Aid in the Twilight Zone:

A Critical Analysis of Humanitarian-Development Aid Linkages in Situations of Chronic Instability

A Report for UNICEF by

Joanna Macrae
Mark Bradbury

Humanitarian Policy Programme
Overseas Development Institute

Humanitarianism and War Project
Brown University

FINAL DRAFT

10 February 1998
Table of Contents

Executive Summary iv

Glossary vii

1.0 Introduction 1
   1.1 “Transitional” situations: a topical agenda 1
   1.2 Methodology 4
   1.3 Structure of the Report 4

2.0 Transition Debates in Context 6
   2.1 Introduction and Overview 6
   2.2 What’s in a name?: Defining transition 6
       2.2.1 Beyond the relief-to-development “continuum” 6
       2.2.2 Working in conflict: accommodating crisis? 7
   2.3 Factors driving the “transition” debate 11
       2.3.1 The need for a new aid paradigm 11
       2.3.2 Blurring mandates 17
       2.3.3 Relief-bad, development-good 17
       2.3.4 Summary of trends 18

3.0 UNICEF in Transition: Policy Framework and Institutional Culture 19
   3.1 Introduction and overview of chapter 19
   3.2 Policy Parameters 19
       3.2.1 Policy framework 19
       3.2.2 Reluctant relief? 21
       3.2.3 EMOPS: an uncertain mandate? 24
       3.2.4 The Conventions on the Rights of the Child:
           unifying principles for relief and development? 25
   3.3 Partners or Predators?: UNICEF’s position in a system under stress 28

4.0 Transition in Practice 30
   4.1 Operationalising the Continuum 30
       4.1.1 Development programming in chronic emergencies:
           some general concerns 30
       4.1.2 Transition in Rwanda 31
       4.1.3 A continuum in policy and practice 34
       4.1.4 Operationalising the transitional agenda in
           Uganda and Somaliland 36
   4.2 Financing transition: From relief to....budget cuts? 37
       4.2.1 Aid finance in transition 37
       4.2.2 Internalising the costs of war 40
       4.2.3 Declining and minimising standards: the impact of declining
           resource flows on programming 41
4.3 The institutional transition: 43
4.3.1 Scaling up 43
4.3.2 Choice of implementing partners 44
4.4 Locating the cause of crisis 47

5.0 Issues and Implications 49
5.1 Tackling “transition”: reframing the problem 49
5.2 Examining organisational culture and values 51
5.2.1 Proud to be a humanitarian agency?: reviewing organisational culture 51
5.2.2 From needs-based to rights-based programming 52
5.3 UNICEF relations with other bodies: old and new challenges 55
5.3.1 UNICEF in a changing UN landscape 55
5.3.2 New Challenges 56
5.3.3 Old Challenges 57
5.4 Programming in transition 58
5.4.1 Beyond the country programming approach 58
5.4.2 Defining the role of EMOPs, country reps and the regions 59
5.5 Developmental relief - some considerations 60
5.5.1 Sustainability and standards 60
5.5.2 Choice and management of implementing partners 61
5.6 Taking the debate forward 62
5.6.1 Working in chronic instability: not an emergencies problem 62
5.6.2 Evaluating field interventions from perspective of chronic instability 62
5.6.3 Participating in and monitoring other agencies’ debates 63

Figure 1 Total DAC Emergency Aid 3
Figure 2 UNICEF Relief Expenditure 1981 - 1995 19
Figure 3 Relation of Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Assistance to Changing Security and Institutional Conditions in Recipient States 50

Annex 1: Terms of Reference 64
Annex 2: List of Informants and Interviews 65

Bibliography 67

Endnotes 73
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors were grateful for the assistance they received from UNICEF staff in New York, Geneva, and at the field level. In particular, Nigel Fisher, Elizabeth Gibbons and Peter McDermott gave generously of their time and facilitated key interviews and access to documentation. Among the many people who supported the study at field level, the contributions of the following UNICEF staff deserve special mention: in Kigali, Jean-Michel Delmotte, Luc Chauvin and Jean-Damascene Kabano; Leila Pakkala in Kampala and Everett Ressler in Nairobi.

Barbara Hendrie wielded her magical red pen over the draft text, as ever helping us to say what we really meant. Responsibility for the final text, however, lies with the authors whose views do not necessarily represent those of UNICEF.
Executive Summary

This study, commissioned by the Emergency Operations Division, is a preliminary attempt to examine the concepts and programming strategies of UNICEF in “transitional” situations. It coincides with a significant number of other initiatives in the aid community, which are seeking to identify ways of enhancing international responses in unstable situations. The topicality of this issue, and the importance assigned to it by senior policy-makers in the official aid community, suggests that UNICEF’s commissioning of a review of its own work and thinking in this area is timely. Sustaining policy-debate and action in this area will be important if the agency is to maintain programme effectiveness and to ensure the profile and funding base of the agency.

As Section 1.0 reports, the study took place over twelve person weeks. The researchers reviewed the extensive literature concerned with relief/development - war/peace transition which has developed in the academic sphere as well as the ‘grey’ literature emerging from official aid policy circles. In addition, they interviewed key UNICEF staff and others within the UN system during visits to New York and Geneva, also meeting with representatives of the World Bank and USAID in Washington. Finally, visits were undertaken to Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya in order to gain a field perspective on UNICEF’s policy and practice in this area. It is important to emphasise that this is not an evaluation of UNICEF’s work in these environments; rather, based on analysis of the existing policy and programming framework, it aims to outline generic issues confronting the organisation.

Section 2.0 examines the evolution of the terminology being used to try to capture the wide-ranging agenda concerning the linkages between relief and development aid and the transition between war and peace. It concludes that the problem confronting the international community is less how to deal with a relatively linear sequence of transition, than how to adapt to environments characterised by chronic instability.

The chapter then examines the factors driving current international interest in relief-development aid linkages in unstable situations. It argues that these debates are being driven in significant part by the need to reinvent the rationale for aid in the post-Cold War era. Alarmed by declines in aid flows and in political support for the aid project, the aid community is making increasing claims regarding its role in conflict management. The report questions many of the assumptions upon which these claims are based, and cautions that there is a risk that aid, including humanitarian aid, is becoming more politically driven rather than better politically informed.

Section 3.0 reviews the global policy framework for UNICEF’s efforts to better link its emergency and development interventions. In line with earlier reviews, the paper concludes that despite its considerable experience and profile in emergencies, UNICEF involves itself in emergencies only reluctantly. Its programming instruments and organisational profile establish country programming as the normal and desirable modality for the agency. The report suggests, however, that such a modality, with its assumptions regarding the existence of a legitimate and stable state, is becoming increasingly anachronistic in many settings. The organisation’s reluctance to acknowledge the extent of its commitment and engagement in situations of chronic emergencies is seen to have a negative impact not only upon the quality of its relief interventions, but also upon its capacity to conceptualise and operationalise longer term responses to chronic instability.
The chapter notes the important shift which has taken place in UNICEF’s programming from an emphasis on service delivery to one centred on the Conventions on the Rights of the Child. This shift is in line with broader trends in the international aid system, where increased conditionalities on assistance reflect a strategy of trying to effect change in governmental, community and personal behaviour. There are significant constraints facing any international organisation attempting to engage with national political authorities (state and non-state entities) on human rights issues, particularly in conflict situations. These are examined in relation to headquarters, and subsequently in section 4.0 in relation to the field.

Section 4.0 draws more specifically on UNICEF’s programming at field level, focusing in particular on Rwanda and Uganda, and to a lesser extent Somalia and Sudan. It comprises three substantive parts. First, it examines the context in which UNICEF is working, concluding that while there is considerable variation in the conditions in these countries, they share a number of common problems including persistently high levels of violence and of absolute poverty, and varying degrees of crisis of governance. UNICEF has consistently sought to relabel these dimensions of crisis as “development” and to insist that developmental programming should be resumed, despite the absence of indicators to prove that the emergency is over.

Second, the report analyses the issue of financial sustainability as it affects the provision of basic health and education services in particular. It concludes that at a field level, it is as much reductions in aid budgets as changes in national circumstances which are driving the pursuit of sustainability. It argues that there is a considerable risk that what are in effect cuts in entitlements to basic goods are being justified by reference to “sustainability”. Such an approach risks compromising basic standards of care and of seeming to normalise catastrophe.

Finally, this section examines the institutional transition necessary to move from relief-oriented to developmental programming. Necessary for this transition, it is argued, is to move from a micro-level, project approach to programming which focuses on individual and family survival and protection, to a more systems-oriented approach which ensures equity and efficiency of service provision nationally. This process of ‘scaling-up’ is not straightforward. The chapter highlights the dilemmas facing field staff in identifying and contracting implementing partners, and in particular of moving from emergency programming to country programming modes during which time the agency’s relations with national governments changes significantly. Improving mechanisms to define and monitor these contractual relations, as well as to enforce their terms, is seen as a priority for national staff and senior management at headquarters.

Section 5.0 examines the issues and implications of the report for UNICEF’s future work, and offers some proposals for future action. It argues that UNICEF needs to reframe the problem of transition. In particular, the existing structure and programming tools available within UNICEF tend to suggest the persistence of a linear model, whereby the emergencies section is expected to “hand-over” to the country programming when “normality” is resumed. Such a model is unlikely to be effective or sustainable in many of the countries in which UNICEF works. It is suggested that at its core, UNICEF’s mandate is essentially humanitarian specifying that it should act impartially and neutrally in the interests of children, not those of governments. Such an analysis helps overcome the schism between relief and development programming which continues to prevail, and provides a focus for a rights-based as opposed to budget-based approach to programming.

The report also concludes that UNICEF needs to maintain or establish a capacity to monitor carefully developments within the international aid system in this area of policy. This relates both to continuing its participation in debates regarding the substance and direction of UN reform, but also in its relations with other key actors, including the World Bank and bilateral community. At
present, UNICEF is at risk of being squeezed out from its niche in situations of chronic instability, as both relief and development agencies extend their interventions into the twilight zone of "rehabilitation" programming. Maintaining a comparative advantage will be contingent upon having an effective policy framework in place, and on building effective partnerships with other international actors.

A number of considerations are then outlined with regard to programming. These relate to overall managerial and organisational structure, including the relationship between EMOPS and the Programme divisions, and the need to rethink how the country programming process can be reformed to meet the competing demands of managerial flexibility and accountability. The issues of sustainability and standards are then explored; in particular, the need for UNICEF to ensure that its programming is informed by rigorous assessment of need, rather than financial or ideological factors.
Glossary

ACC     Administrative Committee on Coordination
CAP     Consolidated Appeal
CCPOQ   Consultative Committee on Policy and Operational Questions
CEDAW   Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC     Conventions on the Rights of the Child
DAC     Development Assistance Committee
DFID    Department for International Development (UK)
DPA     United Nations Department of Political Affairs
DRC     Democratic Republic of Congo
ECHA    (United Nations) Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs
ECPS    (United Nations) Executive Committee on Peace and Security
ESAR(O) UNICEF East and Southern Africa Region (Office)
GoR     Government of Rwanda
GoU     Government of Uganda
HRFOR   United Nations High Commission for Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda
IASC    Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Humanitarian Affairs
MPO     Master Plan of Operation
OECD    Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFDA    Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID)
OTI     Office of Transition Initiatives - USAID
RF      Rwandan Franc
RPF     Rwandan Patriotic Front
SACB    Somalia Aid Coordination Body
SRPA    Special Rehabilitation Programme for Africa (European Commission)
USAID   United States Agency for International Development
UNCU    United Nations Coordination Unit (Somalia)
UNDMT   United Nations Disaster Management Team (Uganda)
UNDHA   United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOSOM  United Nations Operation in Somalia
UNPAC   Uganda National Plan of Action for Children
UNSC    United Nations Security Council
1.0 Introduction

1.1 “Transitional” situations: a topical agenda

This study was commissioned by the Emergency Operations Division (EMOPs) of UNICEF to examine its approach to what it calls “transitional” situations. Specifically, the terms of reference (see Annex 1) state that the aim of the study was to:

assist in the evolution of UNICEF’s developmental strategy for programmes implemented in countries in transition from conflict/instability to peace/sustainable development.

