coordinator and agencies urged the warring parties to ensure the safe passage of humanitarian workers so that they can reach the displaced population of Pool to avoid a full-scale humanitarian disaster.

— from Relief Web: Statement of ERC and UN Country Team in Republic of Congo on humanitarian access to the Pool Region, OCHA

http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/9ca65951ee22658ec125663300408599

For more on the ERC, the USGHA, and OCHA: www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/programs/response/index.html

**The UN Resident Coordinator (RC)**

**Description of the mechanism** The RC is a permanent position in all countries that host UN agencies/programmes. The UNDP Resident Representative in any country typically carries this title.

**Operates where/how** Most frequently, the Resident Coordinator takes on the role of the Humanitarian Coordinator, but infrequently there are two separate posts. The RC is already in the country when an emergency occurs.

**Example of operation** The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator combination was used in Somalia in 1991, and Afghanistan in 1997.
Positions appointed on an “as needed” basis

The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC)

**Description of the mechanism** The HC is appointed by and accountable to the ERC and is the major UN official on the ground in charge of coordination.

**Operates where/how** This post is filled separately when there is no Resident Coordinator, when the emergency requires a regional approach or when the scale of the emergency warrants it. The position normally phases out when the recovery phase is reached.

**Example of operation** Examples of a separate HC include regional coordinators in the Horn of Africa in 1999, the Great Lakes in 1998, the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1996, and in Kosovo, East Timor and Moscow in 2001.

Lead Agency

**Description of the mechanism** Any UN agency may be named to act as the overall coordinator in a complex emergency when the crisis falls generally within that agency's mandate and capacity.

**Operates where/how** A specific office or organisation which may already be in the affected region is designated to coordinate when their particular organisational strengths are needed in the emergency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COORDINATION MANAGEMENT</th>
<th>CORE CONCEPT</th>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The UNDP Representative also serves as the Resident Representative (RR) of the UN system in the country</td>
<td>The RR is a “natural coordinator” of UN response on a day-to-day basis and knows the situation “on the ground.”</td>
<td>The UNDP works closely with national government and has a long term presence in the country which facilitates coordination of short-term emergency programmes with longer-term development programmes.</td>
<td>The association with the national government’s longer-term goals may be seen to be at odds with emergency response strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and/or a Special Rep to the Secretary General (SRSG)</td>
<td>Where there is an unusually acute need for coordination, a special high level coordinator is appointed to represent the authority of UNSG at the country level.</td>
<td>Brings high level exposure to the problems and provides a link from the country to world headquarters of the UN Secretariat and Agencies.</td>
<td>May operate at a level far above current field realities and may be seen as too distant from the field realities of the current emergency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Lead Agency</td>
<td>It is logical for an agency with a special expertise to assume the lead role and serve as the coordinator (i.e. UNHCR for refugee emergencies).</td>
<td>The agency most directly responsible and capable of carrying out the types of programmes needed is best suited to coordinate themselves and other agencies.</td>
<td>Other agencies may feel that their mandates or missions are being made secondary to the lead agency’s mandate or mission.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example of operation UNHCR has been the “Lead Agency” in emergencies relating to refugees. The table on the previous page offers several possible arrangements for managing the coordinated operation and mentions the core concept or logic behind the selection of that type of arrangement, as well as some possible advantages and disadvantages of each.

UN Arrangements in a Coordinated System

Various arrangements for in-country coordination of the international response have been implemented in past and present operations. Coordination arrangements are complex and often carried out by several bodies—civil, military, UN, Governmental, and NGO. For example, as of 2001 in the Afghanistan operation:

- The SRSG was also head of the UN Special Mission for Afghanistan (UNSM A) tasked with finding a peaceful solution.
- The Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator was also the UNDP Resident Representative.
- OCHA served as the secretariat to the Afghanistan Programming Board (APB) which is a joint forum for UN, NGO and donor representatives; acts on behalf of the Emergency Response Coordinator and operates under the authority of the R/HC to coordinate responses; and is responsible for mine action programmes.
- UN Regional Coordination officers acted as field based coordinators.
- Other Country or Regional coordination mechanisms included: the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief; Afghan NGO Coordination Bureau; British Agencies Afghanistan Group; Islamic Coordination Council and the Southern/Western Afghanistan and Baluchistan Association for Coordination.

Consider the various coordination arrangements you have seen in emergencies. Which arrangement provides the best opportunity for good coordination of international emergency response to refugee or IDP-related emergencies?

Why?
What are the possible weaknesses of the arrangement you described?

The UN system uses two major coordination tools which have become traditional in the international emergency response system—the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) and variously-named Information Centres.

**The Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP)**

The CAP presents all programs for a country in one place at the same time, in order to ensure that all gaps are covered. All IASC member organisations participate. At the operations site, the Resident or Humanitarian Coordinator or Lead Agency participates in the process with support from focal points in each organisation involved in the operation. Their responsibility is to provide a reliable assessment of humanitarian need that will be matched through the CAP to the estimated donor response.

**Humanitarian Information Centres**

Humanitarian information centres are typically hosted/managed by UN agencies as a service to the wider humanitarian response community. They serve to archive information as well as to disseminate it to the widest possible audience. Although these are non-directive services, they support a coordination function by providing “the big picture” of what is going on in an emergency, and ideally highlighting service duplication and gaps.

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**6 April 2001 (HPN) —** Following the mass return of Albanian refugees to Kosovo in June 1999, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees was assigned responsibility for the Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs of the UN Interim Administration in Kosovo.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) was also part of this Office, and in this role began to provide information services to support the humanitarian effort.

One such service was the Humanitarian Community Information Centre (HCIC) which, operating out of a shipping container, opened its doors in July 1999. By mid-August, the HCIC was formally opened in the UNHCR building in Pristina. Its work included developing a contact list and sectoral matrix, and organising daily briefings for the humanitarian community. As well as office space, UNHCR agreed to provide administrative support for the Centre. Support was also provided by the US Agency for International Development, the UK’s Department for International Development, Catholic Relief Services, the International Rescue Committee and the World Food Programme.

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— Learning from Kosovo: the Humanitarian Community Information Centre (HCIC), Year One, Paul Currion,
6 April 2001 (HPN)
Civil/Military Structures—CIMICs, CMOCs, Liaison Officers

CIMICs (Civil–Military Cooperation) and CMOCs (Civil–Military Operations Centres) are coordination offices/functions designed and run by military organisations for coordination with civilian actors in emergency humanitarian response. CIMIC is a NATO term and has a specific definition in NATO doctrine, while CMOCs are more generic in nature and exact definitions may vary from one military organisation to another (and one operation to another). In essence, they are very similar structures, both designed as a point of contact between military and non-military staff.

A CIMIC is defined by NATO as “the resources and arrangements which support the relationship between NATO commanders and the national and/or regional/local authorities, civil and military, and civil populations in an area where NATO military forces are or plan to be employed. Such arrangements include co-operation and co-ordination with international agencies, non-governmental organisations and authorities.”

CIMIC functions do, of course, also support the military in its own objectives. “In co-operating with a potentially wide range of civilian bodies, NATO forces will, as far as possible and, within military means and capabilities, accommodate and support the activities of these bodies providing:

1) This does not compromise the mission.

2) Provisional arrangements have been made for the eventual hand-over of functions for which civilian organisations or authorities would normally be responsible.”

Civil-Military Liaison

Traditionally, CIMIC officers have come from various Stabilisation Force nations and they worked throughout the theatre as liaisons between SFOR—Stabilisation Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH)—NGOs and IOs. CIMIC is the means by which the military command establishes formal relations with national and local authorities, the civilian population, IOs and NGOs within its area of responsibility. It is a vital link between the efforts of civilians and SFOR to re-establish BiH in accordance with the General Framework Agreement for Peace. CIMIC provides the resources and makes the arrangements that support the relationship between commanders and the national authorities in an area where military forces are or plan to be employed.

CIMIC personnel are active and reserve duty soldiers specialised in a particular area such as: infrastructure, humanitarian aid, economy and market, culture and education, administration and public affairs. There are CIMIC representatives in the Office of the High Representative, World Bank, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the United Nations International Police Task Force.

— CIMIC Course Opens to AF in BiH, Staff Sgt. Lisa M. Simpson as published in SFOR Informer #134, March 14, 2002

The terms civil and military have many possible meanings. In your experience, what types of military and what elements of the civilian population are generally implied by the term civil/military coordination or cooperation?
Civil–Military relationships may be very complex with various military as well as UN and NGO representatives all operating and trying to coordinate in the same location at the same time. In the aftermath of the announcement on 4 September 1999 of the result of the 30 August ballot, more than 500,000 people were displaced by violence in East Timor. The UN system responded with various structures and organisations (including their own military force). Consider the following example from East Timor and notice the different possibilities for civil-military interface.

### Key Players

Despite the name, Civil-Military Cooperation is never a partnership confined to two parties only. In East Timor, CIMIC arrangements soon included civilians and military personnel in three distinct groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indigenous</th>
<th>UN</th>
<th>Non-UN International</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil</td>
<td>National Council of Timorese Resistance (CNRT), Church</td>
<td>UN Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Falintil TNI (Indonesian forces)</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interrelationships between the groups above had varying degrees of intensity. Thus, a close/"vertical" relationship existed between the CNRT and Falintil—the latter being the militant arm of the former—and an almost equally close/"horizontal" relationship existed between the UN humanitarian agencies and those NGOs that served as implementing partners. The UN agencies and main implementing partners and their responsibilities were as follows:

### UN

- **OCHA**: Overall coordination
- **UNHCR**: Shelter, non-food-items, refugee return, and protection
- **WFP**: Food, lead agency for logistics
- **UNICEF**: Health, water and sanitation
- **WHO**: Health and prevention of epidemics
- **FAO**: Re-establishment of agricultural production
- **UNDP**: Reconstruction and development (limited presence in the initial phase)
- **ILO**: Vocational training (limited presence in the initial phase)

### Main Implementing Partners

- **AICF**: Nutrition
- **CARE**: Shelter, distribution of seeds
- **Caritas**: Food distribution
- **IOM**: Transportation of returning refugees
- **ICRC**: Health care, water and sanitation, food, disposal of dead, tracing
- **M ERLIN**: Health supplies, vector control
- **MSF and MDM**: Health care
- **Oikos**: Distribution of seeds
- **OXFAM**: Water and sanitation
- **World Vision**: Shelter, food distribution

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CIMIC in East Timor; An Account of Civil-Military Cooperation, Coordination and Collaboration in the Early Phases of the East Timor Relief Operation by Michael Elmquist
BEIRA, Mozambique (USAFENS)

During the chaotic initial stages of a humanitarian relief operation, knowing whom to turn to for the best piece of information can be as difficult as it is important.

Imagine you’re a newly arrived international relief worker from Denmark encountering the U.S. military for the first time. You desperately need help moving medical supplies to a village isolated by recent devastating floods in Mozambique. You would like to utilize the military’s HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopters you see parked on the tarmac from your makeshift office in the Beira airport but don’t know where to begin.

A fellow aid worker refers you to the CMOC — the Civil Military Operations Centre. The CMOC is the military organisation responsible for liaison between the military and the many international relief organisations that are providing humanitarian relief to the citizens of Mozambique. You give them your request, and the next day you watch as the supplies are loaded by Mozambique workers onto the helicopter, which is flown by aircrews from the 41st Rescue Squadron from Moody Air Force Base, Ga., and the 56th Rescue Squadron from Keflavik, Iceland.

That’s been the tone of cooperation in Beira where the Joint Special Operations Task Force headquarters is located in support of Joint Task Force Operation Atlas Response. ‘I haven’t seen it come together like this before,’ said U.S. Army Maj. Jonathan Burns, the CMOC director. Burns was deployed from the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion at Fort Bragg, N.C., to support the JSOTF.

‘This is some of the best cooperation I’ve seen. Everybody knows where to come if they have a problem or need coordination . . .’ Much of the CMOC effort in making that happen deals with information management. To help harness the information concerning relief agencies, the CMOC conducts daily coordination meetings with all the agencies. Decisions on how and where supplies will be distributed are made at these meetings.

The CMOC also helped consolidate a mass of information when it created a large bulletin board covering most of the wall in a break area. There, relief workers can quickly scan for information, ranging from where to rent a car, to posting supplies their organisation can offer to the relief effort.

‘It’s gone phenomenally well,’ said Sgt. 1st Class Tim Kohring, a civil affairs noncommissioned officer assigned to Beira from the Civil Affairs Directorate of the Special Operations Command Europe. ‘The NGOs are working with us and they see us as a facilitator. Now, there are signs and arrows showing everyone where to go instead of people spending half a day wandering around.’

That suits Steffen Schmidt just fine. As a member of the U.N. Disaster Assessment and Coordination team at Beira, the Danish aid worker said he appreciates any process that better utilizes valuable relief assets such as the HH-60s in Beira, or the MH-53M Pave Low IV helicopters flown out of Air Force Base Hoedspruit, South Africa. The MH-53s come from another JSOTF unit, the 21st Special Operations Squadron at RAF Mildenhall, England.

‘We needed those helicopters desperately not only for evacuation but also for food delivery,’ Schmidt said. Schmidt described the relationship between the United Nations and military as ‘positive and helpful.’ The military has especially been helpful, he said, by acting as an “extra pair of eyes in the field” upon which to base decisions affecting relief operations.

NGO Coordination

The NGO community divides and groups itself by nationality, religion, advocacy approach, sectoral specialty, and target beneficiary groups (e.g. children, women, the elderly, the disabled, etc.) There are several international bodies, including ICVA and InterAction, described below, that serve to coordinate them at strategy and policy development levels. Other large international NGO umbrella groups include SCHR (Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response), VOICE, PAGER (for Canadian NGOs), and others. These groups generally work on overarching policy and advocacy issues that affect their members.

ICVA

The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), founded in 1962, is a global network of human rights, humanitarian, and development NGOs, which focuses its information exchange and advocacy efforts primarily on humanitarian affairs and refugee issues. ICVA facilitates NGO advocacy in the main international body for humanitarian coordination, the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and UNHCR’s Standing and Executive Committees. In general, ICVA is not operational at field level.

ICVA’s main objectives at the organisational policy level are as follows:

• To act as a catalyst and tool for the accurate, timely, and effective exchange of information
• To strengthen networks among NGOs and to function as a platform to strengthen working relationships with agencies and bodies
• To facilitate, promote, and support NGO advocacy capacity-building efforts

For more information see: http://www.icva.ch/cgi-bin/browse.pl?doc=about

InterAction

InterAction exists to enhance the effectiveness and professional capacities of its members engaged in international humanitarian efforts. InterAction seeks to foster partnership, collaboration and leadership among its members as they strive to achieve a world of self-reliance, justice and peace.