UNICEF commissioned the Humanitarianism and War (H&W) Project, Brown University to undertake the study. The study was implemented by the Overseas Development Institute during the period September 1997 to January 1998. This study forms part of a wider programme of work being undertaken by both academic institutions on the relationship between humanitarian and developmental aid in unstable situations. As such it is informed by the previous work of the authors in Somalia and Sudan in particular, and by the prior work of the H&W project in collaboration with UNICEF.

The study should be situated within a wider context of international reflection on the relationship between relief and development aid, and of the role and modality of international aid in unstable situations. In a report to the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Margaret Anstee commented that the issue of post-conflict rehabilitation and peace-building “...is a (and probably the) major growth industry for a large number of components of the UN system and is likely to remain so for the next few years” (Anstee, 1996, emphasis in the original). As such, it is significant that UNICEF has commissioned this paper at this time.

The issue is not new within the aid community, dating back at least seven years. Within the United Nations system a flurry of reports have been generated under the auspices of the ACC (Administrative Committee on Coordination, 1993); CCPOQ (Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions, 1995; United Nations, 1996; Cholmondeley, 1997); the IASC (IASC, 1994a; IASC, 1994b; UN Inter-agency Standing Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, 1997; ECOSOC Task Force Sub-Working Group on Local Capacities/Relief and Development, 1997; Lautze and Hammock, 1996); inter-agency workshops, such as that convened by DHA and UNDP in Spring 1997 (DHA and UNDP, 1997); and by individual agencies including UNHCR (UNHCR, 1996; UNHCR, 1997a), UNDP (UNDP, 1993; UNDP, 1996), the World Food Programme, and the Department of Political Affairs (United Nations Department of Political Affairs, 1997). In his first speech as President of the World Bank, Mr Wolfensohn highlighted the particular needs of countries making the transition from war to peace (Holtzman, 1997). This has been followed up by a major evaluation of the Bank’s intervention in this area (John Ericksson, personal communication), and by the establishment of a new unit to focus on post-conflict recovery issues. Within the donor community, the European Commission has issued a communication to the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament outlining its policy on relief-development aid linkages (European Commission, 1996). More recently, the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD has issued statements on resource mobilisation in post-conflict situations (Development Assistance Committee, 1996) and policy guidelines on conflict, peace and development cooperation (Development Assistance Committee, 1997).

UNICEF itself has participated in, and contributed to, these debates, through inter-UN agency fora (Fisher, 1996; McDermott, 1994; UNICEF, 1994c); Board Papers (UNICEF, 1994a; UNICEF, 1996c; UNICEF, 1996b); internal policy discussions (Jolly, 1993; Berry, 1997; Bowles, 1993;
McDermott, 1995; UNICEF, 1997); and external advocacy, (see, for example UNICEF, 1996a). UNICEF has also commissioned three major studies from external consultants over the past few years which have made significant comment on the agency’s conceptual and operational approach to relief and development linkages (Duffield, 1994a; Richardson, 1991; Richardson, 1995).

The present study draws extensively on these previous papers, and can be seen as part of a process within UNICEF to inform the development of a clearer policy in this area, something which has been called for by some people within the organisation and by the external reviews referred to above.

The perceived need for improved clarity in the organisation’s policy in relation to the relief-development interface in complex emergencies derives from a number of factors. Briefly, these include:

- **Recognition and acknowledgement of an unstable operating environment.** While conflict is not a new phenomenon, the end of the Cold War has created a space within which the political dimensions of humanitarian crises can be acknowledged more explicitly. At least fifty countries have been affected by conflict over the past fifteen years; at least twenty of these conflicts have persisted for more than ten years, and ten for more than twenty years. The chronicity of conflict, and of the humanitarian crises they produce, challenges conventional models of relief which remain premised upon the idea that crisis is temporary. Conflict-affected countries are among the poorest in the world, both in terms of income per capita, but also in terms of human development (see Holtzman, 1997). In Africa, at least a third of the population lives in a conflict-affected country.

  These environments challenge conventional international relations, including aid relations, which remain premised on the existence of a recognised and legitimate state. New questions regarding the legitimacy of governmental and non-governmental counterparts, and the accountability of international agencies have been raised starkly in these situations.

- **Changes in the international aid system.** The current aid system was put in place during the Cold War. In its aftermath, the international aid community is seeking to redefine the rationale for the continuation of the aid project. They are trying to do this, however, in a climate of growing scepticism regarding the effectiveness of aid and a strong isolationist foreign policy lobby. During the early part of this decade, emergency aid seemed relatively protected from the trend of declining oda. Indeed, international expenditure on emergency aid had risen sharply for nearly a decade: in 1980, emergency relief accounted for $353 million or 2 per cent of total official development assistance (oda); by 1994 this had increased to over 10 per cent, equivalent to more than $3 billion (Development Assistance Committee, 1995). See Figure 1:

  ![Figure 1](image-url)

  However, this trend does not appear to be being sustained. Indeed, in 1995 emergency aid expenditures declined, reflecting in part a questioning of whether it was doing more harm than good (Macrae, 1996).
In seeking to enhance the ‘relevance’ of aid, new claims are being made with regard to its role in conflict management. At the same time, new and tighter political conditions are being placed on aid, including humanitarian aid.

In this context of review and reform of the international aid system, resources are being squeezed and agencies, including those within the UN, are being forced to reexamine their mandates and operations more carefully. Driven in part by donor pressure and in part by a reconceptualisation of the aid task, there has been a tendency towards increasing overlap and duplication between different components of the aid system (Anstee, 1996; UN, 1997). This has included a trend whereby relief agencies become more involved in development, and development agencies more involved in relief (Macrae, 1997a). In this environment of increased competition, definition of comparative advantage becomes a sine qua non for effective operations and for sustaining funding.

This report constitutes a modest contribution to what will necessarily be a complex and sustained process within UNICEF if it is to effectively confront the “transitional agenda”. Reflecting the scope and nature of the issue, the researchers necessarily had to opt for breadth, rather than depth of analysis. What was required and feasible was less a detailed review of UNICEF’s relief and development activities, than an attempt to analyse the blurred interface between the two. Similarly, the country visits (see below) were not evaluative, but rather discursive.

1.2 Methodology

The study took place over 12 person weeks. Reflecting the terms of reference, the study started with a review of the academic literature on relief-development/war-peace linkages, and of the extensive body of grey literature (agency reports and policy documents) which is emerging from within the aid community on this issue. In September 1997, one of the researchers (Joanna Macrae - JM) visited the United States and interviewed UNICEF staff and others within the UN system. Additional interviews were conducted with officials from the World Bank and USAID. In October 1997, JM visited UNICEF’s Geneva office, and also interviewed staff from other relevant agencies and collected further documentation.

The second author (Mark Bradbury - MB) visited East Africa in November/December 1997 for three weeks. During his time in the field, in-depth interviews were held with UNICEF staff and relevant counterparts in government, NGO and sister UN agencies in relation to the country programmes in Rwanda and Uganda. While in Nairobi, MB interviewed staff in the East and Southern Africa Regional Office (EASRO), and UNICEF staff working on Somalia and Sudan. Annex 2 provides a list of key informants.

It is important to emphasise that this is not an evaluation; rather, based on analysis of the existing policy and programming framework it aims to identify some generic issues confronting the organisation.

The draft report was reviewed at a seminar in New York in January 1998 prior to its completion. Present at this debriefing were UNICEF headquarters staff and a four person team from the Humanitarianism and War Project. Additional comments on the draft were also received from UNICEF’s field offices.

1.3 Structure of the Report
The remainder of the report comprises four substantive sections:

**Section 2.0** explores the conceptual underpinnings of current debates regarding relief-development/war-peace transitions. It examines why these debates have taken on a particular urgency, the shifting terminology they employ, and the robustness of the concepts upon which they are based. In so doing, adaptations currently underway within the aid system to respond to the transition debate are highlighted, including the recent proposals for UN reform from the Secretary-General (United Nations, 1997).

Following this brief review of global policy trends, **section 3.0** focuses more particularly on UNICEF. It reviews the conceptual basis for UNICEF’s approach to transitional situations, drawing on recent papers presented to the Executive Board. It then examines how this policy framework has been reflected in the management and culture of the agency over time. Finally, the section examines the financial framework for the agency’s work in transitional situations.

**Section 4.0** is concerned with how the agency’s policy framework has been reflected in practice, focusing in particular on Rwanda and Uganda, but also reflecting more generally on key issues which dominate UNICEF and others’ programming in transitional situations. It examines issues regarding the organisation’s choice of implementing partners, its approach to sustainability issues, and its efforts to operationalise the Conventions on the Rights of the Child in such situations.

**Section 5.0** synthesises the findings of earlier sections in order to highlight key issues for the agency to debate and research further, and identifies proposals which can inform future policy and practice.
2.0 Transition Debates in Context

2.1 Introduction and Overview

This chapter aims to do two things. First, it looks at the issue of terminology, suggesting that the search for an appropriate definition of transitional situations reflects the evolution of a body of research and practice in this area. Second, it examines why it is that the concept of transition is topical; in other words, it seeks to understand what is driving the debate. It does so on the premise that emerging policy in this area is shaped as much by the demands of international aid actors as by the needs of conflict-affected countries.

2.2 What’s in a name?: Defining transition

It is revealing to examine briefly how the terms of debate have shifted in recent years, and who is using different terminologies.

2.2.1 Beyond the relief-to-development "continuum"

If this study had been commissioned two years ago, the terms of reference would probably have included the term “post-conflict”. The early 1990s saw a wave of peace settlements in many of the proxy battlefields of the Cold War. These included Angola, Cambodia, El Salvador and Mozambique. In each of these countries a predictable sequence of internationally brokered transitions was mounted, which started with peace-talks, which yielded formal legal settlements, resulting in the deployment of peace-keeping forces and election monitors organised by some sort of transitional authority, and culminating in elections.

Corresponding to what was seen as a linear transition from war to cease-fire to sustainable peace, an equally linear transition from relief (war) to rehabilitation (transitional authority) to development (peace) was envisaged. This was expressed in terms of the relief-to-development continuum.

The limitations of this linear model are now widely recognised. The very particular conditions prevailing in the early 1990s group of countries achieving peace settlements are acknowledged; it was, for example, in the interests of the superpowers to invest considerable political and financial resources to broker an end to these conflicts in the wake of the Cold War, and the end of the apartheid era in southern Africa. The withdrawal of superpower support for warring parties, and changes in national political economies also created internal pressures for resolution to protracted conflict.

However, the model of post-conflict settlement enacted in these countries - with its formal, internationally-brokered peace agreements - continues to inform certain aspects of international response to conflict. For example, it would seem likely that the UN Department of Political Affair's new-found responsibility will extend only to those countries where a formal peace settlement has been brokered. Similarly, the World Bank requires that an internationally recognised government is in place prior to resuming lending. Although the Bank has not outlined formal criteria for when it will resume operations post-conflict, it can be assumed that one precondition would be a minimum level of security for the foreseeable future.

The term "post-conflict" is itself problematic, and is now less widely used. There are three main difficulties with the term:
• **It implies an absolute cessation of violence.** This is rare; usually significant areas of
countries remain unstable, even following the signing of formal peace settlements and
elections;

• **It potentially overestimates the significance of the “bullets and bombs” problem.** By
emphasising war, other underlying structural problems can end up being ignored. Research
has suggested that an emphasis on the military aspects of transition has significantly
influenced the character of international intervention in post-conflict situations. In
particular, it has led to a concentration on the visible scars of conflict: the damaged
infrastructure, the amputated limbs and psychological impacts, the disruption to supply
chains (see for example, Macrae et. al., 1993). Evidence suggests that, while important, a
focus on buildings and supplies and on particular types of morbidity/mortality can actually
create problems rather than solving them. For example, most of Ethiopia was not directly
affected by military action during the decades of conflict in the north and west of the
country; rather, what it had experienced was several generations of authoritarian rule and
extreme poverty. The problem therefore needs to be reframed. Bullets and bombs do cause
some of the problems facing countries such as Ethiopia, El Salvador, and Cambodia. But
bullets and bombs are also *symptomatic* of a deeper structural crisis - in particular a crisis of
institutions and of the economy.