To realise this mission, InterAction works to:

• Enhance the identity, autonomy, credibility and diverse perspectives of each member agency.
• Provide a broadly based participatory forum for professional consultation, coordination and concerted action.
• Foster the effectiveness and recognition of the PVO community, both professionally and publicly.
• Set a standard of the highest ethics in carrying out its mission.

For more information see http://128.121.4.162/about/index.html

NGO Coordination at the National Level

At the national or regional level other NGO coordination bodies arise in reaction to specific crises and may last for decades in crisis prone countries. These offer real potential for sectoral as well as geographic coordination of response at a practical level. UN and government actors need to support these groups and facilitate their efficiency in delivering life-saving services to those in need.
These coordinating bodies offer direct access to coordination fora that relate to the specific area and emergency being served.

**NGO Coordination in Afghanistan**

In early 2002, questions arose on the quality and capacity of existing NGO coordination mechanisms, as well as the ability of these mechanisms to interface with UN and other institutions. Discussions took place among three major NGO networks: InterAction (American Council for Voluntary International Action), the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR). The discussions focused on reviewing existing NGO coordination structures and identifying ways in which NGO coordination could be strengthened.

There are at least two NGO coordination structures that have been in existence in Afghanistan for more than a decade and that bring together a significant part, if not the large majority, of the NGO community. ACBAR’s membership (some 60 NGOs) is composed of both international and national NGOs. The Afghan NGOs’ Coordination Bureau’s (ANCB’s) 140 members are all national, Afghan NGOs. In addition to these two main structures, two other bodies are said to exist: SWABAC for NGOs working in Baluchistan, and ICC for Islamic NGOs.

Humanitarian actors need to understand and use coordination structures already in place and avoid “reinventing the wheel”. It is likely to be more efficient to join existing structures with a strategy to strengthen and improve them, rather than to create something new and parallel with them.

Coordination structures are routinely hosted by all of the various actors in humanitarian response. The following list identifies some of the possibilities.

- **Host/National Government structures, response offices**
  - Special Office of the President
  - Emergency Committee (cabinet or Ministerial level)
  - National Emergency Ministry or Agency

- **UN structures, positions, and arrangements**
  - The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)
  - OCHA
  - The Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC)
  - The UN Resident Coordinator (RC)
  - The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC)
  - A Special Representative to the Secretary General (SRSG)
  - Lead Agency

- **Civil/Military structures, positions**
  - CIMIC (Civil-Military Cooperations)
  - CMOC (Civil Military Operations Centers)
  - Civil Affairs and Liaison Officers

- **NGO coordination bodies**
  - International
  - National
Chapter 3
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Generally, the greatest limitation to the effectiveness of an ad hoc - “Special Emergency Office” or Coordinator appointed by the national government is their lack of understanding about national priorities
   • T  • F

2. The ERC is always the head of OCHA.
   • T  • F

3. One problem with the Lead Agency coordinator model is the perception by other agencies that its specific mandate will dominate all other relief activities
   • T  • F

4. The general goal of international NGO coordinating bodies such as InterAction and ICVA is to set policy and work towards larger advocacy issues that affect their memberships.
   • T  • F

5. An SRSG is always appointed by the Secretary General in emergencies.
   • T  • F

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. The IASC promotes:
   A Solutions to problems of special concern such as internally displaced persons, security for relief personnel, and field coordination
   B Resource mobilization at the field level
   C High level headquarters-oriented forums
   D A and C

7. CIMIC functions support:
   A Civil Society
   B The military in its own objectives
   C Co-operation and co-ordination with international agencies, non-governmental organisations and authorities.
   D Relationship between NATO commanders and the national and/or regional/local authorities, civil and military, and civil populations in an area where NATO military forces are or plan to be employed.
8. What was the HCIC in Pristina, Kosovo in 2001?
   
   - **A** The Humanitarian Community Information Centre
   - **B** The Humanitarian Center for the International Community
   - **C** The High Commissioner for International Concern
   - **D** The Health Centre for Immediate Care

9. The Resident Coordinator and the Humanitarian Coordinator are the same person when:
   
   - **A** He/she is the head of UNDP
   - **B** When the Resident Coordinator is appointed as Humanitarian Coordinator by the ERC/IASC
   - **C** When UNHCR is the lead agency
   - **D** When there is a Special Representative of the SG

10. All of the following are related to UN coordination except:
   
   - **A** The CAP Process
   - **B** FCUs
   - **C** OCHA
   - **D** CVA
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<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>10.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Improving Humanitarian Coordination

Coordination meeting in Rwanda, 1994. A UN on-site coordination centre in Kigali coordinated relief efforts of NGOs and UN agencies via daily meetings. FAO photo #17612
PRETEST — Improving Humanitarian Coordination

1. The following five factors; location, membership, authority, resource level, and institutionality/formality—are all useful in the analysis of coordination initiatives.

2. Using a system of analysis based on the factors above, the local situation and context would still need to be considered as these are not well-addressed using these types of ‘generic’ factors.

3. For analytical purposes, an example of “low institutionality” in a coordination body might be extreme policy shifts arising from frequent staff rotation and conflicting personalities in positions of leadership.

4. Analytical indicators of a local coordination body with a high resource level might include; dedicated staff, dedicated office, equipment, and budget to carry out secretariat and other coordination functions.

5. Indicators of a local coordination body or system with a high level of authority might include direct budgetary or legislative control over the coordinating organisations.

6. Being a good coordinator relies on inherited personal traits and cannot be learned or trained.

7. Your response to highly competitive behavior in a humanitarian operation should also be highly competitive—especially when mutual goals are at stake.

8. Networking includes using your contacts’ networks as well as your own.

9. Many conflicts arise from poor communications and misunderstandings.

10. Formal coordination mechanisms are always more effective than informal channels.

11. At UNHCR, GIMU stands for Geographic Information and Mapping Unit.

12. Even good coordination meetings represent additional demands on your time that could be better spent on the real work that is involved in humanitarian response operations.
13. Large group processes are always detrimental to coordination and therefore some actors must be excluded from coordination processes.

14. Facilitation skills are only pertinent to the person chairing the meeting.

15. The facilitator should not share procedural guidelines for holding the meeting in order to avoid interference from the participants.

16. National governments have a right, a responsibility, and the authority to coordinate.

17. When organizations do not focus on meeting the humanitarian needs of the affected people, their efforts at coordination are more likely to fail.

18. Your personal efforts in coordination are critical to the collective effort.

19. Specific funding for coordination bodies is generally not required.

20. Coordination efforts that are started before or at the onset of the emergency, are much more likely to succeed.
A Framework for Analysis of Coordination

By studying this chapter you will learn about one particular way of analysing and troubleshooting coordination systems, structures, and meetings that you become involved with. This framework is based on 5 critical factors relating to the organisation of the coordination system itself rather than the context, or specific emergency situation. The 5 factors are:

- Location
- Membership
- Authority
- Institutionality/Formality
- Resources

“How do we get this operation coordinated?”

Infinite variations are possible when describing coordination mechanisms. They include formal meetings, informal meetings, consortia, CIMICS, CMOCs, OSOCCs (On-Site Operations Coordination Centres), and HICs. These mechanisms are evaluated from different viewpoints depending on who was included, who was excluded, who was supported by the mechanism and who was not. Consequently, actors often find it difficult to determine what type of mechanism to select.

For example, a Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC) may have facilitated coordination in one emergency, but may have performed marginally in another. The factors affecting the utility of a certain mechanism are:

1. Situational and contextual factors beyond the control of humanitarian organisations
2. Planning factors within the control of the humanitarian organisations and individuals.

Situational and contextual factors are sometimes so powerful, that even a well coordinated effort still cannot meet the needs of the refugees or displaced people. For example, the problems posed by an outbreak of war, severe drought, flooding, massive influxes into difficult terrain may defy the cumulative efforts of assistance providers who coordinate their resources. There is no generic framework for analysis or selection of a coordination mechanism that is capable of factoring in these contextual variables. This will have to be done in addition to the analysis described in this chapter—once the specific situation is known.
This chapter describes one analytical framework that considers factors which you and your organisation can influence, namely, planning factors. You can use this framework to study (and learn from) cases you are familiar with. These are the steps to follow in using the framework:

1. Five factors are examined, which, when considered together, can apply to almost any coordination mechanism.
2. For the coordination initiative, mechanism or structure being studied, the 5 factors are ranked as either “high” or “low”.
3. The analysis helps to raise warning flags about key issues or possibilities that must be addressed.
4. This approach helps actors to decide how best to work with (or modify) any given mechanism, based on an understanding of the factors and what they mean for successful coordination.

What factors, within the control of humanitarian responders, might make a substantial difference in the success or failure of a coordination initiative? List at least 5.

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 

The Factors

Location of Meetings and Communications (Factor 1)

The location factor considers whether the coordination elements and/or partners in the process are concentrated into one area. A “High” ranking would be given to the location factor when the coordination activities tend to happen at the same time in the same place such as in a UN building, Ministry building, military compound, or completely “neutral” location. A high location factor implies a strong need for, or belief in, face-to-face communication, and the need for group consensus and discussion within an atmosphere of maximum transparency.

A “Low” rating for the location factor implies that there is no jointly agreed or supported meeting place or secretariat. Partners tend to move from place to place for meetings or simply meet in smaller groups. Such systems might rely on radio, telephone, and e-mail for their coordination activities. A low rating is also given where organisations are located in different places (by sector, by affiliation, or by hierarchy level within the organisation) and systematic ways to bring them together physically are lacking. These systems might be facilitated by careful scheduling/timing of meetings, radio and other distance communication protocols.
Describe a coordination initiative, mechanism, or structure that you are familiar with and indicate its ranking (from low to high) on the location factor. Be careful to avoid considering a whole country scenario as a mechanism since it is typical that many mechanisms exist in parallel in any one operation. Be as specific as possible.

Why was it organised in this way?

What impact did this have on how well the system functioned or is functioning?

Membership (Factor 2)

The membership factor is the degree of inclusion/exclusion exhibited by the coordination system. A ‘High’ rating for this factor indicates a very participative approach involving an inclusive and mixed set of actors in the coordination system. This factor is so important that it will likely affect all other aspects of the coordination mechanism. When deciding whether the membership factor should receive a high or low, consider these questions:

- Are representatives of the local population and affected people and national government included?
- Are military forces included? Does including them mean excluding other partners?
A ‘Low’ rating for this factor means that relatively few actors are participating in the coordination mechanism, or at its lowest, there is simply no coordination. Coordination bodies that include only UN organisations, only Government, or only NGOs (by affiliation) would be considered at the low end of the scale.

**Question**

Using the same coordination initiative, mechanism, or structure that you described above, consider where it falls on the spectrum from low to high for the membership factor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>MEMBERSHIP FACTOR</th>
<th>LOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wide participation, open invitation to all responders, including Government, representatives of the local and affected population, UN, NGO, donors, military and other active responders.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tightly limited group of like-minded agencies; only multiple bilateral and interest-group relationships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why was it organised in this way?

What impact did this have on how well the system functioned or is functioning?

**Authority (Factor 3)**

The authority factor relates to the actual power that coordinators or coordinating bodies have to make and enforce decisions. Usually this authority is a result of control, or significant influence, for example, over the coordinating organisations’ budgets, or over national legislation. A rating of “High” for this factor means that there is a high degree of organisational commitment to decisions taken. The presence of national government is important in analysing this factor as they have the authority to use national legislative and implementation powers.
A coordination system with a ‘Low’ authority factor would operate purely on consensus and mutual agreement of all partners, since the coordinating body, agency, or group would not have the authority to pressure any agency or body to coordinate. Key words associated with these types of coordination arrangements are non-binding, advisory and consultative.

Rank your coordination mechanism from low to high on the authority factor.

Why was it organised in this way?

What impact did this have on how well the system functioned or is functioning?

Institutionality/Formality (Factor 4)

The institutionality/formality factor describes how routine, dependable, and predictable the coordination mechanism is. A ‘High’ rating for this factor would indicate a system in which there are well-established and widely-recognised protocols of operation, such as well known, formal methods of invitation, attendance, reporting, etc.

A ‘Low’ rating for this factor indicates a system that is extremely loose and ad hoc, and that evolves so quickly that there are few agreed formal protocols. Such systems are very unpredictable.
Another perspective on these types of coordination arrangements is that these less institutionalised arrangements may be more flexible and allow greater creativity in finding solutions to shared problems.

**HIGH**
Predictable and well understood protocols and means of operation. Less susceptible to staff turnover and “personality” issues.

**LOW**
Extremely ad hoc, flexible, allows for creative solutions at any point. Unpredictable and subject to extreme policy shifts based on staff rotation and personalities.

Rank your coordination mechanism from low to high on the authority factor.

Why was it organised in this way?

What impact did this have on how well the system functioned or is functioning?

**Resource Level (Factor 5)**

The resource level factor is a measure of how well the coordination mechanism or structure is funded, staffed, and equipped to carry out its function. A coordination body or secretariat, for example, with a ‘High’ rating for this factor would be well staffed, have officially recognised and dedicated working spaces, funded positions, a budget, communications equipment, etc.

A coordination initiative with a ‘Low’ resource level might be characterised by no or few paid or full-time staff, and little or no support equipment, communications infrastructure or vehicles.
Rank your coordination mechanism from low to high on the authority factor.

Why was it organised in this way?

What impact did this have on how well the system functioned or is functioning?

Using the Analytical Framework

Using this relatively simple analysis of five different factors, and considering only two levels for each factor i.e. “High” or “Low”, there are 32 possible variations. In reality, there are thousands of variables that would affect each situation differently. Nonetheless, humanitarian organisations and staff members do have a degree of control over all of these factors through their initial planning recommendations, preparation of emergency budgets and programmes, and finally individual choices in determining how to become involved in a coordination effort.

There are two principal ways to use this framework. The first is for studying and learning from other coordination mechanisms and strategies, and the second is for understanding and making recommendations for “fixing” or improving current coordination arrangements. This second use has real value for field coordination since there are often strong reasons for joining existing (even though perhaps inefficient or otherwise lacking) coordination mechanisms rather than inventing new ones.
Using these factors as the basis for your own analysis, choose the coordination mechanism or situation that you are interested in, and apply the factors one by one. This may be done individually or by a group of interested and/or frustrated coordinating partners. After describing the situation and then analysing each of these factors, you should produce some useful recommendations. Use the table below to help structure your analysis and presentation.

### Example

**TITLE** ____________________________  **SITUATION** ____________________________

**PLACE** ____________________________  **DATES** ____________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Institutionality/Formality</th>
<th>Resource Level</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ High</td>
<td>□ High</td>
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**Why was the coordination mechanism set up this way?**

**What were the benefits of this arrangement?**

**What were the weaknesses of this arrangement?**

**Tips or guidance for dealing with this factor.**

**A Cautionary Note:** This framework does not imply that high values are always the better option for each of these factors. There are cases where low levels of inclusion (for example the UNHCR-led coordination initiative for Ngara, in which many NGOs were “screened out” of the process) have been widely reported as very successful. In other cases, coordination structures are said to have failed precisely because of the real or perceived exclusivity.