• **It does not help to articulate strategies in situations of protracted violence.** While the
needs of the post-Cold War cluster of countries were extensive, there were far more
situations where there was no obvious end of conflict in sight. It is in these environments -
for example, Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, Sri Lanka and the Caucasus - that considerable
volumes of relief continue to be given. Frustration with the limitations of relief and
conventional development aid programming has helped refocus the debate away from a
preoccupation with the military aspects of transition, to the need to link relief with
developmental strategies.

2.2.2 Working in conflict: accommodating crisis?

In place of the term "post-conflict", a series of new terms have increasingly been used to try to
reframe the issue. These include "linking relief-rehabilitation and development" (LRRD);
"capacity-building"; and "transition" (the World Bank variant is more specific: "war-peace
transition"). What is less clear is whether any of these terms have overcome the conceptual
problems created by the notion of a 'post-conflict' situation, or whether they have created new
conceptual problems of their own.

With regard to "transition", one of the questions this term begs is *when* the transition is seen to
start and stop. In other words, what criteria determine when a country is defined as being
"transitional". This question is of more than academic importance. There is evidence from an
increasing number of agencies and countries that the shift in aid programming from relief to
development is occurring earlier and earlier. That is, situations that effectively still constitute
emergencies are being relabelled "transitional" in order to justify the move into "development".

In a recent policy paper, for example, UNHCR acknowledges that its repatriation programmes
are now often occurring while conditions remain unstable (UNHCR, 1997b). Similarly, USAID
staff reported that OFDA is now defining chronic political emergencies as being ‘in transition’ in
order to reduce their caseload and the strain on their resources.5 UNICEF defines Rwanda as a
transitional situation despite the fact that the UN does not travel to 25% of the communes unless it
is essential; in a further 25% of the country travel is undertaken only with an armed guard.6
This process of relabelling is of concern for both technical and political reasons. There is a risk that assumptions are being made regarding the scope of developmental space in war zones, and that the challenge of protection is being underestimated. Moreover, to argue that there are development opportunities may be to deny the impact of political and military actors actively working to ensure that certain sections of the population do not develop. David Turton (Turton, 1989) has argued that war is about far more than securing a military victory; it is frequently also about destroying the cultural and political identity of the opponent. In other words, the destruction of livelihoods as well as lives is not simply an unfortunate byproduct of conflict - it is part of a deliberate strategy to destroy the Other. In this context, arguing that there are opportunities for development in war zones risks ignoring the fact that the politico-military process is aiming in exactly the opposite direction.

Further, the term "transitional" is being used to subsume a wide range of situations. A preparatory document for this study, for example, included the former Yugoslavia, Haiti, Palestine, Angola, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Liberia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia (including Somaliland), Uganda and Zaire (DRC), all under the "transitional" label. Table 1, however, indicates the very different conditions that pertain in some of these countries.
Table 1: Countries in Africa defined by UNICEF as “transitional”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somaliland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 1 indicates, although these countries share a history of protracted conflict, their internal conditions vary considerably, as does the position of the international community in relation to them. In Somalia, there is no functioning central authority, frustrating efforts by international aid agencies to move towards rehabilitative programming. Somaliland is not formally recognised by any government as an independent state. Rwanda and DRC have gone through extended periods in which the position of the international community was unclear. In other situations, the sustainability of the political settlement is widely questioned. In contrast, the situation in Ethiopia, Eritrea and Mozambique appears to be relatively stable.
Grouping such countries together under the term "transitional" thus masks a number of critical differences between them, both in terms of their internal conditions, and the nature of their articulation with the international community. In this regard, the term "transitional" is not necessarily an improvement on "post-conflict" or "continuum". All of these fail to highlight the extent and character of developmental space that exists in each particular context, and the conditions under which the international community may or may not be able to utilise that space.

The real commonality of these countries lies in the fact that they remain highly unstable, and are subject to continuing violations of human rights - including the rights of the child. In other words, they are subject to periodic or sustained humanitarian crises. The recognition that some countries are experiencing protracted crises is an important step forward in developing a more accurate conceptualisation of what is actually happening "on the ground".

For both donor and recipient governments alike, to acknowledge that a crisis exists is difficult. "Crises" are considered to comprise a situations where there has been a breakdown of government, or where government is not in control of territory, or where its legitimacy is under dispute. These are characterisations that no regime would willingly tolerate. Moreover, in terms of aid, the corollary of a crisis situation is typically relief programming. Since the modalities of relief tend to bypass the state, and thus curtail the capacity of public authorities to allocate resources, there are additional reasons for states to resist the term "crisis". Phrases such as “crisis countries” are thus unlikely to gain widespread usage outside aid bureaucracies.

Recognising the protracted nature of the humanitarian crises affecting some countries also means recognising that relief alone is unlikely to be a sufficient response. At the same time, the volatility of the political environment also means that conventional development programming is unlikely to be feasible and/or appropriate. As Duffield (1994) notes, it is the essentially political nature of these crises that renders the formulation of a response especially challenging.

Throughout the remainder of this report, the terms chronic political crises or chronic political instability are used to refer to situations that are otherwise labelled "transitional". The point here is that it is precisely the protracted and political nature of the humanitarian crises in these situations that needs to be made explicit. The task is then to describe the nature of such political environments, their implications for the well-being of populations, and whether and how relief and development aid modalities can operate within them. It is important to emphasise that the term chronic political instability is not equivalent to, or seeking to replace the concept of the continuum in its various incarnations. Rather, the proposed terminology derives from an explicit rejection of the continuum concept in its political (war-peace transition) and aid (relief-rehabilitation-development) formulations.

It may appear relatively straightforward to propose a new piece of jargon, and in particular to replace the specific term “continuum”, which has attracted increasingly criticism. However, as the section above has highlighted the persistence of the continuum concept is striking despite the increasingly bewildering array of new terms which claim to replace it. Explaining this persistence is important if the limitations of the continuum concept are to be addressed. The following section therefore analyses the factor which have been driving renewed interest internationally in relief-development/war-peace linkages, and identifies a number of factors which account for the continued reliance of the aid community on linear models of “transition”.

2.3. Factors driving the “transition” debate
Looking at the evolution of terminology is revealing. It reveals, for example, that the form of the international response to crisis appears driven as much by the needs of the international community itself as by the needs of conflict-affected communities. This section aims to understand what is driving current debates, and to reflect on key trends emerging in the international aid system around the notion of "transition".

2.3.1 The need for a new aid paradigm

The aid community is in defensive mode, and is seeking to present a new rationale for official aid. The reasons for this have to do with trends in official development assistance, in relief expenditures, and in perceptions of the cost of conflict in recent years.

The costs of conflict are beginning to be felt and acknowledged by the donor community. This has been achieved in part through the advocacy work of agencies such as UNICEF, which have supported studies to account for the financial and human costs of war. Acknowledging such costs became politically feasible in the post-Cold War context, when distance could be placed between the Western state and on-going violence in developing countries and those in the former Eastern bloc.

Responding to conflict was also making an impact on overall aid flows from donor countries. The 1990s has seen a rate of decline in official development assistant (oda) from the OECD countries that is unprecedented since the 1960s. Riddell (1996) reports that in 1989 the volume of oda fell by a marginal 0.5% relative to the previous years. Since then, annual falls in oda have been much steeper: 3.9% in 1992; 5.4% in 1993, 1.3% in 1994; 5.4% in 1995. Not only do these figures represent an absolute fall in the value of oda, they also reflect a fall in their value relative to GNP. In mid-1996, aid provided by member states of the OECD had fallen to 0.27% of GNP, the lowest recorded since the UN established its target of 0.7%.

The decline in willingness of donors to spend on overseas aid is partly linked to the escalating cost of the world's peace-keeping bill, which doubled from $2.4 billion in 1990 to $5.4 billion in 1994 (Netherlands, 1993).

At the same time, the composition of oda has changed. Between 1980 and the mid-1990s there was a massive expansion in the proportion of oda allocated to relief, from less than 2% of oda in 1980 to some 10% a decade later. By far the largest proportion of relief aid is being allocated to respond to conflict-generated emergencies - 97% in the case of the European Commission (Randel, 1994). Similarly, in 1994, WFP spent only $19 million on meeting the effects of natural disasters compared with more than $1.5 billion on conflict related emergencies (Webb, 1996).

These trends do not only reflect the growing costs of humanitarian and military intervention in conflict situations; they also reflect the extent to which the scope for intervention itself has expanded. Unlike previous decades, there is now scope for intervention inside conflict zones, rather than just on their periphery (Duffield, 1994b). The international community is more willing to provide humanitarian assistance in such contexts, if necessary protecting deliveries of relief aid with military escorts. In addition, the rise in relief spending also reflects greater stringency on the part of donors in providing development aid. Especially where human rights or economic conditionalities are applied, as for example they have been intermittently in Kenya, relief aid remains the only means of spending. In certain countries and regions, it is more difficult to spend development than relief aid (Macrae, 1997a).
The growing costs of intervention and relief provision in conflict areas, and the overall decline in donor spending on ODA, had by the early 1990s created pressure for a reinvention of the rationale for aid.

In searching for a new aid paradigm, aid policy elites in the UN, European Commission and the DAC among others, have returned to the cupboard of once fashionable ideas. First, the dust has been brushed off the very old idea that aid could be used to address the root causes of migration and war. This root cause analysis, made first in the mid-1940s, had also been briefly revisited in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Surkhe, 1995). Driven in large part by increasing concern over conflict-induced migration to the West, a debate was initiated within the UN to examine the root causes of migration, and to identify whether and how aid could be used to address them (Surkhe, 1995).

However, a stand-off rapidly ensued between the East and the South on the one hand, and Western donors on the other. The socialist and non-aligned bloc argued that international factors were the primary cause of poverty and instability, and therefore migration. Global inequality, extractive capitalism and military expansionism were all identified as the primary external causes of migration and conflict. Meanwhile, the West focused on the internal causes of conflict: poor and authoritarian governance, bad economic policies, environmental degradation. In the context of the Cold War, the inevitable stand off meant that the root cause debate stalled.

In the 1990s, the notion of linking aid with conflict prevention, and hence with the prevention of potentially large population movements, has been revived. Most prominently, the former UN Secretary-General's *Agenda for Peace* and *Agenda for Development* have highlighted the linkages between development and peace (Boutros-Ghali, 1992; Boutros-Ghali, 1994). More recently, a number of donors including the European Commission and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) have developed policy statements explicitly highlighting the role of aid in conflict management (European Commission, 1996; Development Assistance Committee, 1997; Development Assistance Committee, 1996).15

It is in this context that new promises and claims have been made about the potential role of aid in conflict management, and by extension in limiting conflict-induced migration. At the same time, expectations have become higher that humanitarian aid can be used to sustain and contain populations over many years, in very violent situations (Hathaway, 1995).

Recognition of the need for politically informed and politically responsible aid programming is welcome and long overdue. The persistent attempts to portray aid as an inherently benign technocratic and economistic process (Griffin, 1991) lacking political content or intent were not sustainable. However, the refocusing of the function of aid in the post-Cold War environment raises a number of questions and presents agencies such as UNICEF with some tough dilemmas.

**Aid as Political Engineering**

Recent policy statements by the UN, European Commission, and DAC concerning the role of aid in conflict management have focused largely on the internal causes of conflict. In so doing, they have identified many of the root causes of conflict as legitimate and feasible targets of aid interventions. Measures once promoted as means of poverty alleviation, are now seen to have the added advantage of contributing to conflict reduction - in other words to contribute to an overall political purpose.

Analysis of trends in US aid and foreign policy are illuminating in this regard. The creation of the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) in 1992 marked an effort by the US Government to include a political dimension to its aid programming in situations of post-conflict transition. Drawing on
both relief and development aid budget lines, and with reporting lines within both USAID and the State Department, OTI represents a form of aid programming that explicitly promotes a process of political engineering in recipient countries. Through a multi-track approach, it aims to link conventional development aid programmes with initiating and directing a process of political change.

It may be argued that this is not necessarily a new phenomenon, and that aid as a tool of political agendas has a long history. However, there are qualitative differences now as compared with previous decades.

During the Cold War, the function of aid was relatively clear. It was there to maintain and sustain strategic alliances, but within a humanitarian (in the broad sense) rather than overtly political framework, thereby enhancing the respectability of both recipient and donor governments (Griffin, 1991). In other words, the political content of aid programmes remained relatively hidden (Angell and Murphy, 1988; Pietrse, 1996), and the distinct professional spheres of foreign policy and aid programming were, at least formally, maintained. More recently, however, these distinctions have become blurred. It may be significant, for example, that the Administrator of USAID, who once reported directly to the President, now reports to the Secretary of State.

Further, the political agenda driving Cold War uses of aid had less to do with influencing internal political processes in recipient countries, than with ensuring the loyalty of military and political apparatuses at the level of the state. It was concern with the political allegiance of states to either East or West bloc that tended to drive aid-linked policies. In this regard, present means of envisaging aid uses are quite different. They see clients not in the state, but in civil society, and they seek to influence not military-administrative apparatuses, but social and political processes.

That is now acceptable to explicitly use aid in such a manner is reflected in important policy shifts within the United Nations and several donor countries, which include moves to integrate foreign policy and aid administrations. Significantly, in her report to the former UNSG, Dame Anstee writes:

The process of peace-building is in fundamental ways different from the kind of activities subsumed under the heading ‘development’, although these form a highly important component. The main distinction is that development activities naturally have to operate in a political context, this is not their primary purpose, whereas in the case of peace-building political considerations take centre stage. In such situations, developmental and humanitarian programmes must contribute to the overall political purpose of consolidating peace and preventing renewed conflict, as well as serve their normal function of improving conditions of life and relieving hardship. Thus, the political objectives should always prevail (Anstee, 1996, emphasis added).

It is in this spirit, that the UN Department of Political Affairs has been assigned as lead agency for peace-building and post-conflict recovery (United Nations, 1997); DPA also chairs the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, which includes key development and humanitarian agencies. These arrangements are new, and as such are untested.

The arrangements established in the UN reform process, and by similar policy shifts in donor countries, seek to improve coherence in the political policy framework surrounding aid. The lack of such coherence was a key finding of the joint evaluation of the international response to the genocide in Rwanda (Ericksson, 1996). What is unclear from the reforms taking place, however, is what kind of politics will be informing aid programmes. Implicit in statements issued by the UN
and indeed by the European Commission (European Commission, 1996) are a number of highly problematic assumptions.

In terms of the causes of conflict, current policy statements use a conceptual model that focuses primarily on internal factors. Violence tends to be presented as the product of underdevelopment and misunderstanding (Macrae, 1997a; Duffield, 1997). Quite apart from the way this underplays the significance of external factors - the legacy of the Cold War, and the role of international and regional powers - such a model also implies that solutions to conflict are relatively straightforward. By linking violence to underdevelopment, strategies for conflict resolution can be conceived as closely resembling the objectives of development cooperation. However, there is a critical flaw in the model. As Keen (1994) shows, the orchestrators of violence - as well as the beneficiaries - are typically not the poor and marginalised, but the politically powerful. It is how these politically powerful groups are confronted that is likely to be central in determining the outcomes of conflict. Negotiation with such groups is traditionally the sphere of professional diplomacy; aid agencies have neither the competence nor the mandates to play this role, nor can aid programming compensate for the absence of political engagement by donor governments at this level.
Nevertheless, not only is aid increasingly used as a substitute for political engagement, in non-strategic countries or regions, it is becoming the primary form of political action taken by donor governments. In such contexts, the capacity of aid agencies to work on the basis of humanitarian need (i.e. impartially), rather than on the basis of trying to secure a particular political outcome, may be compromised. There are, for example, mounting pressures on agencies to promote the idea that by omission as well as commission, aid can and will play a substantive role in conflict reduction.

De-neutralising humanitarian aid

Relief aid - or, more properly, humanitarian aid - has traditionally been seen to be politically impartial. In contrast, development aid has been seen as partial. Development aid requires a political judgement in terms of what institutions ought and ought not to be strengthened. Also, since most bilateral and multilateral development aid is channelled through governments, it tends to be weighted in favour of the state. In this sense, development aid is not neutral; rather, it has traditionally conferred a degree of legitimacy from the international community onto its recipients.

During the Cold War, donors sought to maintain the political distinction between humanitarian and development aid. During the 1980s, for example, specific mechanisms of disbursement for humanitarian aid were created that deliberately minimised the extent to which Western governments engaged with belligerent recipient governments. These mechanisms include channelling the bulk of aid inputs through NGOs, and through various entities such as the Red Cross. Hence, in contrast to development aid, humanitarian aid was delivered through highly decentralized and often private structures, that effectively bypassed the state.

However, as the complex political impacts of relief become clearer, and as relief agencies must increasingly rely on national and local level actors to deliver supplies, including military actors, the notion of the neutrality of humanitarian aid is being widely questioned. Importantly, the traditional neutrality of humanitarian aid may also be undermined by new policies concerning the role of aid in conflict reduction.

The notion that aid can contribute to conflict reduction has much in common with an older aid paradigm, that which has emerged in relation to prevention of and preparedness for natural disasters. Ideas surrounding natural disaster response have long informed aid interventions in complex political emergencies at both a conceptual and an operational level. These include the ideas that well-managed relief can be used to promote long-term recovery, and that appropriate development programming can reduce vulnerability to future hazards.

This approach has been linked to debates regarding the possible contribution of aid to conflict management. Specifically, building on analyses of the political economy of relief in wartime have led to the idea that, if humanitarian aid can fuel war, perhaps, conversely it can also be used to build peace. In this regard, rather than a way to address the consequences of conflict, humanitarian aid is increasingly being seen as a tool to manage conflict. Like development aid, whether or not to provide humanitarian aid has become a legitimate form of political engagement by donor governments in conflict situations. In eastern Zaire, for example, the non-provision of humanitarian aid was justified by the fact that previously, humanitarian aid had been abused by the Interhamwe (Stockton, 1997). Similarly, the British Government recently withheld relief aid from Sierra Leone, arguing that to provide aid would serve to reinforce the military junta.

In other words, a political rationale that might once have been applied only to development aid, has been expanded to include all kinds of aid. Collapsing the political distinction between
humanitarian and development aid in this way "de-neutralises" humanitarian aid. As the theory and practice of neutral aid wanes, it becomes harder and harder to defend or resurrect the principles underlying that practice. As pressures mount for humanitarian aid to become more like development aid, so the concept of humanitarian neutrality is changing.

People behaving badly: a psychological approach to conflict management

Alongside the trend of analysing conflict primarily in terms of its internal causes, is a further trend toward locating the causes of conflict in the personal, psychological sphere. As a senior OTI official observed, “we need to change attitudes and behaviour”.23

In addition to focusing on causes such as poverty, environmental change, land scarcity, etc., aid actors are increasingly interested in the psychology and sociology of violence. Changing the behaviour of actors in recipient countries is seen as a necessary means of containing and reducing violence (Duffield, 1997; Pupavac, 1997). Pupavac (1997) warns that in the process, responsibility for addressing the material, structural determinants of conflict, and its international, political dimensions is becoming down-graded and de-emphasised. Duffield (1997), analysing the emergence of specialist conflict resolution NGOs, sees their rise as symptomatic of a retreat from a development approach based on the redistribution of resources. In its place, he and others suggest, greater emphasis is being placed on "self-reliance" and "self-help", and upon altering the behaviour of governments, families and individuals.

This policy shift away from redistribution of wealth, which had characterised the development aspirations of the 1960s and 1970s, draws on a number of different strands from both sides of the political spectrum.

On the one hand, the “new Africanism” of countries such as Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda has sought to resist what are seen as the forces of imperialism, whereby development aid has done little other than maintain dependency and undermine the responsibility of national governments to their people. At a micro-level, this view is also shared by those who criticise relief aid, which is seen to do little but create dependency, disempower, and enable warring parties to relinquish their responsibility to civilians under their control (de Waal, 1997).

In donor countries, the view is increasingly that until national governments in developing countries behave properly, aid will be useless and can be legitimately withheld. This view characterises the policy of the United States and the United Kingdom (Albright, 1997).24

As a response to declining aid budgets, and the need to represent the purpose of aid as contributing to stability, advocating behavioural change becomes attractive. In contrast to projects focusing on infrastructure and material supply, investment in “capacity building”, “training”, and “advocacy” can be presented as relatively cost-effective and inherently sustainable. This is not to suggest that such interventions are unnecessary. Rather, the critical question is whether or not they are being used as substitutes for resource transfers (Duffield, 1997). The answer to such a question needs to be grounded in empirical analyses of specific cases - the issue is thus returned to in chapter 4.0, which reports on UNICEF’s interventions in Rwanda and Uganda.

2.3.2 Blurring mandates

Another reason why the notion of "transition" has become topical is that aid agencies are working in an increasingly crowded marketplace, and one in which the operating environment is increasingly muddled.
On the one hand, agencies such as UNDP and bodies such as the DAC are increasingly involved in situations that were once the lone preserve of relief agencies. On the other hand, agencies that previously confined their work to refugee and emergency settings, such as UNHCR, are seeking to take on new, developmental roles. Although these trends reflect a more holistic analysis of relief-development needs, they also reflect changing opportunities. The imposition of conditionalities on the use of development aid in countries such as Sudan and Kenya, for example, and the lack of recognised governments in countries such as Somalia and Afghanistan, meant relief aid was the only instrument available to agencies wishing to maintain operationality. For developmental agencies, moving back into emergencies/conflict zones was a mechanism for maintaining funding levels, as well as maintaining visibility in the better publicised war-zones (Anstee, 1996). Such "market-driven" aspects of recent trends in aid should not be excluded from analysis, although they are difficult to quantify.

2.3.3 Relief-bad, development-good

A final set of factors driving the popularity of a "transitional" model is a mounting critique of relief. In addition to arguments that relief induces dependency, this critique has two main components.

Chronic crises

An important body of work in the early 1990s highlighted the limitations of conventional relief strategies in situations of protracted conflict. A report for UNICEF (Duffield, 1994a) was one of the first to discuss the chronic nature of humanitarian crises. Far from being temporary interruptions to an otherwise progressive development process, the majority of contemporary conflict/emergencies were extremely lengthy, sometimes lasting a decade or more. While provision of food aid and medical care can meet basic physiological needs, they cannot address the underlying structural and institutional crises which prove so devastating. Providing material goods, without addressing the social, political and administrative systems required to sustain this provision was seen as problematic. In other words, while relief might be a necessary condition for alleviating humanitarian crises, it was not sufficient.

Feeding the beast

A second important criticism levelled against relief in recent years is that it does more harm than good. In particular, it is susceptible to manipulated by warring parties, and often benefits the politically and militarily powerful rather than the poor and dispossessed. This critique drew on substantive evidence from a number of major humanitarian crises around the globe (see, for example, Keen, 1994b), and has now become incorporated into popular culture through prominent media coverage (see, for example, de Waal, 1996). With the negative effects of poorly-managed relief aid being increasingly exposed, developmental approaches grew increasingly attractive. In contrast to relief which fuelled conflict, it could be argued that development helped reduce it, by addressing its underlying causes (see, for example, Development Assistance Committee, 1997).