Similarly, the other factors may be better, for any given situation at either end of the spectrum. The point is that they must be considered, and analysed. Careful design of the coordination arrangements must consider the consequences of these factors, regardless of the mechanism type, structure, or tool being used.
Some Examples of Practical Coordination Success

Humanitarian assistance operations are rarely neat and tidy situations where good practice reigns and the results are all positive. As in all human endeavours, there will be weaknesses as well as strengths. There will be good outcomes and many that might have been much better. Strategies that become lauded as “Best Practices” themselves are sometimes a result of luck as well as skill and insight. A few are mentioned here with illustrations. More information on these cases can be found on the websites of the concerned organisations or by contacting the named organisation directly. One such study that is frequently cited in this text on was conducted for OCHA—“Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons from Recent Field Experience.” By Nicola Reindorp and Peter Wiles (2001). This report is recommended reading for all actors in humanitarian assistance and can be found on the OCHA website.

**Highlighting Skills, Local Knowledge and a Comprehensive Strategy**

**FAO in Kosovo, 1999**

Coordination on agricultural recovery started very early in the emergency and started well because of the skills of the FAO staff. One staff member, an agronomist, was employed locally by FAO, already had credibility among NGOs and knew Kosovo agriculture (in ALNAP Annual Review, 2002). FAO also had a well-focused strategy of coordinating and providing technical support to implementing agencies, working closely with donors to avoid duplication and advising on funding levels.

**The Importance of Cooperation with Local Coordination Bodies and Mechanisms**

**DFID response to 2000 floods in Bangladesh**

In the majority of the cases, the NGOs, the UN and the local disaster relief committees all respected the authority of the District Commissioners and were willing to be coordinated. The national Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief worked very hard with limited resources and district relief officers made use of agreed-upon procedures found in a new instruction manual “Standing Orders on Disasters” which were useful in the formation of committees.

**The Rewards of Putting ‘Lessons Learned’ into Practice**

**OCHA’s Role in Coordinating Assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2000**

OCHA has recognised the key roles of the NGOs and the Red Cross Movement in the DRC and therefore works with these players. In turn, the players recognise OCHA’s role as primary interlocutor in the UN and as a source of support for negotiating access, needs analysis, information sharing, advocacy for funds and a source of logistics. OCHA’s powerful potential has been acknowledged in its effort to advocate to donors to assist the “forgotten” Banyamulenge tribe. Many players seek the advice of OCHA on political/diplomatic interactions, reinforcing its role of Coordinator.
The Significance of Presence on the Ground, a Streamlined Funding Approach, Government Cooperation, A “Take Charge” Attitude and Good Inter-agency and Refugee Relations
UNHCR in Ngara, Tanzania, 1994

Incredible chaos followed the movement of 10,000 Rwandans into Tanzania but nevertheless, coordination got off to a good start. UNHCR was not only already on the ground but had supplies to distribute. The UNHCR Emergency Relief Team immediately began working with experienced staff from other agencies involved in response to the Burundi emergency. Interagency relations were described as excellent due mainly to the agencies’ shared desire to shed territorial concerns and to work as a group in order to save lives.

Two innovative funding initiatives, donor willingness to channel most funds through UNHCR plus UNHCR’s decision to process NGO grants in the field, led to a streamlined decision making process and enhanced UNHCR’s control over field coordination. Rather than attempting to take control, the Tanzanian government allowed UNHCR to choose implementing partners. UNHCR took an assertive approach to coordination and selected the most experienced and responsible NGOs and placed some in charge of certain sectors. There were good working relations with refugee leaders who organised refugees for orderly food distribution, and facilitated tracing programs and other humanitarian tasks. (Note: This was a short term good coordination solution but proved to be controversial in the long run as refugee leaders often held forceful control over the population.)

The Positive Effect of Involving All Parties in Sectoral Coordination and Having a Cohesive Structure
The Committee on Food Aid (CFA) in Sierra Leone, 1996

The keys to success of the Committee on Food Aid were the fact that key relief personnel wanted to work together and some major donors required that the funded agencies coordinate with others. The success of this body sparked coordination initiatives in other sectors. The CFA held weekly meetings among donors, host government representatives and managers of the four food pipelines. The core CFA coordinated with the National (including all food implementing agencies) and Regional (including beneficiary and local government representatives) Technical Committees, which were part of the larger CFA structure.
Coordination structures, mechanisms, and arrangements can take many forms, names and strategies, none of which may work consistently well in all situations.

A better way to analyse coordination initiative is to consider the factors that are within the possible control of the organisations and agencies involved.

One framework for analysis of coordination structures is based on consideration of five factors:

- Location
- Membership
- Authority
- Institutionality/Formality
- Resources

These factors can be used to analyse existing coordination mechanisms in order to improve them, as well as to create new coordination mechanisms.
Chapter 4
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. The 5 factors considered in the analytical framework for coordination are: location, membership, authority, resource level, and institutionality/formality.

2. The analytical framework implies that high values are always the better option for each of the 5 factors considered.

3. Using the analytical framework presented in this chapter, an example of “low institutionality” would be extreme policy shifts based on staff rotation and personalities.

4. Indicators of a local coordination body with a “high resource level” might include dedicated staff, office, equipment, and budget to carry out secretariat and other coordination functions.

5. Indicators of a local coordination body or system with a high “authority” level might include direct budgetary or legislative control over the coordinating organisations.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. The analytical framework presented in this chapter considers all of the following variables except:
   - A Resource variables
   - B Local contextual variables
   - C Membership variables
   - D Authority variables

7. What of these would result in a “Low” rating for the location factor?
   - A Meetings are often held but poorly attended
   - B There is no jointly agreed or supported place for the meetings
   - C Actors are located in geographically distant places
   - D A and C
8. Membership is a critical factor that may affect all others because:

A. Membership is usually guaranteed for all parties working in the same area
B. The degree to which all concerned actors are included often determines the degree of acceptance of the overall process
C. The fewer the members the easier it is to manage the interpersonal dynamics of coordination
D. B and C

9. In analyzing the authority factor, a key consideration is:

A. The location of the meetings
B. The regularity of meetings
C. The inclusion of government with the power to use national legislative and other authority measures
D. The inclusion of all viewpoints in the process

10. Two key factors for the success found in both the FAO agricultural recovery project in Kosovo and the DFID response to the Bangladesh floods were:

A. The international actors had a good plan
B. Local knowledge and expertise were the foundation of the response
C. The use of aggressive coordination tactics
D. Working relationships and procedures were already in place before the project was implemented.
<p>| | | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>10.</td>
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</table>
Practices, Skills and Tools for Better Coordination

By studying this chapter you will be able to:

- reflect on some good practices and essential skills for coordination
- identify motivators for coordination
- discuss the uses of some important coordination tools
- analyse your own strengths and weaknesses related to use of these practices and tools
- prioritise areas in which you need improvement and outline a plan of action for yourself

“Coordinate all you want, but I’ve got work to do.”

Most humanitarian actors agree that coordination is important but many become decidedly uncomfortable when defining their own roles in coordination. Some actors feel that coordination should merely ensure that duplication and overlap of services does not occur. In contrast, others believe that coordination should seek to harmonise individual responses to maximise impact and achieve synergy (where the result is more than the sum of the parts). This chapter is designed to help you find ways to move toward harmonising your responses in order to achieve the greatest impact in terms of assistance to the affected people.

In this chapter, you will have an opportunity to re-examine coordination, moving from the organisational and policy perspective to the personal level, particularly your own role. You will be challenged to accept personal responsibility for making coordination more effective. You will evaluate your own skills and practices against good practices for coordination and develop a plan to make these practices part of your work routine.

Personal Skills, Practices and Motivations

Knowing the roles of the actors in coordination and the definition and parameters of coordination as illustrated in Chapters 1 through 4 are important steps in becoming an effective coordinator. However, the international humanitarian response “system” itself is still vague, changing, and extremely ad-hoc. When there is not enough structure to support good coordination, success becomes dependent on individual leaders and coordinators who have the ability to bring people together.
One perplexing question among humanitarian workers is: **Are good coordinators born that way, or are good coordinators “made” through training and practice?** Upon deeper analysis you will find that people who have good coordination ‘personalities’ have, in fact, cultivated their skills and know when to use the appropriate tools. They are also extremely motivated individuals. Anyone can become a better coordinator by practicing the skills and tapping sources of motivation. Among the best tools at your immediate disposal are your own personal skills, practices and attitudes.

Among the recurring themes of past studies of coordination are turf battles, empire building, overlapping and conflicting mandates and ad hoc arrangements which prevent effective response. Tensions between staff in the field and headquarters, with each accusing the other of thwarting coordination efforts, recur, as do criticisms of poor information flow and conflicting internal administrative procedures that hamper inter-agency collaboration or prevent flexibility and fast response. The lack of overall strategy or principled approaches is a common feature, as are the tensions between relief and development agencies, humanitarians and peacekeepers, and (consequently) **the importance of personalities in making the system work, if at all.**

— Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons from Recent Field Experience, OCHA June 2001

**Personal Skills**

One of the major problems in coordination is that people fail to prepare by building personal and working relationships prior to an emergency. When the emergency occurs, people feel a sense of competition with each other rather than cooperation. For effective relationships, attitudes of cooperation, peer support and self-discipline must prevail over attitudes of competition, autonomy and control. Key coordination skills are in the areas of trust and relationship building, networking, facilitation, consensus building, and dealing with conflict.

**Trust and Relationship Building**

The key to establishing productive relationships is enhancing a sense of trust among all involved. Trusting relationships are developed as a result of interactions over time; they are not automatic. Trustworthy actions are typified by:

- open or transparent agendas
- sharing of information and resources
- accepting and supporting others and their contributions
- exhibiting cooperative intentions that move the actors closer to mutual goals.

The effect of a trusting relationship is a more open expression of thoughts, reactions, opinions, information and ideas between people and organizations. Trust can also be networked—that is, people are likely to also trust someone who is trusted by a trustworthy associate. Unfortunately, trust can be destroyed more quickly than it can be created and once lost, it is difficult to regain. Trust can be lost through actions and responses which are non-accepting or non-confirming and when the risks taken by one party are not reciprocated by others. (See also, UNHCR’s Distance Learning Module – Managing External Relations)
Target groups for relationship building include:

- Government actors – Politicians, ministry staff, central and local leaders
- International actors – Donors, assistance agencies, embassies, regional and neighboring countries
- National actors – Civil Society Groups, NGOs, citizens, academic institutions
- Others from your own organization

Networking Skills

A network is an organised collection of professional and personal contacts. Networking means keeping the channels of communication open with members of your group or network.

Systematic development of the network offers the following benefits:

- Encourages sharing of new experiences and knowledge
- Provides the expertise and information needed now and in the future
- Enhances understanding of the mechanisms by which things get done quickly—provides valuable insights, in terms of what works and what doesn’t, with which to develop strategies
- Promotes collection and exchange of resources—produces a multiplier effect when networks and resources are shared
- Creates global and regional networks
- Generates opportunities for better coordination and collaboration.

A network is a relationship that is based on reciprocity—giving people what they want and need in return for expecting help from them when needed. Networking does not have to be highly complex or formal; it can be as simple as sharing useful information from time to time. The key to successful networking is “keeping at it” and constantly nurturing the contacts. While e-mail has revolutionized the ability to network, it has disadvantages such as “information overload” where people cannot answer all of their e-mail messages on a regular basis. Some actors will not have e-mail capabilities and others will prefer more personal approaches. Many complex interpersonal networks have been developed in communities and regions where there are no telecommunications facilities. Meetings and mail or courier services may be useful in these cases.

Some means to improve networking should be included in project development strategies and should be undertaken by all members of the organization.

1. **Make records of contacts** Ensure that all information is spelled correctly, updated periodically and that the most recent contact with each person is documented.

2. **Make new contacts** Have up-to-date business cards to offer new contacts and should follow-up with information immediately.

3. **Create mailing lists** from the list of contacts and send publications and newsletters routinely.

4. **Create and share briefing packages** to clarify the goals and activities of the organization, especially for new contacts.

In networking, some practices must be systematically avoided. **Do not:**

- Share confidential information or information that is potentially harmful to other people’s relationships. Networking should be based on balance and trust.
- Assume that the person with the highest rank or that bigger organizations have better networks, or networking skills.
- Neglect to take time to thank someone who helps or shares information with you.
- Fail to respond to requests for help or information or fail to follow through on requests.
Using your mobile phone for networking

The ability to communicate efficiently is one of the key skills of good coordinators. During the Kosovo crisis in 1999, one effective coordinator always took the time to ask every person he met for his/her phone number. This information was carefully loaded into the electronic address book on his mobile phone. Although this behavior required some time and dedication, it proved to be a time-saving and coordination-friendly habit. As soon as important issues arose, calls could be made immediately to the appropriate persons. This well-organised networking habit allowed the coordinator to communicate faster and more flexibly than others who relied on less mobile communications.

If you do not have a mobile phone, use a notebook to organise your network contacts. The main objective is to systematically cultivate relationships with current and potential coordinating partners, and to routinely document the contact points, phone numbers, e-mail addresses or whatever is needed in order to quickly communicate with them.

Facilitation Skills

Facilitation is the art of helping people make choices and reach mutual goals while accommodating creative solutions.

Understanding the principles of facilitation contributes to general effectiveness in building relationships, resolving conflicts, and handling group feedback whether there is a large group or only a few people. Certain basic values must underlie a facilitator's approach and provide the ground rules for the group. These are:

♦ **Democracy/egalitarianism** Each person has the opportunity to participate equally in the group discussion as well as the planning of the meeting and the agenda. Each person has something to contribute and should be given the opportunity to do so, if he/she chooses.

♦ **Responsibility** Each person is responsible for his or her own participation in the meeting but the facilitator needs to be sensitive to how much responsibility the participants are able to take.

♦ **Cooperation** The facilitator and participants work together toward collective goals.

♦ **Honesty** The facilitator sets the tone for an honest exchange through an attitude of openness and information sharing.

Using Active Listening

The foundation of facilitation is active listening. Active listening involves quieting your own mental dialog and devoting your mental powers to really absorbing what a person is saying, rather than, for example, preparing what you will say next. Active listening also involves being attentive to other communication signals such as body language, facial expressions and verbal tone.

Three techniques that promote active listening are: encouragement, restatement of what you hear, and summarising key points along the way. The chart below provides some reasons and examples for using each of these techniques. Try using these techniques with colleagues in the office and partners in other agencies.
**ACTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>PURPOSE</strong></th>
<th><strong>ENCOURAGE</strong></th>
<th><strong>RESTATE</strong></th>
<th><strong>SUMMARISE</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To show your interest.</td>
<td>To prove that you have heard and understood</td>
<td>To pull important ideas, facts, etc. together into a logical whole.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To keep the other person talking.</td>
<td>To allow opportunities for clarification</td>
<td>To establish a basis for further dialog</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn more detail or explanation about the speaker’s point(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td>To review progress</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TIPS**
- Don’t agree or disagree.
- Use an inquisitive and positive tone of voice.
- Don’t look at your watch or your computer screen.
- “I understand . . .”
- “Can you tell me more about . . .”
- “That’s interesting . . . please go on . . .”
- “I would like to hear your views on . . .”

**EXAMPLES IN ENGLISH**
- “I understand . . .”
- “If I understand correctly, then your idea is that . . .”
- “To sum up . . .”
- “Can you tell me more about . . .”
- “In other words, you are saying that . . .”
- “As I understand your point of view now, your basic ideas are . . .”
- “That’s interesting . . . please go on . . .”
- “You sound very disappointed about . . .”
- “So, it seems that the main issue is . . .”
- “I would like to hear your views on . . .”
- “So you are saying . . . did I understand you correctly?”

**Exercise**

Prepare some statements, in your own words, that you would feel comfortable using in order to carry out each of the three techniques used in active listening.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Example phrases to use with this technique (in your own words)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging</td>
<td>..................................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restating</td>
<td>..................................................................................</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarising</td>
<td>..................................................................................</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Consensus Building

While facilitation and active listening are important tools in successful coordination, the process must also produce a practical outcome. The ultimate goal of coordination is consensus on an action plan that provides the greatest benefit to those in need using available resources. The coordinator should have a vision of a workable agreement along with trust in the group to develop it.

Consensus building processes help people to reach agreement on solutions to controversial problems. The facilitator promotes consensus by:

♦ Bringing the actors together
♦ Designing consensus-building processes (timing, activities, results expected, etc.)
♦ Encouraging communication and setting an atmosphere for constructive debate
♦ Clarifying issues to be addressed
♦ Helping parties obtain data they need to make decisions
♦ Clarifying interests, priorities and alternatives
♦ Identifying overlapping interests or areas of potential agreement
♦ Helping parties agree on criteria to evaluate solutions
♦ Recording discussion and points of agreements as they develop
♦ Helping anticipate implementation problems and addressing future conflicts

Dealing with conflict

Conflict and arguments are inevitable parts of most relationships. Conflict can encourage change and growth but it can also be destructive by obstructing consensus building or inhibiting participation by group members. The key to turning conflict into something constructive is flexibility. Facilitators can move conflict toward collaboration by taking a problem solving approach in which the parties attempt to find a solution that satisfies everyone, or the best acceptable solution. Many conflicts arise simply as a result of poor communications or misunderstandings about goals and expectations. There may be different perceptions and assumptions in the group; these should be examined to find the root cause of the conflict. Sometimes an argument will erupt between two parties who feel competitive when in fact both parties are seeking the same end.

Some recommended steps in a creative problem solving approach are:

1. **Test the perceptions of both parties**—People in conflicts are especially prone to making assumptions about the other party(s), distorting facts or attributing motives which may not be real. Therefore, focus on the problem, not the people or their emotions. Facts and figures must be clarified and common ground identified before people can pursue creative solutions to a problem.

2. **Analyze the problem in as much detail as possible**—To avoid becoming stuck with certain solutions, the problem should be stated clearly before solutions are suggested. It will help to have a specific statement of the problem along with some goals to be met. It is also critical to ask why one side is asserting a particular position or argument, to understand what they really need to achieve. The underlying interests behind the specific argument can often be met in many ways while stated positions and arguments are usually much more rigid.

3. **Generate possible solutions**—Once the problem is clear, generate as many ideas as possible, without passing judgment at first (brainstorming). People are less likely to hit an impasse when many options are being evaluated because they can consider the pros and cons of options more collaboratively.
4. **Evaluate solutions**—Evaluate the various solutions. The best way to choose a solution is by consensus so that the solution is acceptable to everyone. People should not be required to justify their choices if they would rather not. It may be easier at the beginning of a process to agree on criteria for selection of the best options. This will help to break impasses and give the parties a perspective on each other's problems.

In the following matrix, rate your own skills as objectively as you can. Later in this chapter you will design a plan for improving them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desired Skill Area for Coordination Practice</th>
<th>I am good at this</th>
<th>I can do this, but not consistently</th>
<th>This is difficult for me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trust and Relationship Building/Networking</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I conscientiously work at establishing trust over time with all other actors</td>
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<tr>
<td>I establish personal contacts wherever I go</td>
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<tr>
<td>I systematically organise the contact information for members of my network and find efficient ways to communicate with them</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I maintain my contacts through routine communications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always build my network of contacts and put them in contact with each other</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilitation/Consensus Building</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I try to think of all people in the group as having leadership potential—not just a few</td>
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<tr>
<td>I ask those who have not participated for their opinion</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I practice active listening, being non-judgmental and encouraging feedback</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I help to structure group discussions through agendas, ground rules and goal-setting</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dealing with Conflict</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand that perceptions and assumptions, including my own, are a major barrier to agreement</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to negotiate an agreement where everyone wins or is able to compromise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand and use the steps in creative problem solving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I perceive conflict as healthy and necessary but want to see it managed well</td>
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</table>
**Good Practices**

A number of important practices and tools form the basis for coordination. Each individual is a coordinator in his/her own right and is responsible for participating in these activities and using these tools consistently. These practices offer “value added”, which help to make coordination synergistic and greater than the sum of its parts. Critically, they contribute to our success as humanitarians as we conduct our daily work.

**Joint Analysis and Common Frames of Reference**

Because effective analysis of situations is time-consuming, sharing information is valuable to others and allows different perspectives to be revealed. When information is jointly collected and analysed, a common frame of reference is established. All actors should participate in joint analyses including joint assessments, monitoring and evaluations. Multi-agency teams should be gender balanced and include members from all partner organizations.

**Using Standardised Forms and Templates**

Standardised forms or templates for emergency assessment data, and planned and actual response activities are critical to coordination efforts. For example, when actors collect their own assessment data using unique formats and varying levels of detail, the combined analysis is often confusing and results may be questionable. Therefore, actors need to develop, adapt, or adopt existing templates to be used in the emergency response, and—most critically—agree to use them. The final forms must to be appropriate for the specific emergency, but can be developed very quickly.

What types of information can be efficiently collected using standardised forms and templates to enhance operational coordination?

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Many kinds of information can be usefully collected using standardised forms and templates. The following list provides several good examples of the kinds of forms and templates that might be useful for coordination.

- Assessment data
- Organizational ID / registration information
- Quality/specification of relief items
- Geographic information
  - place names
  - population data
  - damage assessments
Standardised Procedures in Kosovo

One of the main tasks of the HCIC Data Coordination unit is to promote the use of data standards in Kosovo. One of the simplest ways that data can be standardised is through the use of codes. An example is the way the Kosovo General Government Budget is organised:

- 01 General Public Services
- 02 Civil Emergency Service (Defence Affairs and Services)
- 03 Public Order and Safety Affairs

Using simple budget codes allows expenditures to be organised into general categories. If this same set of codes is used in all levels of government, from local to province wide, it is much easier to organise and account for all aspects of the budget.

Another type of data standardisation is the use of municipal codes and place codes. Municipality codes allow data to be organised at the municipal level. The use of a municipality code means that data for the municipality can be collected through either Serbian or Albanian names or a combination of the two. The code becomes a neutral organising tool. A complementary set of place codes (p codes) provides a unique identification number for every settlement in Kosovo. Using p codes allows data to be organised at the village or town level and permits various types of data sets collected at the village or town level to be linked. Because a spatial locator is built into every municipal and place code, data collected using this data standard can be readily represented on maps.

Databases & documentation

One of the aims of the Kosovo Encyclopedia is to encourage sharing of datasets or descriptions of datasets for the purpose of assisting in coordination and planning. Even though an agency or organisation may not wish to release their datasets, simply providing a description of the data that has been collected can be useful:

- Knowledge of the existence of a database can prevent duplication of efforts in developing new databases
- Existing databases can serve as templates for designing compatible datasets for linking archival and new data
- Standardisation of data collection permits multiple datasets to be linked for analysis
- Use of P-codes in datasets can allow data to be symbolised and mapped (see examples in GIS/Map Centre’s ‘Who is Doing What Where’ maps)

— HCIC website www.reliefweb.int/hcic/

Use of maps

When similar maps are used by all actors, they provide a common frame of reference vital for coordination. All actors involved in emergency operations and planning should study the maps and familiarise themselves with locations, and logistical and access issues.

“A very positive instrument which was appreciated by all field operators had been the creation of a Common Base Map containing uniform names for the different localities as well as essential planning data.”

— Evaluation of Lessons Learned in Kosovo, by a WFP evaluator.
Maps are often in short supply in emergencies. If you are deployed to an emergency site or are “backstopping” an emergency operation from headquarters, learn which maps are being used by operations already on the ground or find a map which has the largest scale. It is important that coordinating parties use the same maps when discussing joint activities. Detailed military maps with grid designator systems may be available from the military.

The lack of common situational awareness between the military and the IOs and NGOs is compounded by the lack of common maps. The CMOC staff generally uses 1:50,000 or 1:100,000 military maps. In most cases, this is not the same as what the IOs or NGOs use. With no common frame of reference, the use of grids to identify a location on the ground will not be easily passed to an organisation that has no military maps. A possible solution would be to procure selected map sheets of the areas where the IOs and NGOs are working and provide them to the lead agency in the area. If the maps are in short supply, the use of Rand McNally maps or a map downloaded from the Internet may facilitate the passing of information from the military to the IOs and NGOs. This method, however, has the potential for errors when converting a general location from a non-military map to a military map.

— The CMOC, MAJ Richard Vick, Battle Command Training Program, December 2001
http://call.army.mil/products/nftf/novdec01/novdec01ch2.htm

A wall map can be an invaluable tool in coordination meetings as well as in making decisions about geographical coordination strategies. Some organisations can provide detailed maps and diagrams prepared specifically for use in the emergency response.

A Planning Tool—UNHCR Maps from GIMU

“On the outset of an emergency, updated geographic information such as standard topographic maps, location of refugee camps, UNHCR offices, border crossings, areas of responsibility for agencies, landmined areas, road networks, land location of water resources are in high demand. Much of this information already exists in the Geographic Information and Mapping Unit (GIMU) databases. The GIMU processes more than 400 topographic maps at various scales, which can be scanned and delivered within 72 hours to the emergency team deployed.

The GIMU also maintains a digital database covering the entire world at 1:1M scale or below for specific countries (including road network, elevation, more than 500,000 cities/villages, administrative units at various levels, rivers and major environmental features, etc.) Thematic maps showing environmental parameters and other topics of interest, such as climatic information, can be produced within one day. Information such as border crossings, location of refugee camps and transit centres should be collected in the field during the emergency and maintained/stored in a Geographic Information System (GIS).

Joint Formulation of Strategies

Rather than simply a list of activities or organisational objectives, everyone in the operation needs a strategy that clearly sets out the vision, objectives and clear measurable goals in response to actual needs. For coordination to be truly effective, there has to be an agreed upon common strategy for the organisations which is supported by sound planning at the individual staff level. Agreeing on roles and responsibilities in an emergency can be very difficult. It requires a good leader or facilitator, but also the support of those who are willing to be creative—thinking beyond their own limited organisational mandates, and willing to coordinate and be coordinated.

The Gap Identification Worksheet

The Gap Identification (Gap ID) Sheet (or ‘Roles and Responsibilities’ grid used in the CAP process) is used to analyse any shortfalls or “gaps” between tasks that have to be done and the multiple organisations’ ability and interest to do them. The tool is generally set up as a matrix with organisations on one axis and tasks to be done (or areas of responsibility) on the other. This matrix can be used by groups working to cover the gaps. It is also shows who is doing what in the operation.

**Gap Identification Worksheets: Summary Sector-Level and Task-Level**

The sector-level summary table below can be used to determine roles and responsibilities for those actors likely to be involved in a future response. It is particularly useful in presenting action plans and working relationships to partners in a coordination meeting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>MIN/FA</th>
<th>MIN/AG</th>
<th>MIN/PH</th>
<th>MIN/INT</th>
<th>MIN/PW</th>
<th>UNHCR</th>
<th>WFP</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>RC</th>
<th>REF’S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water Systems</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistics/Transport</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection/Security</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In this Gap ID Sheet, gaps appear in the Sanitation and Education sectors: i.e., no agency or organization has yet taken responsibility for these two sectors.

A task-level sheet gives more detail on specific tasks, roles and responsibilities for a specific sector outlined in the contingency plan—in this example, the FOOD sector.

**FOOD Sector**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>MIN/FA</th>
<th>MIN/AG</th>
<th>MIN/PW</th>
<th>UNHCR</th>
<th>WFP</th>
<th>UNICEF</th>
<th>RC</th>
<th>REF’S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determine food needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine ration level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launch food appeal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up distribution syst.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare storage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport food to site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide weight scales</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide cooking sets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: This sheet shows a “gap” in the provision of cooking sets: i.e., no agency/organisation has yet taken responsibility for this task.
GAP ID sheets are easy to make with the table function in word processing software or widely-used spreadsheet programs. A plenary process, led by a facilitator, can be conducted to record agreements and arrangements as they are made. The tables should be disseminated through coordination meetings, e-mail, or the internet. An ongoing process of updating and posting the most recent matrix is an effective way to inform both coordinating partners and those who may design their own activities based on their understanding of what others are already doing.

**Agreement on Standards and Working Relationships**

Good coordination is often constrained by the lack of agreed-upon standards and pre-planned working relationships. When an emergency situation unfolds, actors often face barriers in their relationships with other actors. They often have no pre-set agreements on sharing operations and do not understand each other’s way of doing things. Furthermore, they are not certain what standards they should be aiming for in the response.

The ICRC has declared that conducting humanitarian activity in a stable and predictable manner is vital to fostering respect for humanitarian principles. Many NGOs and others have agreed to The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief and have supported the Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response. UNHCR has developed standards for refugee assistance found in the UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies. Actors need to agree on standards for their actions and then judge themselves against those standards through the use of monitoring and evaluation processes. It will be important to see that programs address changing circumstances and constraints.

| Are there standards that you will be measured against in the performance of your responsibilities in a humanitarian operation? Describe them below. |

---

**Using Memoranda of Understanding**

Working agreements promote coordination and can mitigate potential conflicts by clarifying interagency objectives, expectations, roles, responsibilities and commitments. They may take the form of memoranda of understanding (MOU) or letters of agreement among organisations, and should be in place well ahead of an emergency.