Interestingly, this critique of the negative impact of relief has not been accompanied by an historical analysis of the effectiveness of development aid in conflict reduction. In particular, the fact that countries such as Rwanda, Sudan, Somalia and Zaire were among the highest recipients of aid per capita, and yet have been among the most violent, is rarely referred to.

2.3.4 Summary of trends
What emerges from a review of the international aid system and the forces driving the notion of a "transition" are a number of key trends:

• A move towards increasing politicisation of aid, reflected in the administrative changes to encourage greater coherence between political, humanitarian and developmental spheres (eg the creation of OTI; the creation of ECPS and assignment of DPA in to a key role within the UN), and an increasing emphasis on joint strategic planning across these spheres (eg the strategic framework process within the UN; joint AID-State strategy planning as part of GHAI). In addition, there is an increasing confidence within the aid community regarding its role in conflict management - this is focusing increasingly on the internal causes of conflict and in particular the role of aid in effecting changes in behaviour of states (governance), communities (capacity-building) and individuals (rehabilitation and psycho-social healing). For UNICEF this trend has a number of implications. In addition to ensuring that its voice is heard in political fora such as the Security Council, it also needs to be keenly aware of the risks of increased donor conditionality on aid funds: protecting the organisation’s neutrality will be essential if it is to maintain its credibility and fulfil its mandate.

• A related move to overcome the divisions between relief and development actors, reflected in the increasing blurring of agency mandates. For example, the World Bank is now developing a watching brief strategy for countries in conflict, UNDP is playing a greater role in emergencies, similarly UNHCR and even ICRC are now taking on a greater role in developmental programming. As later sections describe, for UNICEF the expansion of agencies into situations of chronic instability means that the agency needs to establish clearly its mandate and competence in these situations if it is to maintain comparative advantage and attract sufficient funds.
3.0 UNICEF in Transition: Policy Framework and Institutional Culture

3.1 Introduction and overview of chapter

This chapter draws on a review of key UNICEF Board Papers and major evaluations of the organisation in order to describe how it conceives of its role in emergencies and development, and the links between the two. Following from this is an analysis of the organisation’s structure, procedures and culture, including a review of the financial framework within which its work takes place. Finally, an attempt is made to situate UNICEF within an increasingly competitive environment.

3.2 Policy Parameters

3.2.1 Policy framework

Figure 2 shows the UNICEF funds allocated to emergencies between 1981 and 1996:
Figure 2 shows a particularly steep rise in the organisation’s relief expenditure in the three years 1990-1993, since when funds have tailed off. The trend in UNICEF’s emergency aid expenditure reflect those globally: sharp increases in emergency aid expenditure during the early part of the 1990s that appeared to tail off in 1995. This is to be expected following the unprecedented scale of emergency expenditure in Bosnia and Rwanda in the first half of the decade. Despite the sharp fall in the agency’s emergency expenditure since 1993, according to figures provided to the researchers, in 1996, emergencies still accounted for over a quarter of UNICEF’s total expenditure.

By their very nature, emergencies generate considerable volatility in aid expenditures, it being difficult to predict when major crises will occur and particularly what international reaction will be. The crisis in north Korea, for example, has attracted little attention, and the protracted crises in countries such as Afghanistan, Sudan and Somalia consistently report contributions in the region of 20-30% of appeals. In contrast, responses to the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and to the aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 were relatively generous.

Concerned by the increase in the organisation’s involvement in emergencies, and in particular the way this might detract from its developmental work, in 1994 the Board reviewed UNICEF’s emergency operations capacity. It requested the Executive Director to report in further detail on its emergency strategy, and to examine whether and how emergency expenditures contributed to meeting developmental objectives (UNICEF, 1994a). The resulting Board Paper (UNICEF, 1994a) was followed in 1996 by two further papers which provided a conceptual framework for the agency’s emergency interventions and outlined its strategic priorities and operational concerns (UNICEF, 1996c; UNICEF, 1996b).

These are rich documents. They reassert UNICEF’s mandate to act:

...wherever and whenever children, women and families are at risk, whether they be refugees, displaced persons or persons affected by conflict, natural disaster, inequity or poverty (UNICEF, 1994a).

In the context of this report, the most notable feature of these documents is the continued reassertion of UNICEF’s commitment to ensure that its relief interventions are carried out in a manner which maximises developmental impact. This is in two broad ways.

First, in terms of disaster prevention, it aims to “...prevent the exposure of children to risks by addressing the root causes of conflict” (UNICEF, 1994a).

Second, and more prominently, UNICEF aims to build capacity among disaster affected populations in order to maximise protection during crises and facilitate recovery. This approach provides a direct linkage with development, in that:

UNICEF concurs with the generally held view that development must involve a process of reducing vulnerability of communities and national structures. Emergencies...can be viewed as a disruption in the development process...UNICEF considers the continuum not as a linear process, but as consisting of closely linked and overlapping phases requiring different types of responses...the deciding factor is to ensure that the capacities of communities and populations at risk are strengthened to cope with disasters (UNICEF, 1994a).

The entry point for operationalising this approach is the family, which is seen to provide the most effective framework to secure the rights and well-being of children. The capacity of the family to
provide this framework for protection is seen to be undermined by conflict and natural disasters. So, for example, families’ access to service provision is seen to be diminished as state provision is reduced. The task for UNICEF, therefore, is to reinforce family structures, working with them directly, and through state and non-state entities, including military and civil groups. UNICEF’s operational approach combines four primary elements: advocacy, assessment, care and protection of children from intentional harm. How these strategies are implemented at field level is discussed in Chapter 4.0. What is important here is to analyse how these objectives reflect the institutional culture and structure of UNICEF globally, which in turn has implications for its positioning.

3.2.2 Reluctant relief?

In its definition of strategic priorities, UNICEF states that it aims to:

...ensure the survival of the most vulnerable children and women and their protection against malnutrition during the dangerous and early days of acute emergencies, through access to essential and life-saving and life-sustaining services (UNICEF, 1996b, emphasis added).

This statement is telling in that it testifies to UNICEF’s preoccupation with moving as quickly as possible from a relief to a development footing. Importantly, it is by pointing to its capacity to adopt developmental relief that UNICEF increasingly claims a comparative advantage in complex political emergencies (see, for example, Fisher, 1996). This is by virtue not only of programmatic content - for example, the reestablishment of sustainable services and household production - but also of process, in particular its development links with relevant national authorities (see, for example, UNICEF, 1996b; Fisher, 1996). While underpinned by an analysis which aims to enable communities to recover quickly their dignity and to resume their normal way of life, implicit too is a sense that institutionally UNICEF feels more comfortable in the territory of development than of relief.

Richardson (1991, 1995) and others (see, for example, Schoch and Faure, 1992; Bowles, 1993) also note this sense of reluctance and discomfort regarding the organisation’s involvement in emergencies. Consistently cited are the fears of senior management that emergencies detract attention from its development work; this is very evident in Uganda. The tension between the view that UNICEF can and should respond to the needs of women and children in emergencies, and the view that to do so could diminish the agency’s response in the quieter emergency of underdevelopment persists. The joint evaluation of UNICEF pointed out that the Executive Board has also remained ambivalent in its views on the appropriate balance in the agency’s activities (Schoch and Faure, 1992).

The ambivalence of the organisation towards emergencies has a significant impact on the way it conceptualises and operationalises the links between relief and development.

At a conceptual level, UNICEF’s reluctance to see itself as an “emergency” organisation may reflect a tendency toward a mandate-driven analysis of the world. As a senior UNICEF staff member commented with regard to large parts of Eastern Europe - which is facing a protracted and structural crisis, characterised by declining indicators of health and wealth for the majority of people - in some situations the concept of “development” is not relevant. There is a risk that pressures to relabel situations as post-emergency, and therefore "ready" for development, may lead to inaccurate analyses of actual realities. The pressures to undertake such a relabelling are evident at the field level. As one UNICEF staff member in Uganda commented:
...there is economic and political stability, and everyone wants to feel positive. We all want development and to put the emergency behind us.

Similarly, in Rwanda, UNICEF staff noted that as far as the government was concerned, the emergency was over when the majority of the refugees were repatriated. Thus, despite deteriorating security during the second half of 1997, which led to fifty percent of the country being inaccessible to the UN, there were considerable pressures to move to a developmental footing. As UNICEF staff noted, “We are partners with the government and they are sovereign”.

Interviews with staff in Uganda and Rwanda indicated that while there is undoubtedly scope for informal political analysis, conducted off the record and in bilateral discussions between UNICEF staff and the Government, and between UNICEF staff and other agencies, incorporating such analysis explicitly into its public policy and programming is necessarily extremely difficult. This has the effect that for some staff working at the programme level, they have little incentive to develop detailed political analysis nor guidance on how to apply it to their daily work. This can give the impression of politically “blind” programming, which in turn can translate into apparently uncritical shift towards “developmental” programming.

The institutional culture of UNICEF, which can be described as ambivalent to emergencies, reinforces pressures at the country level to resume a development mode, and in particular to reestablish governmental authorities as primary partners and channels for resource flows. This can create significant contradictions within the organisation. As described in chapter 4, these contradictions emerge in relation to the problem of engaging with national authorities as development partners, when those entities are also warring parties and responsible for violations of child rights. They relate also to the expectations of sustainability, a key objective of developmental programming, in environments of acute structural stress.

The institutional culture of “reluctant relief” is diffused to field level and influences the shape of country programmes. This is manifest in a number of ways.

First, the primary programming tool for UNICEF is the five year country plan. This is agreed by the recipient government and is used to set objectives and identify indicators of performance, including individual staff performance. In situations such as Rwanda, the country programme was abandoned and replaced by three, one year emergency programmes. These were not subject to the same extensive process of consultation with national authorities as the country programme. Recently concluded negotiations with the GoR have resulted in a new three year bridging programme - The bridging programme is seen as an interim programme that will lay the foundations for a fully fledged five year country programme (UNICEF Rwanda, 1997, July). It is premised on the assumption that the government will remain in place and that there will be relative stability. These programming procedures reflect the continued dominance of a linear vision of relief-to-development ‘transition’. In other words, it is assumed after the (temporary) abandonment of the country programme, a new country programme will be resumed in a stable environment.

It is inherently difficult for an international organisation to do otherwise than to work with such assumptions. To question the stability of UN Member States and their capacity to weather political and natural hazards is extremely sensitive. However, it will be important for UNICEF to identify mechanisms that enable it to plan in a manner which does not rely on assumptions of a linear transition from war to peace, and from relief to development, but that rather reflect a more volatile political environment, and the agency’s multiple accountabilities to children and women, as well as governments.
The five-year country planning process is therefore at risk of seeming anachronistic in an environment characterised by extreme turbulence and increasing concern regarding the political conditions under which external aid is delivered. As Richardson points out, as important as skills to plan the transition from relief to development will be how to plan for moves in the opposite direction. He adds that in some countries, particularly in Africa, “this means that many of the initiatives and ideals of UNICEF’s child survival and development revolution of the 1980s may have to be abandoned” (Richardson, 1991).

A second outcome of the agency’s reluctance to engage in emergencies was expressed by some field staff who felt that, as emergency response was not included in the country programme, there were disincentives to get involved in this area, even where there were clear humanitarian needs. There are political risks for the country office in this regard, and particularly the country representative who often has to advocate for the space in which to work and, for example, to include the country in consolidated appeals. In addition, since staff performance is judged according to the plan of action, and not additional objectives, one staff member reported that “it is safer to stick to the MPO”.

The institutional separation of emergencies from development, and the fact that the former is seen as the poor relation of the latter, is also reflected in the financial structure of the organisation. UNICEF emergency programmes are funded almost entirely through supplementary contributions through the consolidated appeal process (CAP). In financial terms, then, emergencies are not seen to be part of UNICEF’s “core business”. While the total volume of emergency expenditures has increased over the past decade, with important exceptions, UNICEF is seen as less successful than other agencies in attracting resources through the CAP (see, for example, Richardson, 1991, 1995; interviews, DHA, Geneva). The implications of this financial division are likely to be complex and merit further study. A key question would be whether the popular view that relief aid is generous relative to development aid holds true in practice, and the impact on equity and coverage of UNICEF’s programmes when emergency appeals yield relatively low levels.

Institutional denial of the chronic nature of humanitarian crises and of the particular programming requirements associated with political emergencies, also raises important management questions. Institutional denial of the chronic nature of humanitarian crises and of the particular programming requirements associated with political emergencies, also raises important management questions. In particular, the role of EMOPS as anything other than a logistics support unit becomes increasingly unclear, if, as appears to be the case, emergencies are seen to demand simply an intensification or, as argued in UNICEF, an “acceleration” (Ressler, 1996, December) of developmental programming rather than a different approach.

3.2.3 EMOPS: an uncertain mandate?

In his 1991 report, Richardson states that the emergency unit of UNICEF had gone through a series of ups and downs “...reflective of the organisation’s reluctance to commit itself too heavily to emergencies and partly of fears on the part of the regional programme desks that the emergency unit would take attention and resources from their own activities”.

Based on limited interviews with UNICEF staff in New York and Geneva, it is our understanding that EMOPs serves two primary functions: technical and policy. At a technical level, through its Operations Centre (OPSCEN) EMOPS provides backstopping to country programmes on security and communications issues. In addition, it provides support for logistics and fundraising. At a policy level, EMOPs has responded to what might be seen as the professionalisation of relief within
the aid community, and the need to have specialist staff to respond to demands for the agency’s representation in international and inter-agency policy fora. In this capacity, it is engaged in activities which include staff development and training as well as definition of policy.

What is less clear are the precise operational responsibilities of EMOPs. UNICEF remains a highly decentralised organisation where country representatives have extensive responsibilities and have the authority to define the country programme in line with their perceptions of country priorities and needs. They are supported in these tasks by specialist sectoral divisions and programme desks at headquarters, and by the regional offices. It was unclear to the researchers, and also to some field staff, what EMOPs role is in setting and monitoring principles to guide programming in protracted political crises. It appears to have a mandate and capacity which limits the extent of its input into specific countries; this has the effect of delegating to country representatives responsibility for determining the type of response that will be mounted, the principles which will govern that response and the staff resources that will be allocated. This situation led one staff member to comment:

In the East and Southern African Regional Office there is a lack of consistency regarding the structure of emergency responses, which results in varying staff levels and structures. UNICEF lacks clear policies with regards to emergencies.

In both Rwanda and Uganda, staff reported that there had recently been only limited contact with EMOPs New York. This was explained in part by the demands on EMOPs to respond to the “acute” emergencies taking place in DRC, Congo-Brazzaville and Tanzania. Where there had been inputs, these had been confined largely to organisation of the DHA-led appeals and to security issues.

What this suggests is that at present UNICEF lacks the organisational capacity and structures to accommodate situations of chronic political crises. Current arrangements reflect the continued predominance of continuum thinking: in other words, an approach which can respond to acute crises by providing extensive technical resources, but then requires that “normal” country programming be resumed. In countries such as DRC and Rwanda, where significant “pockets” of acute crises persist, EMOPs maintains a role, for example, by participating in weekly regional conference calls etc. However, as it is UNICEF policy to maintain that emergency aid can and should be developmental, it is not surprising that EMOPs role in policy and standard-setting is subsumed by the country programme. In this context, it is easy for the technical (logistics, finance and security functions) to predominate, alongside representation in specialist, international emergency fora. While the former is seen to contribute a useful role, the latter usually remains relatively disconnected from the field.

The formal structures which exist in UNICEF belie the richness of the agency’s work in emergencies and the policy influence it can wield on the ground. In Rwanda, in the immediate aftermath of the genocide, UNICEF was the lead agency for non-food inputs. It leads OLS in the southern sector, and in Uganda it has played a significant role in coordinating response in the northern region. However, this valuable work has taken place without a clear conceptual framework of how and under what conditions emergency inputs should be linked with the country programme. Rather, the current conceptual framework, which states that emergency inputs are developmental, is seen to obviate the need for definition of the distinct principles and conditions required for working in situations of protracted political crisis. Necessarily, therefore, it becomes difficult for EMOPs to defend a role which is other than technical and representational, as it claims what it does and stands for is little different from the rest of the organisation.
3.2.4 The Conventions on the Rights of the Child: unifying principles for relief and development?

The Conventions on the Rights of the Child provide a point of departure and definition for UNICEF’s work in situations of chronic instability, and in particular for its work in situations where there is a political and military transition. Article 39 specifically refers to the rights of child victims of conflict to support for physical and psychological recovery.

In addition to indicating areas of specific programme content, the CRC also provides an approach which embodies a set of principles. These principles constitute a basis for negotiating the highly politicised environments of chronic emergencies. The potential advantage of the CRC is that it enables UNICEF staff to define their strategy without relying on the unhelpful distinction between relief and development aid.

A 1996 Board Paper (UNICEF, 1996d) identifies the ways in which CRC can be used to inform a strategy of protection: prevention of extremely difficult circumstances, reduction of risk, compensatory support (eg reunification of families, rehabilitation of children) and advocacy. Interviews with staff at headquarters and in the field testified to a recognition of and support for a shift in the agency’s approach from one which focuses on service provision to one more concerned with advocacy and the enforcement of rights. This shift was seen to have followed from UNICEF’s involvement in the signing and dissemination of the CRC, and to have been informed by the joint evaluation of the agency in 1992.

The potential value of the CRC in chronic political crises, and in particular where UNICEF is seeking to make the transition between emergency and country programming modes, is that it can provide a framework within which the agency’s relationship with governments and other parties (potentially including other warring parties) can be based. It is through defining such principles that UNICEF can ensure it remains politically neutral, and that the shape of its programme is not driven by political interests of donor or recipient countries, but by the needs of children and women.

As an international organisation within the United Nations system operationalising this approach is not unproblematic, however. At present, governments provide the primary mechanism for ensuring the accountability of international organisations. As the sovereign power they are responsible for defining and endorsing the content of UNICEF’s country programmes, and they are also central to the implementation of country programmes. At the same time, in situations of chronic political crisis, governments are also warring parties and may be responsible for actions that violate the rights of children. There is thus an uneasy tension in cases where UNICEF’s key partners for child rights are also violating them.

In his 1995 report, Richardson concluded that:

Nowhere is this need [to speak out to protect child rights] more acute than in emergencies, but there are those who question whether UNICEF has been courageous enough in using its reputation and influence in this regard....The potential responsibilities of acting as the equivalent of a human rights advocate will in many cases politicise its role. Historically the organisation tended to speak with a soft voice or no voice at all on these matters.

This tension between protecting and upholding rights, and the need for pragmatism, accountability and the maintenance of legal obligations to states, is not unique to UNICEF. A UNDP-DHA workshop on linking relief and development, in which UN Coordinators from many countries were assembled, concluded that an institutional culture is lacking that rewards staff who speak out in
favour of human rights. The meeting called for greater protection of staff working in such environments, and noted in particular that if staff are expelled from countries for advocating human rights issues, this should not be seen as an indicator of poor performance (DHA and UNDP, 1997).

Clearly, a careful balance needs to be struck; something UNICEF Rwanda and Uganda recognise. A senior UNICEF staff member described the role as playing “good cop” to Amnesty International’s “bad cop”. Rather than simply criticising government policy, UNICEF has and should continue to work with relevant authorities to increase awareness of child rights, and to enhance government capacity to protect them.

This approach of protection of child rights through education and increasing capacity is one that coincides with the broader approach to conflict management emerging within the aid community. The rights-based development agenda which is emerging is necessarily highly politicised, and therefore deeply controversial. Depending on how the rights-based framework is interpreted, it can be either a mechanism for political accountability or an instrument which the West uses to beat the developing world. An awareness of these different ‘spins’ on the CRC is important as the agency strives to define its strategy in situations of chronic political crisis.

Issues to consider in a rights-based approach

One issue of concern in a rights-based approach is too narrow a focus on internal factors causing conflict. This may be manifest in programmes which emphasise increasing understanding and awareness of human and child rights. Pupavac (1997), for example, notes that peace education has been a prominent strategy among international agencies working in the former Yugoslavia. She cautions, however, that teaching the values of mutual respect for all people’s of the Federation was a key part of the curriculum before the war. Implicit in the peace education programmes is the notion that conflict reduction can be facilitated by helping modify personal attitudes and behaviour. Such an approach has the advantage of enabling agencies to represent traditional developmental activities as part of a process of conflict management. There is a risk, however, that this approach downplays the role of government or international payers in committing or condoning abuses.

Hence, it is possible to interpret the CRC selectively, and to focus overmuch on the responsibilities of individuals and families, and neglect the importance of state and international responsibility for providing a framework for protection. Equally, it is tempting to see human rights violations as deriving from misunderstanding and under-resourcing, rather than being based on an explicit, relatively well-thought through plans underpinned by extensive human and financial resources from the state and other international actors. Such an individual and family-based approach may be legitimate for aid agencies to adopt, in the sense that it targets those areas where agencies have the skills and mandate to respond. However, evidence regarding the effectiveness of strategies that rely on behavioural change and capacity building to reduce the risk of future violence is equivocal (see, for example, Sorbo et. al., 1997; Duffield, 1997). Further, such a strategy avoids the hard questions that UNICEF needs to confront; namely, the conditions under which it engages with those responsible for violations of child rights.

A second issue of concern regarding the rights-based approach to development derives from those who ask who is defining this agenda. Given that the CRC has been ratified by 187 states, it can be argued that, like other human rights instruments, it is global and therefore embodies universal values. This is problematic, however, if these rights are not universally applied, or seen to be
universally applied, and if they are seen as a substitute for resource transfers from rich to poor countries. Steven Lewis (personal communication, September 1997), Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF, clearly recognises the balance that needs to be struck between rights and rations. He emphasises the importance of ensuring that the CRC does not become a stick with which to beat families and states in developing countries, or a means to apply greater conditionalities on aid transfers. Ensuring that an adequate resource base is in place to enable states and individuals to fulfil their protection obligations is crucial.

In its advocacy work at the field level, UNICEF has recognised this. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF has advocated for the new government to allocate more public resources to the education sector and encouraged donors to contribute also. In Rwanda, UNICEF is advocating for the adoption of new laws which place responsibilities on families to send their children, including girl children, school. What is less clear, however, is whether families will be able to access schools: for example, it is estimated that 10,000 new teachers would need to be trained annually in order to be sufficient to teach the country’s child population (O’Mahoney, interview, 20 November 1997). For advocates of the rights of children to education, a holistic approach is clearly required to ensure that not only the family, but also the state and the international community fulfil their obligations.

The CRC constitutes a potentially powerful basis for UNICEF to define its modus operandi in the complex political environment associated with chronic instability. Interpreting and operationalising this framework is not straightforward, however. As with any policy innovation, it will take time to assess its effectiveness in practice, and UNICEF staff at different levels are all too aware that defining how best to use the CRC in their work will take time.