In the process of establishing an MOU, actors develop more trusting and understanding relationships. The MOU will serve as a point of reference throughout the working relationship and can help to solve disputes and to orient new staff members. The MOUs need to be reviewed periodically and/or updated when the actors and/or the context has changed.

Prototype MOUs which can be adapted to new situations, should be developed to save time during an emergency. MOUs among the UN agencies have helped significantly to streamline their coordination in emergencies. All humanitarian workers should be familiar with them as they define the division of labour in several key areas. The diagram below shows the linkages between some of
the UN agencies as reflected in existing MOUs. Some of the MOUs note practical divisions of labour while others simply mention intent and are flexible in terms of operations planning. The arrows in the diagram show the MOUs between the UN organisations. The date shown is the date the MOU was established. The listing gives the chronology of the development of these agreements.

Existing working links relating to emergency humanitarian response between UN agencies that have been formalised into MOUs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOU</th>
<th>Main Areas of Coordination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WFP/UNHCR 2002</td>
<td>• WFP and UNHCR conduct joint assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• UNHCR is responsible for delivery from EDPs and ultimate distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• WFP is responsible for food for all populations of concern over 5,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR/UNICEF March 1996</td>
<td>• UNICEF is involved in both development and relief programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• UNHCR is responsible for development compatible relief programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• UNICEF will supply materials for carrying out needed measles vaccinations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• UNICEF will be responsible for the needs of the local host country population in coordination with the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF/WFP February 1998</td>
<td>• UNICEF is responsible for providing nutritional assessment and therapeutic programmes for undernourished children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• WFP is responsible for logistical aspects and provision of general food basket</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the diagram above, the greatest number of signed MOUs are among the three agencies UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP. What might explain this fact?

It is not surprising that the greatest number of MOUs (relating mainly to emergency operations) exist between WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF. They have resulted from the coordinated roles that the organisations must play in emergencies in order to achieve the desired impact. Some of the key points covered in the MOUs that relate specifically to emergency operations are presented below. You are encouraged to find and read all of these MOUs and to be up-to-date with revisions and modifications as these are subject to occasional review and change.
Advocating for Mutual Values

The strength of the humanitarian operation will be highlighted by its advocacy for the protection of basic human rights, whether through negotiating with warring parties, lobbying host governments or briefing the media. A cohesive force in advocacy helps secure funds and greater support for humanitarian causes. Advocacy is strongest when it combines the voices of many rather than depending on only the loudest few.

In this matrix, compare yourself to good coordination practices. Later you will develop a plan to help yourself move toward these practices if you are not already there.

### Good Practices in Coordination for Integrated Responses in Emergencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joint Analysis and Common Frames of Reference</th>
<th>I do this most of the time</th>
<th>I am working on doing this</th>
<th>I do not do this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I participate in joint needs assessments, and monitoring and evaluation exercises</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I analyse the causes and dynamics of the conflict and other contextual issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learn about the possible security risks posed by the situation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learn about the local refugee protection issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find out about the strategies of local and international political and military parties in relation to humanitarian activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the coping strategies of the affected people so my programs do not undermine them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make a point of using and sharing lessons learned from past experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I share my analyses with other actors and organisations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use common tools for analysis such as maps and standardised forms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joint Formulation of Strategies</th>
<th>I do this most of the time</th>
<th>I am working on doing this</th>
<th>I do not do this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understand the vision of my organisation and seek to understand that of others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My objectives for my work are clearly defined</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The tasks that I must undertake to achieve the objectives are clearly set out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a clear sense of direction and clear measurable targets to aim for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask affected people about their needs and resources and coordinate with other assistance actors to fill the gaps, using the GAP ID tool</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider both refugee protection and assistance in my programs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider needs for relief, rehabilitation and longer term strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I engage all stakeholders in my planning, including national and local actors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am flexible in planning to allow for fast moving events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement on Standards and Working Relationships</th>
<th>I do this most of the time</th>
<th>I am working on doing this</th>
<th>I do not do this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I seek to follow standards that have been agreed upon for the integrated response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my daily work, I use internationally agreed standards, such as UNHCR’s, Sphere’s and the Code of Conduct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In my planning, I include components for monitoring and evaluation.

I evaluate programs against international and standards and goals and objectives set out in planning documents.

I am willing to consider creative solutions for covering gaps in assistance even if it is not specifically in my mandate.

I have agreements in place to cover all joint arrangements before an emergency happens.

I understand what resources I have to offer and what other actors have to offer so that our resources can be shared and optimised.

Advocating for Mutual Values

I consider advocacy to be part of my daily work and I deliberately plan for advocacy action.

I work to achieve impartiality in administering my programs.

When there is an opportunity to change a force against human rights, I propose a plan of action.

I work with others to add strength to advocacy actions.

In looking over these practice and skill areas, think about your own performance and expand the concepts to be more relevant to your role in coordination. Describe possible limiting and enabling factors and note how you can improve in each area, considering the limiting and enabling factors within and outside your organisation or environment. Means for improvement may include, but are not limited to:

- Training and distance learning
- Using the skills you already have but neglect to draw on
- Reading books on the topics
- Emulating people with the needed skills

Based on your responses, think about the areas or skills where you need the most improvement. Next consider possible factors that could limit your improvement as well as those that would tend to encourage you. Finally think through a practical action plan for improving each skill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prioritised practice or skill areas which need strengthening</th>
<th>Limiting and enabling factors</th>
<th>What will I do to improve?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Personal Motivations

Motivation is usually defined as, “The needs or desires one has to enter into activities that lead to certain goals.” Motivation begins with fulfilling our basic needs and then moves to the next level of fulfilling emotional needs (love, belonging, esteem of others, sense of accomplishment and achievement). The ultimate level of motivation concerns our need to be our best and achieve our full potential. Some of the case examples given at the end of Chapter 4 demonstrate the powerful coordination experience that can result when people desire to coordinate and be coordinated.

The current state of coordination is a mixed bag for several reasons. First, competition for funds and the desire for visibility undermine coordination. Second, the focus of NGOs on sensitive security issues rather than on programming hinders their willingness to work with other NGOs. (Variations in the perceived threshold of tolerable security conditions may severely complicate joint activities.) The third factor revolves around the personalities involved. Some individuals are more willing than others to work together. Clearly, what has developed in Afghanistan, as in other such settings, is less a “system” than a series of ad-hoc arrangements. As is often the case, creative people at the field level find ways of working together despite well-known problems of a headquarters and operational nature.

— NGO Policy Dialogue XI, Afghanistan Revisited, April 30, 2002

What motivates you to coordinate and collaborate? Include all factors that affect you, such as feelings you anticipate when coordination is successful, hopes for personal advancement in various ways, etc.

Compare your answer to the following list of some typical motivators: more interesting work assignments, recognition for your efforts, awards for achievement, increase in benefits or perks, leadership in the coordination group, enhanced relationships, the joy of teamwork, more security, better status, salary increases, spiritual or humanitarian values.

Without understating the importance of money, there are many other rewards that may be equally or more important. These include job variety, autonomy, decision-making authority, a sense of growing, developing and doing work one can take pride in. When you or your co-workers are not feeling motivated, it will be important to stop and analyse why. Only motivated people will routinely deliver exceptional performance, and those who are not motivated may under-perform, despite their abilities. Some of the problems may be:

♦ The climate of the organisation is not conducive to promoting coordination
♦ The employee does not have the needed security and/or resources he/she requires
♦ The work team may not be skilled in promoting team building and communications
♦ There may be a lack of leadership resulting in loss of direction and meaning for the team
♦ The perceived rewards may not be proportional to the effort and difficulties
♦ The individual may be constricted by failure of the organisation or the coordination body to adapt to changing needs
If you are not feeling particularly motivated to coordinate with others, or the typical rewards for motivation do not exist, what steps can you take to change these conditions?

Your answers might include:
- Discussions with supervisors regarding motivators for coordination that the organisation can provide
- Seeking enhanced learning experiences like fieldwork, training courses or teaching
- Working on multi-agency teams to determine standards for coordination
- Enlarging your network and calling on your contacts to brainstorm some solutions
- Using the compelling arguments for coordination as a means to promote effective humanitarian action.

In your experience, where and when does good coordination happen most often?

Compare your answers to those provided in the following list compiled from interviews and discussions with successful coordinators:
- Among small numbers of humanitarian actors
- In informal rather than formal ways
- Where relationships have been built over time
- Where shared technical expertise facilitates communication
- When the focus is on how to achieve shared goals rather than agency profiles
- Where incentives to coordinate are increased
- Where coordination adds value
- Where there is a focus on the people in need of assistance
Describe the situations in which you might coordinate at an interagency level. Are they physical places or communication methods, like e-mail, electronic bulleting boards, and e-chat rooms?

Given the difficulties in successfully implementing formal coordination in the humanitarian system as described in Chapter 3, one must often turn to more informal methods to complement the broader exercise of coordination. Experience has shown in public and private forums that, particularly for the efficient transfer of information, informal channels are often more effective than formal structures. Informal channels are built upon reciprocity and trust and thus can often promote creative alternatives.

In the world of coordination of international humanitarian response, where command and control structures are tentative at best, both formal and informal channels must be used. NGOs and representatives of bilateral donor actions cannot ignore the UN’s activities to meet the needs of the displaced/refugees, or vice versa, as each has an effect on the other. If you feel more comfortable with informal methods and small groups, you may wish to build on those opportunities first. Conversely, if you are used to attending large meetings, you may wish to cultivate facilitation and consensus building skills.

Referring to Chapters 2 and 3, make a list of the actors that represent different perspectives in humanitarian assistance. List the meetings and informal spaces where you might interact with these actors. List the reasons why you interact and coordinate with them now or why you may have failed to interact with them. List your plans for initiating or expanding interactions with them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Possible meetings/Interactions/Communications</th>
<th>Reasons why I do or do not interact/coordinate with them</th>
<th>Plans for expanding my interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affected people or beneficiaries</td>
<td>EXAMPLE: Focus groups, meetings with community leaders, email, chat rooms, through local NGOs</td>
<td>EXAMPLE: They are the focus of all programs and operations but difficult to reach; lack united approach</td>
<td>EXAMPLE: Find out how others maintain communications; talk to others who have visited them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other UN Agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other NGOs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Cross, ICRC, IFRC, or National Societies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military, UN forces or others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donor representatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Certain personal skill areas are vital to success in coordination including:

- trust and relationship building
- networking
- facilitation
- consensus building
- dealing with conflict

Good practices, used consistently, are essential to support an integrated coordinated response. These include:

- joint analysis and use of common frames of reference
- joint formulation of strategies
- agreement on standards and working relationships
- advocating for mutual values

Tools that should be regularly used in coordination are:

- networking and communications tools such as mobile phones
- standardised forms and templates
- common frames of reference such as maps
- Memoranda of Understanding and other working agreements
- Gap ID or Roles and Responsibilities Charts

Coordinators need to assess their personal abilities honestly and seek to attain the level of good practice through a planned program of action goals. Personal motivations are a major force in coordination. Where people lack a system of rewards and incentives, they may neglect coordination, despite having the needed skills.

If lack of motivation is a constraint, a careful analysis is required in terms of personal motivators, problems and solutions. People should seek ways to coordinate that they find most comfortable but develop skills for those situations where they are not.

Both formal and informal channels are important for coordination.
Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Being a good coordinator relies on inherited personal traits and cannot be learned or trained.
2. Your response to highly competitive behavior in a humanitarian operation should also be highly competitive—especially when mutual goals are at stake.
3. Networking includes using your contacts’ networks as well as your own.
4. Many conflicts arise from poor communications and misunderstandings.
5. Formal coordination mechanisms are always more effective than informal channels.

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Networking is similar to contingency planning in that:
   A. You must decide on the scenario that is most likely to happen in order to best prepare for it
   B. It is based on cultivating your contacts before you need them
   C. It allows you to take much more than you put in to the system
   D. It naturally develops on its own.

7. Practices not to use in networking include:
   A. Reciprocating with those who have helped you through offering support and feedback
   B. Sharing confidential information or information harmful to another’s relationships
   C. Distributing up-to-date business cards
   D. Recording and filing information on a new contacts within 24 hours
8. Which of the following could be significant in achieving coordination?
   A Agreement on standards and procedures
   B Effective use of informal channels
   C Personal motivations
   D A good set of agreed maps and common system for archiving and retrieving information from them

9. The recommended frequency for implementing good coordination practice during an emergency response is:
   A Whenever coordination meetings are taking place
   B Continuously
   C In the field at the onset of an emergency
   D At the end of emergency operations when there are clear ‘lessons learned’

10. Which of the following techniques are elements of active listening?
    A Encourage
    B Restate
    C Explain
    D Summarise
<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<td>10</td>
<td>A, B and D</td>
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Making the Most of Coordination Meetings

By studying this chapter you will learn about:

- Ways to improve your own and others’ attitudes about the value of coordination meetings
- The impact of meeting timing and dynamics
- The need to facilitate (and be facilitated) in coordination meetings
- The types of locations that can improve meeting attendance and performance
- Hosting arrangements that build ownership and consensus among participants
- Making your meetings more action-oriented

“I don’t have time for any more coordination meetings!”

This statement probably sounds familiar to anyone who has been in an international emergency response operation. It sums up a common feeling among overworked and under-supported staff that coordination meetings simply add additional and unnecessary work. Many humanitarian actors have learned through painful experience that making the effort to meet often does not pay off in terms of achieving immediate goals. The time taken to plan for and attend meetings seems at times to conflict with the need to take immediate action.

When coordination meetings are not well organised or are unclear in both their objectives and outcomes, they become a burden rather than a support. You can help make coordination meetings more efficient and effective by being a better meeting planner, facilitator, and attendee. This chapter provides some practical advice for all of these roles.

Ways to Improve Coordination Meetings

Actors in a humanitarian operation probably meet most often face-to-face in the venue of the coordination meeting. The degree to which the meeting is organised to produce results and the quality of the participation affects the way actors see the entire coordination process. A common problem in coordination is the failure of actors to feel ownership of the process. One danger is that actors who feel left out or marginalised will seek their own parallel mechanisms. It is therefore crucial that the meetings represent a process that includes key actors, respects what each has to say and the resources they have to offer, and promotes consensus building to achieve the best outcome for the affected people.
Whether you are a meeting planner, facilitator or attendee, you can contribute to making meetings more productive. Some practices that promote ownership are described below.

1. Develop a positive attitude toward meetings by seeing them as a vital part of coordination practice
2. Invite everyone appropriate for the task
3. Meet in a safe and accessible place for all attendees
4. Set an agenda and keep to the scheduled timing
5. Use good facilitation skills whether you are the key facilitator or not, e.g. share as well as listen, treat all attendees as equals, etc.
6. Help the group come to decisions and demand prompt follow-up from yourself and others
7. Prepare written minutes and distribute them quickly.

1. Develop a positive attitude toward meetings

One of the biggest problems with coordination meetings is that people tend to see them as a distraction from the “real work” rather than a critical part of the work itself. If you catch yourself saying, “I am glad that this meeting is over—now I can get back to work!” something is wrong with the meetings you are attending. Success will depend on the attitude you bring to the meeting and your ability to positively influence the process, regardless of your role in the meeting.

How can you change attitudes about the value of coordination meetings in your next emergency response?

Remind yourself and your team that most decisions for the use of resources to meet critical needs depend on the actions of other responders. Decisions often have to be multi-actor decisions as no single agency or organisation has all of the information or the resources needed. You can make clear to others that you expect the meeting to be focused on the immediate work at hand and to be of operational value to you, your colleagues, and those depending on your humanitarian assistance.

2. Invite everyone appropriate to the task

As described in Chapter 4, membership is a factor that influences the success of coordination efforts. The trade-off involved with membership is that wider participation produces a more accepted outcome, while group processes are generally more efficient and easier to manage with fewer members.
What can be gained from inviting a large number of people to a coordination meeting?

Resources are unevenly spread among assistance providers. No resource, however, large or small, should be overlooked or wasted, especially in large emergencies. To avoid the creation of separate mechanisms that may duplicate efforts or waste resources, all actors should be included—in some way. Several methods may be used to manage the actors when the numbers become large:

- Set ground rules or put other guidelines in place to efficiently manage a large number of participants
- Create special working groups to find solutions to the coordination process itself
- Create umbrella groups or sectoral groups, in which a number of organisations may work together in a specific geographical area or in a technical sector
- Have working groups designate a member to represent them at meetings.

One common frustration occurs when some participants are simply “observers” for their organisations and are not authorised to make decisions or commit resources. Other organisations may follow suit and soon the meeting may consist of nothing more than a facilitator and observers. This may contribute to limited information sharing and updating but will likely not promote the coordination initiative very effectively.

Humanitarian workers should attend coordination meetings with the determination to “get some work done”. If your organisation is asked to attend, discuss the need for sending someone to the meeting who can make decisions for the organisation and who can also follow-up any commitments made in the meeting with actions.

Immediate Coordination in Kigoma

We had a meeting with the agencies that night—and we were a very small number of people between the Tanzanian Red Cross, MSF Spain, ourselves. . . . So we weren’t very many people—so we basically split up what we were doing.

We contacted all of the other agencies in Kigoma and around to tell them—‘OK . . . It’s happened—start getting stuff up as quickly as possible.’ We contacted Geneva, and early the next morning each of us went down the path that was decided the night before.

— Maureen Connelly, UNHCR, talking about coordination of the response to the refugee influx in Ngara, Tanzania 1994.
3. Meet in a safe and accessible place for all attendees

The location of the meeting and the quality of arrangements can either facilitate or constrain attendance. In fast-developing emergency situations security, shelter, and the ability to communicate with headquarters may be the most important factors.

**Coordination in East Timor**

On 20 September 1999 (“D-day”), the first INTERFET (International Forces in East Timor) forces deployed to Dili, East Timor. On the same day, the Secretary General’s Special Representative and the Humanitarian Coordinator, accompanied by a core group of UN agency staff, also traveled to Dili and established Dili as centre for the coordination of humanitarian assistance within East Timor. From that moment, the coordination centre in Darwin became a logistical support centre. During the first four days after D-day, all UN personnel were accommodated within the Australian Consulate in Dili, almost the only building that had remained unharmed throughout the crisis. Coordination meetings were held around a small table in the basement, and floor space was soon saturated with cots and foam mattresses. INTERFET meanwhile established camp at the “Helipad”, a WWII airstrip close to the Australian Consulate, in use as airfield for helicopters.

— CIMIC in East Timor, Michael Elmquist, OCHA, 1999

What might be the possible effects of hosting coordination meetings in a military compound?

What might be the possible effects of hosting a coordination meeting in a Government Office building?

What might be the possible effects of hosting a coordination meeting in an NGO compound?
Now consider the following characteristics of different types of meeting locations and compare the effects on participation with your answers above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Affect on Participation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting is held in insecure location close to danger zones</td>
<td>Meeting attendees themselves may be targeted.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Field-oriented actors may be more likely to attend.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Security situation as well as immediate context is more understood by coordinators.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Organisations with higher levels of restriction on movement may not be able to attend.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting is held in a building with strict security access restrictions</td>
<td>Attendees may feel more secure.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Some attendees, particularly national counterparts, may have difficulty attending the meeting or clearing security procedures.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Those who pass the security after questioning or security challenge may contribute differently after being “hassled at the door” for security reasons.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting is held in a military compound</td>
<td>Some organisations may not agree to participate in activities hosted by the military.</td>
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<td>Security may be so high as to restrict access to some coordinating partners.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Military compound may come under attack.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting is held in a centrally-located UN compound</td>
<td>Access should be relatively open, but some security protocols will be in place as above.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Should help with UN interagency coordination unless the room or building itself is seen as one agency’s “turf.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting is held in a large internat’l NGO compound</td>
<td>May be seen as aligned towards the hosting NGO, this is less so if the meeting is held at different locations on a rotating basis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting is held in national government offices</td>
<td>Government security may be difficult in some cases.</td>
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<td>Some organisations may resist being seen to be in alignment with the national government and may not attend.</td>
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<td>Coordination and sense of ownership on the part of government agencies should be higher (except in the case of inter-ministerial tension when the building or room is seen to be the turf of one Ministry).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting is held in the national capital far from the humanitarian field situation</td>
<td>Meeting may be attended by higher-level staff from the organisations invited.</td>
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<td>The attendees may be out of touch with field realities outside of the capital area.</td>
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<td>The meeting is more likely to attract local and in some cases international media interest.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting is held in a centrally located hotel meeting space</td>
<td>Lunch and/or coffee can be provided.</td>
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<td>Venue is likely seen as “neutral” unless it is a very expensive hotel.</td>
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In general, try to meet in a place or space that has a “neutral feel.” Consider the following advice from a military planner in relation to setting up CMOC offices away from military compounds. Even though the feeling of neutrality in the coordination space is important, simple logistical needs, ease of access, and information are more important. First meet practical needs, then work to ensure that a “neutral space” of working environment is provided.
Keeping a “Neutral Feel” in Civil/Military Coordination

Commanders who form Civil Military Operations Centers (CMOCs) to help accomplish their mission should keep in mind that the people who staff the NGOs may be uncomfortable around the military environment of a tactical operations centre (TOC); thus, it is prudent to establish the CMOC away from any TOC.

Commanders and those who staff the CMOC must thoroughly understand the capabilities of all of the special forces within the command — especially those elements which the commander may commit to the CMOC effort. During the initial coordination meeting with the NGOs, it is important that expectations and capabilities be discussed so that everyone understands the realities of the situation and the extent of the resources available to support NGO activities and initiatives. The idea is to strive for synergy through mutual support and cooperation.

Commanders need to equip the CMOC with phones, computers, fax machines, copiers (along with adequate automation maintenance support), and ancillary office items. Interpreters may also be needed to handle incoming calls. If radios are used between military and NGO participants, a common frequency must be established as well as appropriate call signs.


4. Set an agenda and keep on the schedule

A basic principle of meeting management is simply to write and stick to an agenda. It is very tempting to divert from a pre-set agenda in emergency situations when need and information change quickly and there is constant evolution of the emergency response. On the other hand, agendas should allow some flexibility to accommodate issues that arise and to promote spontaneous discussion in order to reach creative solutions.

Once a coordination meeting and schedule is set, agenda items develop as the situation demands. Security, procurement, logistics, or situation updates are typically key issues that are on every agenda. One of the most important agendas to agree on is the first, since it has no previous meeting minutes or pre-set agenda to fall back on.

Coordination—Morning and Night

Within three days after D-day, a pattern of CIMIC (NATO’s Civil Military Coordination) had evolved. Each morning started with a 7:30 meeting of the heads of UN Agencies (in the UNHOC dining room). First item on the agenda would be “Matters related to the military,” thus enabling a member of the UN CIMIC Team to participate in the 08:00 “Commander's briefing” at INTERFET HQ. This briefing was classified “INTERFET Eyes Only," and the fact that the presence of a civilian UN representative was tolerated is a testimony to the good common sense that prevailed. It is worth noting, however, that the briefing on the civil/humanitarian situation was given by the INTERFET CIMIC officer, not by the UN representative.
Each evening, INTERFET CIMIC officers would participate in the 17:30 meeting at UNHOC. The meetings routinely started with a daily security update, provided by INTERFET. At the first such meetings (while still at the Australian Consulate), the INTERFET CIMIC officer was inundated with requests for protection of key installations and for provision of escorts. This quickly led to the need for a more formalised system by which requests for military support were to be submitted in writing (on a form prepared by INTERFET) preferably 48 hours in advance through the OCHA CIMIC Team.

— CIMIC in East Timor, Michael Elmquist, OCHA, 1999

Here are some alternatives for dealing with important information that can minimise disruption of the meeting.

♦ Schedule more frequent, task-focused and shorter meetings. Use these events to introduce the new or emerging agenda items so that the right people can be advised of the agenda items before the main coordination meeting begins.

♦ During the meeting, establish a “parking lot” or a “bin” for issues that arise in the discussion that are important, but not on the agenda. These items can be handled at the end of the meeting, by subgroups interested in the issue or may simply be incorporated into the next meeting’s agenda if the issue does not demand immediate attention.

♦ If the new issues are overwhelmingly important, count a show of hands or otherwise gain a consensus that it is to everyone’s benefit to throw out the current agenda (in this case the original agenda items go into the “bin”) and deal with the issue at hand. The point here is that you must remain flexible, but within the norm of predictable structure and procedures.

5. Use good facilitation skills whether you are the key facilitator or not

As discussed in the previous chapter, good facilitation skills should be used by all actors whether they are assigned to be the leader or not. These include bringing out the leadership potential of everyone, ensuring that everyone present is included in the discussion, setting the tone for honest exchange, and using active listening techniques. Facilitators need to anticipate problems and impasses that may occur. They can go over the agenda, rehearsing the questions that may come up and how to best handle them.

I think the need for coordination and cooperation went extremely well from the beginning. We were faced with such huge problems that none of us could afford to go out on our own without affecting what we were trying to do, but also what everyone else was trying to do. I think you’ve got to meet, you’ve got to discuss, you’ve got to have different viewpoints and then consensus at the end. I think that if any agency imposes completely on another, your coordination will go.

— Maureen Connelly (UNHCR) reflecting on the coordination of the response to the Ngara, Tanzania refugee influx in 1994.

All actors at meetings need to be able to both describe what they are trying to do as well as to listen to others. They must adjust their own activities to benefit, allow, or at least not conflict with other partners’ agendas, initiatives, or programmes. This requires active listening, looking for ways to facilitate the work of others and making clear your own activities and goals.

It is of critical that goals, aspirations and mandates are not confused with actual funded projects and initiatives, however. Overstating capacity or technical expertise in such meetings may actually lead to those in need not receiving support or assistance even when the need is well known. Consider the following chain of events.
Coordination, Commitment, and Follow-Through

In the Kosovo emergency response, there was a steady stream of new NGOs arriving daily looking for a way to fit into the ongoing response program. NGOs were coordinating along several different lines simultaneously, some specialized in the shelter sector for example, while others involved themselves in nutrition, education and other areas. As these divisions became clear, each sector was further divided, for example by district or according to sub-speciality, for example urban or rural shelter programs.

With winter quickly approaching, shelter coordination meetings began to develop in the local districts. At one such meeting, three NGOs reported that they planned to move into a village that had not been “programmed” by anyone for shelter repair. Two weeks later it was determined that none of them actually had the funding to do so. Apparently, upon hearing that other NGOs were already beginning operations in the village, each NGO decided to withdraw its plans. The end result was that no one began shelter work in the village! The coordination meeting had been the mechanism by which all three agencies “got out of each other’s way” with the result that needed aid was not delivered.

— Jim Good, InterWorks, recalling a Shelter Programme in Kosovo, 1999

The above situation may not have happened if the GAP ID (Roles and Responsibility) charts were being used effectively. The facilitator should also use flip charts, white-boards, or chalk boards to keep the agenda in view, catch key inputs and give all participants a chance to verify that what is being recorded correctly captures their meaning. A map of the operations area should be posted in the meeting room or projected on the wall.

6. Help the group come to a decision and demand prompt follow-up

Coordination meetings must facilitate decision-making and development of a plan of action. In order to reach consensus on a plan, discussions of pros and cons, background context, and exploration of options are all critical tasks. The facilitator’s task is to lead people through these discussions toward decisions and then to seek commitment for follow-up actions. If decisions on key issues cannot be made in the meeting, form a working group or task force to make those decisions later. A task force might also be appointed to encourage follow-up after the meeting.

What are some tips that you could recommend to meeting chairpersons to help ensure that discussion items are translated into action terms?
Recollections about a Coordinator

Randolph Kent was the first Humanitarian Coordinator in Kosovo and was present from the onset of the very first coordination meetings in Pristina, June 14, 1999. He was generally well accepted as the coordinator for several reasons:

1. He was from UNDP and seconded to OCHA. As such, he was not from any of the key operational emergency response agencies on the ground—and so seemed a neutral person which was important at that point. However, he was not automatically resented as an outsider either, largely due to the fact that he was on the scene from Day 1.

2. Coordination is most needed at the beginning. Efforts that start too late, with too little resources or inexperienced coordinators often face resentment from field staff that are already too far along their own path to make changes easily, and who have already solved initial problems on their own.

3. He held meetings in the UNHCR warehouse, which, in the early days of the return, was the only place already cleared of mines and UXO and so was a primary place for UN and NGO field staff to congregate. It was convenient and safe. In the beginning, people sat in the warehouse on bales of blankets for chairs.

4. He kept everything short and to the point. When things needed further follow-up between concerned parties, he would name the parties out loud and direct them to meet in this or that corner (always pointing to a specific place and using specific names). This facilitated direct and immediate action and provided some structure and direction, even in this loose way, for those with shared concerns to meet independently of the whole group. In this way he always put some closure or ‘actionable next step’ to all issues that were raised in the meeting.

5. Meetings were held twice a day in the first days, then daily, then weekly as the need became less and formal coordination structures began to develop. Particularly in the beginning, he announced that the meetings would be one hour long and he always kept to that schedule.

   — Interview with George Devendorf, International Mercy Corps (IMC), March 2002

7. Keep written minutes and distribute them quickly

We all tend to remember things the way we interpret them, not necessarily the way they really happened. The practice of keeping written minutes and approving them in the subsequent meeting gives the chance for people to comment and to correct misunderstandings.