At present, it appears that there is insufficient guidance provided to staff as to how to analyse the political environment within which they work, and how to manage the tensions between human rights advocacy on the one hand, and the operational requirements of a UN agency on the other. Such guidance is particularly important in situations where UNICEF is attempting to move from an emergency footing to a country programme, as in Rwanda, and situations such as Uganda where a significant humanitarian crisis is placing different demands on UNICEF than its more conventional development programme. A clear statement of principles is needed to guide programming in these environments. At the core of these principles is the spirit of the CRC and indeed of UNICEF: the need to work in an impartial and neutral manner in order to maximise child welfare. Developing such principles, and the capacity to monitor adherence to them through political analysis will become more pressing, not only in terms of UNICEF’s wish to ensure the integrity of its programming, but also in terms of increasing demand from donors for “smart relief” and politically informed development programming.32

3.3 Partners or Predators?: UNICEF’s position in a system under stress

A final set of issues emerging from a review of UNICEF’s global policy framework is the risk that it is losing its comparative advantage. During the 1980s, UNICEF was virtually alone in the UN family in working with non-state entities (for example, the SPLA in southern Sudan) and in situations where the incumbent government was not internationally recognised (for example, Cambodia 1982-1989). In the 1990s, NGOs and other UN bodies are now working with non-state entities (Richardson, 1995). In terms of its comparative advantage in situations of protracted political crises, this has implications in that UNICEF has claimed that its sustained involvement with different parties throughout the course of a conflict places it is a good position to facilitate recovery.
In those situations where UNICEF’s presence has been relatively sustained, its capacity to use this experience to influence rehabilitation policy is not a given. In Cambodia, for example, UNICEF was in a unique position to advise on development of the health and education sector, but was rapidly squeezed out by other agencies, in particular the World Bank (Lanjouw et. al., 1998). A similar pattern was evident in Ethiopia after 1991 (see Macrae, forthcoming). In contrast, UNICEF staff suggest that the agency was able to use its analysis and operations in the education sector in Bosnia to inform the development of a sector-wide strategy.

Potentially, the establishment of more inter-agency coordination fora, which aim to develop more coherent responses to protracted political crises, might provide a mechanism through which UNICEF can maximise its influence in non-food sectors. Participation in the strategic framework exercises supported by the ACC, and active involvement in the Executive Committee for Security and Peace are likely to be important in this regard.

A difficulty confronting UNICEF in these fora, however, is that they are becoming crowded. UNICEF is being squeezed from both ends of the “continuum”. UNHCR is playing an expanded role and wishes to grow still further in its work with returning refugee populations. Its quick impact programmes (QIPs) are often in the same sectoral domain as UNICEF’s work (particularly health and education) and also embrace protection issues. At the other end of the spectrum, the World Bank and UNDP are working to reestablish their presence more quickly in crisis countries. At present, the timing of the Bank’s re-entry is determined by an interpretation of its articles of association, which require that recognised government be in place and the state be accorded membership. However, the idea that the Bank might lend in future to non-state entities is not ruled out according to at least one interpretation of the Articles (see World Bank, 1997).

UNICEF points to the fact that it has been given large grants by the World Bank for its work in Somalia and Rwanda as evidence of the close and effective working relationship between the two organisations. It is important to place these grants in context, however. Bank staff interviewed in mid-1994 commented with regard to Somalia that the allocation of Bank funds to the emergency programme was a result of deep staff concern and frustration that the Bank itself could not intervene. They had lobbied the Board hard for this allocation and had not expected it to be replicated; in fact it was in Rwanda later that year. Whether these gestures of compassion, which reflect a very human need to “do something”, will translate into the Bank modifying its approach in response to UNICEF analyses seems questionable, however.

Many agencies are giving considerable thought as to how they can and should engage in situations of protracted political crises. More agencies are also getting involved in operations in these environments. If UNICEF wishes to maintain its visibility and its policy influence, it will be important that it forms effective partnerships with other agencies and maintains its share of resources once other, developmental and refugee-oriented agencies return to conflict-affected countries.
4.0 Transition in Practice

This chapter explores key operational issues facing UNICEF in situations of chronic instability. While the relief-to-development continuum model is rejected by UNICEF at headquarters and country level, the study suggests the model is nevertheless evident at an operational level. In this regard, the chapter identifies two dilemmas in particular surrounding UNICEF's developmental strategy in "transitional" situations - sustainability and legitimacy. The implications of an increased emphasis on behavioural change and of rights-based programming are also considered.

4.1 Operationalising the Continuum

4.1.1 Developmental programming in chronic emergencies: some general concerns

Both UNICEF headquarters and field staff say that they consider the notion of a relief-to-development continuum to be too linear, and the distinction between emergency relief and development aid unhelpful. However, the way UNICEF operationalises its institutional response to political emergencies appears to reproduce continuum thinking.

UNICEF has adopted the idea of "phases" in terms of the transition from emergency to development mode. These include: pre-emergency prevention and preparedness, emergency onset, on-going crisis, rehabilitation, recovery and post-emergency (UNICEF, 1996, November). As a planning tool, the notion of "phases" enables UNICEF to prioritise its actions and resources. Hence, preventative interventions are aimed at dealing with the root causes of conflict, while survival and protection of children and women are key goals during the onset and acute phase of emergencies; rehabilitation and developmental actions are the focus during the rehabilitation phase, and the promotion of lasting solutions through capacity-building is the area of concentration during recovery (UNICEF, 1996, November). In ESAR, this model is being standardised through capacity-building for country offices and national institutions (ESARO, 1997b; ESARO, 1997c, September; Ressler, 1997).

Although useful as a planning tool, the idea of "phases" does not necessarily represent a break with the linear thinking of the continuum model. Rather, a phased response approach provides a way to operationalise the continuum idea, by suggesting appropriate institutional responses at various points in a crisis. Like the continuum, the notion that crises have distinct phases represents a return to conventional models of emergency response based on natural disasters. Thus, as the ESARO Regional Emergency Advisor recently noted:

Some of the same questions are being asked now as in the 1970s about emergency response (Ressler, 1997).

The application of a natural disaster model to a political emergency is highly problematic. The preventative measures required to forestall a political emergency are of a very different nature to those required for a natural hazard. The assumption of a progression (or continuum) from one "phase" of disaster to another can easily misrepresent the complex and often contradictory dynamics of chronic emergencies.
As noted in the previous chapter, UNICEF's institutional culture and programmatic orientation is predominantly developmental. Hence, UNICEF asserts that it "thinks and acts developmentally even in a predominantly relief context" (see Terms of Reference), and that:

...as soon as possible in emergencies, UNICEF looks beyond the immediate provision of relief to more sustainable interventions that emphasize local capacity-building and self reliance to meet emergency needs and to reduce the vulnerability of children to future emergencies (UNICEF, 1996, November).

UNICEF's Rwanda, Uganda, Somalia and Sudan country programmes all attempt to operationalise this approach. In the acute emergency phase, UNICEF's responses have focused on individual survival needs, with assistance directed toward the youngest and most vulnerable, and delivered through vertical programmes. Once the acute phase of emergency is seen to be over, there is then a shift toward rehabilitation and development, premised on restoring the self-reliance of the family and the community, and the capacity of local and national institutions and services.

Hence, despite very different operating environments, UNICEF's strategic approach to developmental programming shows a marked commonality in each of these countries. In addition to being informed by the idea of a progression from acute emergency to recovery to development modes, there is a common emphasis on "sustainable development". In Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan and Somaliland, sustainable development is consistently promoted through the same strategies; political decentralisation, community financing of services, and capacity building.

Taken together, these strategies can be said to represent a common approach to transition in UNICEF's operations. This approach is not unique to UNICEF, however, but is reflective of a broader agenda in international aid and development, one that supports processes of political, economic and social transition towards liberal-democracy. In aid terms, this means support for a transition from centralised to decentralised development planning and implementation, and from centrally-resourced to community-resourced service provision.

To illustrate, the following sections briefly consider UNICEF's developmental programing strategies in a number of countries, beginning with Rwanda.

4.1.2 Transition in Rwanda

UNICEF's Master Plan of Operation (MPO) for the 1988-1992 Rwanda Country Programme of Cooperation described Rwanda as having "a climate of relative political stability". Generally, Rwanda was considered to be a "nicely developing country" (Uvin, 1996). To achieve its goal of reducing infant and under-five child mortality, UNICEF placed emphasis on "community motivation through existing social and political structures in an effort to ensure an acceleration of development through social mobilization" (UNICEF Rwanda, 1988, February). The decentralized administrative and political structures of the country were considered conducive to this:

UNICEF-assisted projects can count on an established system of regular community participation in development programmes and maintenance of public services...The national political party, MRND, has an established local-level network that provides a mechanism for communication and social mobilization (UNICEF Rwanda, 1988, February).

In this context, the Bamako Initiative to strengthen community participation in the management and financing of health services was launched in 1989. This initiative would continue to form the basis for UNICEF's developmental strategy in Rwanda up to the present.
By 1993, the context for development had changed dramatically. From optimistic descriptions of the country five years earlier, the situation was described as one where "mere survival is becoming increasingly difficult" (UNICEF Rwanda, 1993, January). In 1989, the south of the country was hit by famine. Coffee prices had slumped. Armed incursions in October 1990 had raised ethnic tensions. The defence budget quadrupled. National expenditure on health and education fell by 25 percent and 17 percent respectively between 1990 and 1992, and per capita social expenditure was falling by more than 10% per year (UNICEF Rwanda, 1993, January). Between 1989 and 1993, GDP fell by 40%, hitting the peasantry particularly hard. The armed insurgency had forced the ruling party to accept multi-party democracy.

For UNICEF, however, the main lessons learned from the period from 1989 to 1993 were the need for flexibility in programming to incorporate emergency management, and the need to strengthen programme integration and community participation (UNICEF Rwanda, 1993, January). Hence, as government social expenditure was plummeting, the 1993-1997 MPO continued to place emphasis on community participation:

In the transition to a decentralized, pluralistic system, the programme will promote...the strengthening of structures for community participation [with] emergency preparedness, [including] strengthening and accelerating child survival measures in the country programme (UNICEF Rwanda, 1993, January).

In the health sector, this included the provision of primary health care according to the participatory and self-financing principles of the Bamako Initiative. The major innovation in the 1993-1997 MPO was the adoption of an Information, Organisation Building and Advocacy component. This aimed to "empower the population to take responsibility for solving local problems by strengthening the capacity of community members to assess and analyse priorities and to take action through community organization" (UNICEF Rwanda, 1993, January).

However, the 1993-1997 MPO did take account of the increasing weakness of the state, in that:

...the new programme will concentrate at the peripheral level, where work will continue with community involvement and the support of local administration, regardless of changes that may occur at the centre (UNICEF Rwanda, 1993, January).

Within a year, the situation in Rwanda had deteriorated still further. Political transition to a broad-based government was accompanied by a degenerating socio-economic and political situation, with war displaced in the north, refugees in the south, and a famine in several parts
of the country. Some 50% of children under five showed signs of severe or moderate chronic malnutrition. By the end of 1993, some 2 million people were in need of immediate assistance.

In response, UNICEF was allocating more and more resources to the "loud emergency", although the "silent emergency continues and continues to worsen" (UNICEF Rwanda, 1993b, December). By December 1993, "continued aid inflows are all that stands between Rwanda's economy and collapse" (UNICEF Rwanda, 1993a, December).

The dismantling of the one-party state and the erosion of government negatively affected rural populations. At a communal level, tax revenues had all but dried up, and communes laid off community workers. There was growing evidence that increasing poverty was pushing health care services beyond the reach of the poorest families. Similarly in non-formal education, it was noted that growing poverty and marginalisation of rural populations meant that "it is likely to be some time before commune administration [would] have enough resources to pay community and literacy extension workers" (UNICEF Rwanda, 1993a, December). And in the water sector, the lack of revenue had meant that:

...communes have been forced to lay off at least 40 per cent of community water technicians. Increasing poverty also makes it difficult for communities to devote time and resources to the maintenance of existing community water supply systems (UNICEF Rwanda, 1993a, December).

In this context, the aim of raising the percentage of community contribution to the cost of water supplies was considered problematic.

Nevertheless, despite the deteriorating situation, the Bamako Initiative was deemed successful, and decentralisation was deemed to have helped. Thus, rather than increasing direct assistance to support health services, the solution would continue to be that of promoting self-help and cooperative approaches to cost recovery (UNICEF Rwanda, 1993a, December).