One method of keeping minutes allows them to be viewed as the meeting progresses. Use flipcharts and markers to record key points or project minutes onto a large screen or monitor as they are being typed. A period of time may be designated at the end of the meeting to review them in plenary. This quick review makes it possible to disseminate the minutes shortly after the meeting adjourns.
By 1997, monthly interagency meetings were taking place in Kigoma, the regional office to which the sub-offices of Ngara and Kibondo reported. This half-day meeting was the most regular and comprehensive and was attended by the entire staff of sector specialists and coordinators of UNHCR, as well as by most NGO directors and team leaders. Unfortunately, because of transportation difficulties, not all NGOs attended regularly.

In the view of some NGOs, these meetings seemed, overall, to perform a “social” function; although issues were discussed and data on mortality rates examined, clear conclusions, concrete actions, and deadlines were rarely forthcoming. However, the validity of these claims is cast in some doubt by this researcher’s observations of the minutes of these meetings, which were of fairly high quality—comprehensive in substance but not overly detailed. The best minutes for the purpose of general information are not swamped in detail, but lay out the general concerns and actions by agency. These minutes circulate as monthly interagency memos and inform staff working in the region about other NGO initiatives and issues, as well as UNHCR activities.


In general, minutes should reflect two things: (i) what concrete information was provided to the meeting (facts, figures); and (ii) what decisions were taken. To avoid the high chance of misinterpretation, it is best to not try to summarize discussions, opinions or arguments. When the same person is responsible for writing the minutes in each meeting, their skills in doing so will be further developed over time. They may also be assigned the responsibility of reminding people to attend the next meeting.

**Meeting Management Tools**

Some examples of meeting planning tools follow. It is helpful to set up a supply list on the computer so it can be altered as needed. A diagram of the basic layout of the meeting space helps to troubleshoot problems in the arrangement. The layout should project an air of professionalism and aid in building rapport between facilitators and participants. Radios and fax machines should be located far enough away from the actual meeting location so as not to interfere with participants’ hearing one another. Another important tool is a coordination meeting procedure checklist (see example below) or guideline for running the meeting that can be passed on to replacement staff or to revolving chairpersons of the meetings. This format can be also be distributed to attendees to facilitate their participation. If you have the chance to host or chair a coordination meeting or task force, use the opportunity to set an example. Others will be happy to copy a successful model.
Coordination Meeting Supply List

- Maps of the area
  SCALE: 1:50,000 or 1:100,000.
  Have a map for each participant.
- Six tables
- Twenty-four chairs
- Four tablets of flip chart paper/easels/pens
- Several rolls of acetate for overlays
- Large coffee pot/coffee cups
- Twenty-four spiral note books
- Two boxes of pens
- Four packs of 3x5 cards
- Stapler
- One box of staples
- One box of adhesive dots
- Pertinent background documents/situation reports—photocopied for each participant

Coordination Meeting Action List

- Have meeting space, wall maps, flipcharts, markers, and laptop computer ready.
- Start on time.
- Call to order.
- Announce purpose of meeting.
- Set a deadline to adjourn.
- Appoint (or call for) a secretary to maintain records of the meeting’s actions or recommendations.
- Have participants introduce themselves and their organizations.
- Encourage participation by ensuring that all have a chance to speak.
- Set out priorities and goals for the meeting and get consensus on them.
- Identify what information is needed by whom and the key information that everyone needs. Call for information on each of these points from the attendees.
- Finally, identify priority issues, actions, or agenda points and agree upon a prioritised agenda and a schedule for completion of each point.
- Do not leave any question or issue that is raised in the meeting unanswered or unattended. If it can’t be dealt with in the meeting, call for interested people to meet on it immediately after the meeting. If it can be scheduled for the next agenda, do that.
- Agree on the day, time, and location of the next meeting.
- Adjourn on schedule.
Whether you are a meeting planner, facilitator or attendee, you can contribute to making meetings more productive. Some practices that promote respect and ownership of the coordination process are:

Meetings by seeing them as a vital part of coordination practice.

Invite everyone but as appropriate for the task.

Meet in a safe and accessible place for all attendees.

Set an agenda and keep to the scheduled timing.

Use good facilitation skills whether you are the key facilitator or not, e.g. share as well as listen, treat all attendees as equals, etc.

Help the group come to decisions and demand prompt follow-up from yourself and others.

Keep written minutes and distribute them quickly.

Use proven tools to plan and run meetings in a professional way.
Chapter 6
Self-Assessment Questions

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. Even good coordination meetings represent additional demands on your time that could be better spent on the real work that is involved in humanitarian response operations.  
   T   F

2. Organizational representatives at coordination meetings should come prepared to commit resources and make decisions.  
   T   F

3. Large group processes are always detrimental to coordination and therefore some actors must be excluded from coordination processes.  
   T   F

4. Facilitation skills are only pertinent to the person chairing the meeting.  
   T   F

5. The facilitator should not share procedural guidelines for holding the meeting in order to avoid interference from the participants.  
   T   F

Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Humanitarian responders to emergencies sometimes find which of the following reasons not to attend coordination meetings:
   A   The effort does not seem to pay off in terms of helping them achieve their goals
   B   They might feel marginalised in the coordination process
   C   People use meetings to take needed breaks from work
   D   A and B

7. Which of the following is true about the location of meetings?
   A   It generally has no effect on the number of attendees
   B   The feeling of being in a neutral space is critical to many participants
   C   A military compound is generally the safest spot
   D   Enhanced security means that everyone can attend
8. Actions that help keep the meeting on time and allow the goals to be achieved include all of the following except:

A ‘Roundtable’ facilitation, where each attendee facilitates a part of the meeting in order to guarantee the widest possible ownership

B Putting issues that arise in a ‘parking lot’ or ‘bin’ for discussion later

C Troubleshooting by the facilitator to help predict problems that might derail the meeting

D Setting shorter and more frequent meetings

9. The tool listed below that is most useful for clarifying unmet needs and assigning responsibilities for the purpose of overall coordination is:

A The Gantt Chart

B The GAP ID

C The Flip Chart

D The Logframe

10. The task of keeping practical written meeting minutes involves:

A Recording the concrete information that was given (facts and figures)

B Summaries of arguments

C Decisions that were taken

D A and C

Chapter 6 Answers

1. F   6. D
2. T   7. B
3. F   8. A
5. F   10. D
Ten Ideas that Work

This chapter encompasses some of the key lessons learned and best practices regarding coordination of international humanitarian operations.

1. What is best for the affected people transcends what is best for any single agency's reputation.
2. Coordination systems ought to be clear and well understood.
3. Governments have a right, a responsibility, and the authority to coordinate.
4. All humanitarian organizations have a right to exist.
5. There is no single best model—build on what you find.
6. Coordination requires resources.
7. Start early, stay late.
8. Agree on operational standards.
10. Individuals can make a difference.

“Have we learned anything about coordination, after all?”

1. What is best for the affected people transcends what is best for any single agency’s reputation.

The refugees, displaced, besieged, and disaster-affected communities we serve come first. They are not only the recipients of assistance but they are also major stakeholders in the process. Coordination is not an end in itself. If the coordinating mechanisms established do not lead to a humanitarian goal, they should be changed or abandoned. In fact, actors who do not keep the affected population in focus often fail in their own missions. Consider the following two statements and think about the central message of each.

There is one further key ingredient for effective humanitarian action and coordination upon which even the best laid plans and procedures depend: a focus on the people who are in need. No structures or incentives can fundamentally compensate for a lack of commitment to an effective, coordinated response to the needs of beneficiaries. Indeed, often such focus and commitment has to compensate for the absence of effective plans and procedures, and to overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of coordinated responses.
Yet all too often, the pressures to play to agency goals and agendas can obscure the fundamental goal of any humanitarian response. In the words of one UN agency member in the DRC, ‘the focus here is not on the ‘product.’ No one has thought—what am I here to manufacture?’ It is a familiar adage: the greater the commitment and the closer the agencies get to people in need of assistance and protection, the greater the likelihood of coordination.

— Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons from Recent Field Experience, Nichola Reindorp and Peter Wiles, OCHA, June 2001

Generally, we feel that coordination mechanisms should remain as flexible as possible. They should not be so time-consuming as to impede more essential operational duties of field staff. Nor should they slow down the decision-making process or render cooperation more difficult. We must bear in mind that the prime objective of humanitarian coordination in an emergency context is to enhance response to the most pressing needs. Let us therefore strive to ensure that coordination efforts serve the best interests of victims rather than simply lead to the bureaucratization of humanitarian action.


What are the similarities between the two statements above?

2. Coordination systems ought to be clear and well understood.

Situations are complex and often misunderstood. The coordination system, its actors, roles and reporting lines and accountability mechanisms must be clarified and documents defining them disseminated to all actors.

Past studies, case studies and interviewees all presented a picture of coordination arrangements dogged by unclear roles, reporting lines and accountabilities.

Clear reporting lines are critical to effective daily management, accountability and the loyalties they signify. Yet in the DRC, many senior officials were baffled and frustrated by the maze of reporting lines and the lack of clarity about how they related to each other. For one example among many, the Senior Humanitarian Adviser for the east of the country was required to report in four directions, but none of those included the Provincial Coordinator. Unsurprisingly, donors, the Red Cross and NGOs alike all stated that they too were unclear who had responsibility for what inside the UN. Elsewhere, senior individuals with coordination responsibilities confessed that they had ignored unclear multiple reporting lines established at the highest levels and had simplified their own reporting relationships.

— Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons From Recent Field Experience, Nichola Reindorp and Peter Wiles, OCHA, June 2001
NGO complaints on the lack of a clear picture of ‘who does what when’ concerning coordination are widespread. Comments on the coordination situation range from comments such as ‘a meetings’ circus’ to ‘a coordination mess,’ and the ‘the UN is trying to organize itself.’ At the time of the visit, several teams of the World Bank were in the country and were holding meetings with Ministries, UN agencies, and NGOs. These teams appeared to be part of a seventeen missions plan, to visit Afghanistan. When and how these assessments will feed into the processes, such as the Afghan Planning Board and the related Afghan Support Group, or other donor and coordination processes were questions that nobody seemed able to answer.

In fact it appears to be quite impossible to obtain an overall picture of ‘the plethora’ of coordination structures. Several senior UN staff were asked to provide such a picture on paper, for example in the form of a diagram. Unfortunately, and perhaps typical for the state of play at this moment, basically no one was able to provide this overview.

— NGO Coordination and Some Relevant Issues in the Context of Afghanistan from an NGO Perspective, Ed Schenkenberg van Mierop, ICVA Coordinator, 9 April 2002

3. Governments have the right, the responsibility, and the authority to coordinate.

Government actors at all levels bring tremendous insights as well as authority to the coordination efforts. Invariably, local and national response occurs first and commonly provides the greatest amount of assistance during humanitarian emergencies. When international organisations fail to recognise the national and local resource and knowledge base, their own understanding of the situation is weak.

Ensuring inclusion of the national actors in coordination enriches the capacities of both national and international organisations. The government can use its authority to promote coordination activities within the country.

What are the possible strengths that government led coordination may bring to an international emergency response? What are the possible difficulties?
Tanzania and National Coordination

In Ngara, (Tanzania) it was decided at an early stage to limit the number of agencies working in Benaco to those already working in Tanzania. In addition, CARE, which did not have a prior presence in Tanzania, but whose logistical expertise was highly valued, was invited to establish a programme. Letters of intent were then signed with these agencies—numbering 12 in all. Other agencies that subsequently visited Ngara and expressed a desire to participate in the relief efforts were, with a few exceptions, not allowed to work in the camps. This approach was supported by the local authorities and also by ECHO which, when approached by NGOs requesting funding, simply directed them to UNHCR-Ngara to which ECHO was providing substantial funding. In this way, the number of NGOs involved in the camps was kept to a manageable number and most of the agencies there had participated in the earlier response to the Burundian refugee influx.

— The Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (Study III), March 1996

Strong national coordination, aside from lending authority to the coordination initiative, also reminds international NGOs, UN agencies, and others of the sovereign role and responsibility of the government to address serious humanitarian emergencies, including refugee influxes. If used effectively by well-functioning governments, national coordination can lead to significant coordination successes.

Comparing Government Coordination — Sierra Leone and Tanzania

Certainly key elements of the apparatus are international, even though in many emergencies more assistance is provided by local institutions and individuals. Even if the major actors coordinating and to be coordinated are external, however, the challenge of engaging indigenous actors must be addressed. In Sierra Leone and Tanzania alike, the national governments eventually become less than pleased by the behaviour of the humanitarians in their midst. Ultimately, it is not just refugees who are guests of the “host” government. International humanitarians are too. Indeed, the ultimate success of their labors, these two situations suggest, depend more largely than they may realise on collaborative partnerships with national governments.

— The Dynamics of Coordination, Marc Sommers, 2000

4. All humanitarian organisations have a right to exist.

There are so many actors in a large humanitarian crisis that there will always be disputes about which agency or organisation is best suited to manage, coordinate or lead in a particular area of work. Mandate issues and mission statements may also stand in the way of real coordination if potential partner organisations are perceived to have mandates and experience that do not seem to be appropriate. It is therefore important that all actors seek to work in ways that optimise each partner's specific strength(s) to maximise efficiency.
Tensions in Tanzania

A mainstay in the refugee operations for three decades in Tanzania, TCRS (Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service) was by far the most experienced NGO on the scene. But the feud that began during the Burundian emergency in 1993-1994 and persisted across the entire Rwandan refugee period (one TCRS official called relations with UNHCR a ‘cold war’) centered on UNHCR’s belief that, as one UNHCR official contended, TCRS ‘doesn’t do emergencies [well]. It does long-term settlement work.’ TCRS, of course, strongly disagreed. ‘If UNHCR branded us as not fit for emergencies and not capable for anything but settlement work’, a TCRS official asked, ‘then why did they so often depend on us’ in Ngara? For TCRS, it was as if UNHCR was setting the agency up to fail by giving it ever-increasing work responsibilities and then taking it to task when shortcomings arose.

— The Dynamics of Coordination, Marc Sommers, 2000

5. There is no single best model for coordination—build on what you find.

Coordination should occur in relation to the overriding issues and constraints. That is, if geography and access to different regions within a response are the critical factors for managing the response, then coordinate geographically. If dealing with sectorally-specific issues is of paramount importance, coordinate sectorally. When key military forces and services provide access, logistics, or critical security, coordinate with the CIMIC or CMOC. Use coordination as a tool to solve problems in the delivery of humanitarian aid. Since the problems will vary from emergency to emergency, the coordination arrangements should too.

In many situations there is a need for different mechanisms or strategies at the same time in order to meet different needs. When these multiple strategies are pursued, however, it is important that each part is seen as an integral part of the larger, overall, operational coordination system. For example, due to their sheer numbers, actors may be limited in decision-making meetings. However, other mechanisms should exist to make use of (and facilitate) the energy and resources of other actors who may not be directly involved in the high-level, or sector-specific coordination meetings.

The following example from Albania illustrates a strategy that, while still imperfect, did attempt to meet coordination needs through two separate mechanisms: the EMG (Emergency Management Group) and the HIC (Humanitarian Information Centre).

Coordinating the Coordination Bodies in Albania

The EMG was initiated by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and initially chaired by the Government of Albania. Participants included the relevant Albanian ministries, donors, inter-governmental organisations, UNHCR, the WFP and NATO. This meant that a more traditional coordination forum, dominated by international humanitarian agencies was replaced by one of strong national participation and the involvement of actors usually excluded from every-day decision-making of an emergency. The EMG comprised a high-level policy-making desk, and after about two weeks sectoral desks closely linked to the policy making desk. The EMG was the focal information point for all key actors with the exception initially of the NGOs. NGOs were consequently out of the loop, not only on operational matters,
but also in terms of access to the political realities prompting various planning decisions. This situation was addressed and representatives of the NGOs attended from mid April onwards.

The second key coordination mechanism was the Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC), a coordination unit for the NGOs. The HIC was considered to have improved coordination greatly, but was not fully established until at least the end of April. It was preceded by sectoral coordination meetings chaired by UNHCR and weekly interagency meetings attended by more than 200 UN, OSCE, NATO, and NGO personnel.

— The Kosovo Refugee Crisis, An Independent Evaluation of UNHCR’s Preparedness and Response, UNHCR/EPAU, 2000

6. Coordination requires resources

Coordination functions require a basic level of funding support. Coordination is not free, and many coordination mechanisms have failed due to simple under-staffing, under-equipping, and lack of funding. Fund coordination activities for the full term of the emergency response—consider filling longer term, less rotational positions with secondees or other knowledgeable staff who can remain on site and who can relate to the overall operations as they develop.

What are some of the possible results of failure to learn this lesson?

— The Kosovo Refugee Crisis, An Independent Evaluation of UNHCR’s Preparedness and Response, UNHCR/EPAU, 2000

Kosovo Coordination — Unsupported in the First Days?

UNHCR’s coordination capacity varied in accordance with its staff capacity. Coordination is a skilled activity which demands considerable resources of UNHCR in terms of staff and time, all the more so when playing the lead agency role. UNHCR’s inability to deploy sufficient numbers of experienced coordinators undermined its capacity to provide authoritative and consistent leadership.

Under pressure the agency focused on its own operational performance and paid insufficient attention to its role as lead agency. Lead agency responsibilities demand additional resources, and staff should not be expected to undertake the role as an “add-on” top of existing work.

— The Kosovo Refugee Crisis, An Independent Evaluation of UNHCR’s Preparedness and Response, UNHCR/EPAU, 2000
7. Start early, stay late.

Consistency matters. Coordination efforts that are started at the onset of the emergency or preferably before, are much more likely to succeed. The need to prepare standard templates for information management and to build trusting relationships with partners must start before the emergency begins to be truly successful.

Coordinators need a level of “earned respect” as they generally do not have any other power or authority over partner agencies. This respect is based on early arrival and provision of valuable service. Latecomers will always be suspect in an emergency operation as outsiders, and it will be even harder to gain the respect of those who were there from the beginning.

Coordination requires respect. In practice, a mandate to coordinate is not sufficient. One must earn the right to coordinate by providing more to the actors than what they invest in the process. And, fundamentally, by being there from the very beginning.

— Coordination in the 1999 Kosovo Refugee Emergency—
  The Emergency Management Group (EMG), Albania,
  John Telford, 2000

8. Agree on operational standards.

Field coordination is improved by system-wide coordination of program response by shared universal expectations and standards in each sector of the operation (e.g. Sphere, UNHCR handbook standards, etc.).

The Need for Standards

In both Albania and FYR Macedonia UNHCR provided guidelines on standards, although distribution was as ad hoc as the planning and implementation of the projects. The distribution of established guidelines earlier in the emergency such as those produced by the Programme and Technical Support Section (PTSS), is to be commended and was appreciated, though not necessarily respected by other actors. Guidelines for other sectors or activities had to be written during the emergency and, whilst a positive example of UNHCR’s ability to facilitate professional standards, were hence too late for the crucial early stages of the response. The production of generic guidelines at Headquarters for all major relief eventualities would reduce pressure on the field during an emergency and facilitate rapid dissemination.

. . . The NGOs have developed mechanisms to enhance effectiveness and regularise standards. Whilst not a system of accreditation, reference to mechanisms such as the Humanitarian Code of Conduct, the Sphere project and the recent Ombudsman project initiated by the NGOs, would be a useful guideline for host governments and donors and a reference point for UNHCR.

— The Kosovo Refugee Crisis—An Independent Evaluation of UNHCR’s Emergency Preparedness and Response,
  UNHCR/EPAU, 2000
STANDARDIZE! - The HCIC in Kosovo provided agencies with a standardised agency registration form. Ultimately 137 organisations were listed in the same format and included in the database using the standardised form below.

**Standardised Organisational Registration Form**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Agency</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Reg. no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insert Date/Update</td>
<td>Type of Agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Since</td>
<td>Until</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Representative</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Representative</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipality</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>www</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phones/Fax numbers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo Address</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postal Address</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACTIVITIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Beneficiaries</td>
<td>Pattern of Intervention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of Agency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tag</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another example is the Sierra Leone Information System (SLIS) which develops common data standards and promotes their use by humanitarian players. An example of this is the standardised set of damage categories (similar to that used in former Yugoslavia as well as in Kosovo) developed by the SLIS for use in Inter-Agency Baseline Assessments.

**Standardised Housing Damage Assessment and Reporting System**

The use of common data standards provides a common framework for understanding the condition of schools, health centres and civil authority infrastructure in newly opened areas. This data is useful for planning and coordination and will also serve as a baseline for later comparison and monitoring of change in these areas.

All partners share in the success or failure of the overall coordinated response. Ultimately, all stakeholders—other organisations, donors and the affected people—evaluate the impact of the collective actions. To this end, each organisation should evaluate its own performance in terms of how well it coordinated both internally and externally. The entire coordinated effort as well as each organisation should seek lessons learned and best practices to incorporate into future planning.

For the sake of the evaluation and future references to the operation, the name of the coordination body should be easily remembered, related to its coordination and facilitation function, and not incorporate the name of any participant organisation, even when started or funded primarily by any one partner agency. Consider the HIC (Humanitarian Information Centre) and the SLIS (Sierra Leone Information Service) described below.

HIC and SLIS

The UN Humanitarian Coordinator, together with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and other humanitarian players, established the Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC) after a mission in June 2000 from Geneva, which investigated coordination among UNAMSil and humanitarian agencies in Sierra Leone. As a result of their findings, the HIC was established in August of the same year as a vital tool in the coordination of relief activities.

With a staff of five, the HIC coordinator, two humanitarian liaison officers from UNAMSil, a secretary and a driver—the HIC, under the overall supervision of the Humanitarian Coordinator and through the Chief of OCHA, strives to guarantee an on-going exchange of information with regard to security, humanitarian activities, communications, sectoral assessments, requests for humanitarian aid, and requests for the use of UNAMSil assets.

The HIC now serves as a clearly identifiable ‘meeting place’ for interaction among the organisations involved in implementing the humanitarian response. The centre furnishes humanitarian actors with a multi-sectoral overview of the present humanitarian situation.

The Centre is responsible for establishing and maintaining an effective system for the collection, analysis and dissemination of information. In our Humanitarian Partners Database—with voluntary reporting on humanitarian activities—we strive to monitor activities country-wide. Our objective is a steady and reliable flow of information, in order to assist decision-making organisations in facilitating a timely response to any situation that may arise, and to assist in the furtherance of effective planning and implementation of humanitarian activities in Sierra Leone.

The Sierra Leone Information System (SLIS) is an inter-agency project of UNHCR and OCHA, with major funding from ECHO and support from the Humanitarian Coordinator’s Office. After preliminary fact-finding and awareness missions, the SLIS opened in March 2001 in the OCHA Freetown Office.

The SLIS supports the resettlement and recovery process in Sierra Leone with data collection, data processing, database management, data analysis and data products including maps and data tables. All products of the SLIS are released through the HIC in electronic and hardcopy formats. The goal of the SLIS is to provide data products and tools to support a more efficient coordination process for the humanitarian actors in Sierra Leone, to provide tools for better program targeting, and to provide a readily understandable overview of activities in Sierra Leone.

— Relief Web, http://www2.reliefweb.int/sle/hic/sierra_leone_information_system.htm
10. Individuals can make a difference.

Coordination is facilitated at all levels, regardless of systems and doctrines, by skilled individuals with good interpersonal skills and understanding of group processes. You can support the coordination process regardless of organisational constraints, unclear missions and mandates. Study the situation carefully and make a habit of studying coordination successes and failures in other countries and other emergencies.

Your vision and interest in making coordination work at the field level will be an asset to coordination—regardless of your job description or available resources. In the end, coordination depends on swaying people to work together instead of apart. Every person with that attitude in the field helps improve the chances that coordination will work well.

After reading this course on coordination—what can you do to further improve your own coordination skills?

What can you do to help your organisation improve its coordination with other stakeholders at the field level?
Lessons learned and best practices in coordination include the following:

1. Coordination is not an end in itself but rather aims for the effective and efficient provision of assistance to affected people who are also stakeholders in the process. If the coordinating mechanisms established do not lead to this humanitarian goal, they should be changed or abandoned.

2. The coordination system, its actors, roles and reporting lines and accountability mechanisms must be clarified and documents that define them should be disseminated to all involved actors.

3. Government actors at all levels bring tremendous insights as well as authority to the coordination efforts. Invariably, local and national response occurs first and commonly provides the greatest amount of assistance during humanitarian emergencies. When international organisations fail to recognise the national and local resource and knowledge base, their own understanding of the situation is lessened.

4. Mandate issues and mission statements may stand in the way of real coordination if potential partner organisations are perceived to have mandates and experience that do not seem to be appropriate. It is therefore important that all actors seek to work in ways that optimise each partner's specific strength(s) to maximise efficiency.

5. Coordination should occur in relation to the overriding issues and constraints. Use coordination as a tool to solve problems in the delivery of humanitarian aid. Since the problems will vary from emergency to emergency, the coordination arrangements should vary accordingly—no one system is best for all situations.

6. Coordination is not free, and many coordination mechanisms have failed due to simple under-staffing, under-equipping, and under-funding. Fund coordination activities for the full term of the emergency response.

7. Coordination efforts that begin at the onset of the emergency (or preferably before), are much more likely to succeed. The work to prepare standard templates for information management and to build trusting relationships with partners must start before the emergency response begins to be truly successful.
8. Field coordination is improved by system-wide coordination of program response by shared universal expectations and standards in each sector (e.g. Sphere, UNHCR handbook standards, etc.)

9. All partners share in the success or failure of the overall coordinated response. Ultimately, all stakeholders including other organisations, donors and the affected people must evaluate the impact of the collective actions. To this end, each organisation should evaluate its own performance in terms of how well it coordinated both internally and externally. The entire coordinated effort as well as each organisation should seek lessons learned and best practices to incorporate into future planning.

10. You can support the coordination process regardless of organisational constraints, unclear missions, and differing mandates. Study your own and other situations carefully and make a habit of studying coordination successes and failures from other countries and other emergencies.

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**Chapter 7**

**Self-Assessment Questions**

Check T or F to indicate whether a statement is True or False

1. National governments have a right, a responsibility, and the authority to coordinate

2. When organizations do not focus on meeting the humanitarian needs of the affected people, their efforts at coordination are more likely to fail.

3. Your personal efforts in coordination are critical to the collective effort.

4. Specific funding for coordination bodies is generally not required.

5. Coordination efforts that are started before or at the onset of the emergency, are much more likely to succeed.
Multiple choice. Mark ALL correct statements—more than one may apply.

6. Exclusion of national expertise in coordination efforts results in:
   - [A] A simpler procedure that is easier to implement and more effective
   - [B] More practical solutions to complex problems
   - [C] Weaker understanding of the overall situation by both national and international organizations
   - [D] A and B

7. The best model for coordination is:
   - [A] Dependent on the situation in relation to the specific context, overriding issues, and constraints
   - [B] The Emergency Management Group
   - [C] The Humanitarian Information Center
   - [D] The UN Humanitarian Coordinator

8. Key practices to improve coordination would include all of the following except:
   - [A] Global reduction of the number of NGOs
   - [B] Recording lessons learned and best practices
   - [C] Evaluations by organizations of their own coordination efforts
   - [D] Continuing to establish/examine standards in each situation

9. The Humanitarian Information Center in Sierra Leone created the following benefit(s):
   - [A] A clearly identifiable ‘meeting place’ for interaction among the organisations involved in implementing the humanitarian response
   - [B] A multi-sectoral overview of the current humanitarian situation
   - [C] A means to release all products of the Sierra Leone Information Services (SLIS) in electronic and hardcopy formats.
   - [D] All of the above

10. The keys to good coordination include which of the following?
    - [A] Standards
    - [B] Focus on the affected people
    - [C] Effective meetings
    - [D] Resources
Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Answers

1. T 6. C
2. T 7. A
3. T 8. A
4. F 9. D
5. T 10. A, B, C, D
COURSE EVALUATION

COURSE: EP-07 - Coordination - UNHCR

Date you finished the course: _________________________________________________

What is your present position? ________________________________________________

How many years have you spent in disaster-related work? _______________________

How many years of formal education do you have?
☐ 0 to 6 years    ☐ 7 to 12 years    ☐ 12 to 16 years    ☐ more than 16 years

How was the content level of this course?
☐ too difficult    ☐ about right    ☐ too easy

Was the course material relevant to your work?
☐ yes    ☐ no

How useful were the self-assessment tests to you?
☐ very useful    ☐ OK    ☐ not useful

How valuable was the total course?
☐ very valuable    ☐ of some value    ☐ not valuable

Additional comments: ________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________

Please copy and return this form by mail or fax, or send the information via e-mail to:
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Fax: 1-608-263-3160      E-mail: dmc@engr.wisc.edu
Examination Request Form

This exam must be proctored (supervised) just as it would be for a course taken on campus. Generally, proctors do not charge for this service. In all cases the academic department offering the course must approve the choice of proctor. Qualified proctors include university or college registrars, deans or counselors or professors; high school principals or counselors; directors of educational services at universities, other educational organizations, correctional institutions or the armed services; certified librarians in a supervisory position; or the delegated officials at university testing centers. Students residing outside of the United States may also request, as their proctor, a local director of educational services or an officer of the United States embassy or consulate. Please copy this form as needed.

Date Submitted
________________________________________________________________

Course Title
________________________________________________________________

Student Information:

Name
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Mailing Address
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Proctor Information:

Name
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Title
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Organization
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Complete Mailing Address (Please provide street address, in case courier service is used.)
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Phone Number OR
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Email Address
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Madison, Wisconsin 53706, USA
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