The emphasis on community participation was reinforced through the Information, Organisation and Advocacy programme. The opening up of the political system had revealed a population "inexperienced in organisation and planning decentralised development" (UNICEF Rwanda, 1993a, December). The Information, Organisation and Advocacy programme sought to empower communities and households through decision-making and organisational skills. It also sought to strengthen the dialogue between service providers and their beneficiaries - a precursor to post-genocide approaches to conflict resolution.

The erosion of government authority and the inexperience of the population in decentralised development also led UNICEF to adopt a more hands-on approach to implementation. It widened its range of alliances and partnerships with ministries, churches and NGOs. For emergency work, over 80 per cent of the budget was channelled through NGOs.

In the climate of political uncertainty, financing became problematic as donors withheld non-emergency funds:

Under-funding of development projects remains a major constraint in programme implementation. Most donors are placing emphasis on the political transition. The country has no budget and no development plan. Donors have therefore opted to divert regular technical assistance funds to the emergency and are reluctant to consider regular
supplementary funding requests until the new government is in place and government structures for development programming are stabilised (UNICEF Rwanda, 1993a, December).

By the beginning of 1994, the situation in Rwanda had deteriorated to such an extent that UNICEF proposed an Accelerated Emergency Programme (UNICEF Rwanda, 1994, February). Its overall aims were to prevent unnecessary deaths of children and women due to malnutrition and preventable causes, and to assist communities to restore normal life.

Implementation of the programme, however, was prevented by the genocidal killings that erupted in April 1994. In the aftermath, UNICEF participated in a Flash Appeal, and implemented an ambitious emergency operation that at one point covered six countries - Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Burundi and Zaire.

Almost immediately after the genocide, UNICEF began working with the new Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) government. Its strategy once again involved capacity building and community participation:

UNICEF’s paramount goal for 1995 is to link emergency relief activities to reconstruction, rehabilitation and development to the ultimate benefit of Rwandan children, women and affected communities. UNICEF will need to ensure that its programme contributes to capacity-building at the national, prefecture, commune and local levels so that Government, communities and people themselves take charge of the planning and implementation and the monitoring of activities in the future (UNICEF Rwanda, 1994, February).

In 1996, the process of community participation was boosted with the relaunch of the Bamako initiative (UNICEF Rwanda, 1996, December). The aim was to improve the quality of health care services by giving regional and community health authorities and health centres more autonomy in the management of services, and to enable users to play a direct role in the financing and running of their health services.

By early 1997, with the return of refugees from Zaire, Rwanda was described as a country "emerging progressively from a period of emergency and moving towards rehabilitation and development" (UNICEF Rwanda, 1997, July). Increasingly, emphasis was placed on sustainable basic services, and "involving communities in project activities from their inception to ensure sustainability" (UNICEF Rwanda, 1997, July).

4.1.3 A continuum in policy and practice

The brief review of UNICEF programmes in Rwanda presented here reveals a clear continuity, in both policy approach and operational practice. This continuity is further suggested by the fact that the 1998-2000 MPO is based on a Basic Agreement signed between UNICEF and the previous government on 24 December 1993, only 4 months before the genocide began. The new MPO aims "to revitalise the National Plan of Action for children which was initiated in 1992 but has been since outdated by the 1994 events" (UNICEF Rwanda, 1997, May). The researchers recognise that the Basic Agreement constitutes a fundamental programming instrument of UNICEF and that it does not necessarily change with regimes. However, as discussed further in section 5.4.1 what this suggests is that existing programming tools are insufficiently flexible to deal with situations of chronic instability. The country programming approach locks in country staff to a strategy which provides little space for adjustment in light of political change.
The review also suggests that UNICEF perceived the political crisis of 1994 in Rwanda to be, in effect, a disruption in what was otherwise a relatively stable environment where country programming was proceeding. Indeed, the genocide is sometimes represented almost as an "interruption" in the development process:

In April 1994, the 1993-1997 programme of cooperation was interrupted by the onset of fighting (UNICEF Rwanda, 1997 July).

In this regard, UNICEF would seem to be retaining an outdated notion of an "emergency" as a temporary crisis, after which normal programme activities can resume. This would also seem to be indicated by the fact that, at a programmatic level, problems faced in the post-genocide period are seen to be no different from those faced pre-genocide. Thus, in education:

Many of the problems which exist today were present before the genocide as well - poverty, underpaid, unmotivated and unqualified teachers, an inadequate supply of textbooks, school supplies, and teaching materials, and schools buildings needing rehabilitating - but their magnitude has intensified (UNICEF Rwanda, 1997, May).

Problems faced by government in financing education are also seen not to have changed:

Government does not have the means to respond to the basic educational needs of the country with only 12.3 percent of the national budget allocated to the primary and secondary education in 1996 compared to 25.4 percent in 1992. Neither does the majority of the population: poverty can not be stressed enough as a significant factor contributing to the progressive diminution of students at all levels of schooling (UNICEF Rwanda, 1997, May).

As in pre-genocide Rwanda, UNICEF's post-genocide strategy continues to emphasise decentralisation and the delegation of responsibility to prefectures and communes, to enable them to play a greater role in implementation and supervision. Significantly, however, this is taken one step further: more responsibility is placed on children's primary caregivers, such as the family and the community (UNICEF Rwanda, 1997, May). The closer focus on family and community increases the opportunities for affecting behavioural change, an issue that is considered later in the chapter.
When UNICEF asserts that it "thinks and acts developmentally", is important to be clear what UNICEF means by 'development'. The developmental strategy described above is not confined to Rwanda.

As in Rwanda, after the NRA took power in Uganda political decentralisation was seen as a mechanism to pursue community participation (UNICEF Uganda, 1990). Indeed, during the period 1985-1989, UNICEF area-based programmes focused on developing Resistance Committee structures as vehicles for sustainable social service delivery, and to act as the driving force for community development.

In 1989, however, one of the constraints to the achievement of programme goals was the lack of government revenue to support social services. The danger of overloading unpaid volunteers was recognised, as was the need for substantial donor support to sustain levels of service. Nevertheless, building on successes in water source maintenance, the solution was sought in the development of systems of community financing (UNICEF Uganda, 1990).

The 1990-1995 Programme of Cooperation sought to further pursue the goal of self-reliance through sustainable social services, by optimising social mobilisation. Thus:

Community participation, which is strongly emphasized in the programme through the Resistance Committee structure, is a key element of sustainability (UNICEF Uganda, 1990).

As in Rwanda, the Bamako Initiative was adopted as a strategy for community management and financing of primary health care services.

By 1995, despite accelerating economic growth, lower inflation, and general peace and stability, per capita GDP was still less than $200 per annum, and government investment in social services remained very low. There had been little improvement in mother and child survival indicators since 1990. A review of the 1990-1995 programme concluded that while high levels of external financial and technical assistance had brought improvements in service delivery, it had created donor dependency and "limited measurable impact on behavioural change" (UNICEF Uganda, 1995, January). The formulation of Uganda National Plan of Action for Children (UNPAC) goals, following the World Summit for Children, saw an increased emphasis on behavioural change as a critical part of UNICEF's developmental strategy. Service delivery alone was insufficient:

The achievement of UNPAC goals nationwide will also depend on changing and reinforcing community and family behaviours (UNICEF Uganda, 1995, January).

An assumption behind adopting a behavioural change strategy was that the failure to meet 1990 goals lay in 'behavioural problems'. The adoption of a behavioural change strategy coincides with increased concern with the AIDS pandemic and with programmes focusing on the cognitive and psycho-social development of children from infancy to adolescence (UNICEF Uganda, 1995, January).

The 1995-2000 Programme of Cooperation in Uganda was presented as a "radical shift" from earlier programmes (GoU & UNICEF, 1995, April). The new programme placed a more explicit emphasis on behaviour change, gender roles and child rights, and represented a shift from a project to programme approach. It also represented a shift toward more capacity-building approaches. In
1992, the GoU launched a programme of political decentralisation. UNICEF's 1995-2000 Programme of Cooperation was structured around facilitating this process, and was based on the accelerated decentralisation of the UNPAC. The majority of the country programme was therefore redirected towards strengthening district and sub-country level structures in the planning and delivery of basic services, through district development plans.

This redirection of the UNICEF Uganda programme appears less radical, however, when considered in the light of similar changes taking place in UNICEF's programme in Rwanda during the same period. Indeed, it is a shift that is apparent in UNICEF programmes throughout the East and Southern Africa Region (ESARO, 1997).

Similarly, in Somaliland - an unrecognised state, but a country considered to have achieved significant levels of peace and stability - UNICEF is supporting reform of the health care system. The reform plan comprises measures to rationalise health sector resources to a "minimum" package of essential health services, and the mobilisation of resources including community health care financing. It is premised on a shift from the "free" provision of health services to one that:

...builds appropriate self management capacity for the health care system at the district level [and is] based on the need to achieve sustainable development of health care in Somaliland through efficient and strategic utilisation of the available limited resources (Ministry of Health and Labour, 1997, November).

4.2 Financing transition: From relief to...budget cuts?

4.2.1 Aid finance in transition

A move along the continuum, from emergency relief to sustainable development, relies upon a sustained provision or mobilisation of resources. This study suggests that achieving this is problematic.

In UNICEF, the "Bridging Programme" is a formal planning tool for bridging the divide between relief and development programmes. Currently, it is being used in Rwanda and Somalia in the absence of full country programmes. At present, however, there is no clear mechanism for raising funds for interventions in the twilight zone between relief and development: namely, rehabilitation. The UNDHA coordinated Consolidated Appeal (CAP) in principle is limited to emergency aid. The World Bank-led Consultative Group meetings do not take place unless there is a recognised government in place. The Round Tables provide more of a framework for information exchange than for fund-raising. In countries such as Cambodia, there have been ad hoc mechanisms set up by donors, with the participation of the UN agencies and NGOs to coordinate pledging of resources.

The lack of a clear mechanism for raising rehabilitation funds leads to the packaging of rehabilitation and development projects as relief. The 1997 CAP for Somalia, for example, contained a rehabilitation component. Projects in this component received limited donor support, and the component has been removed for the 1998 CAP.

At present, few donors have a dedicated rehabilitation budget line. The European Commission established the Special Rehabilitation Programme for Africa (SPRA) in 1992, in the same year the Office of Transition Initiatives was established. These budgets function in a manner which is more similar to that of relief than to development, in the sense that they are disbursed almost entirely through NGOs and have a limited project cycle (maximum of two years) (Macrae et. al., 1995b).
For international agencies working in situations of chronic instability, the lack of a clear budgetary framework is problematic. There is no smooth transition between relief and development budget lines. Different planning procedures are required, they are usually managed by different desks or divisions, are subject to different conditionalities, and there are significant differences in the channels through which relief and development funds are disbursed (see section 4.3, Institutional Transition).

Consequently, UN agencies and NGOs experience significant fluctuations in their funding once donors consider the emergency to be over. This was the case for UNICEF in Rwanda, for example. In 1996 there were 160 staff, and in the three years 1994-1997 the office disbursed some US $100 million. Following the acute phase of the emergency, funding levels fell sharply. In 1998, the staff of the Rwanda office is expected to be 83, and the total budget for the triennium 1998-2000 is US $36 million (UNICEF Rwanda, 1997, July).

The event-specific nature of funding is problematic in two respects. First, UNICEF in emergencies would appear to have neither the capacity nor the systems to absorb and account for the use of a sudden increase in resources. This leads to problems of accountability. Field staff in Rwanda asserted that it had taken 18 months to clear up the finances once the acute emergency was over. In Somalia, it took 12 months. It also suggests that funds are neither raised nor disbursed on assessed need. The perceived and actual negative impact of emergency relief programmes, and bad personal experiences of managing them, makes country teams reluctant to resume emergency operations.

The second, and for this study, more important problem is that reductions in the budgets of agencies such as UNICEF are not being paralleled by an increase in development assistance through other channels. While in 1996 the Round Table for Rwanda was relatively successful, in 1997 the mechanism was frozen and donors are holding back. This is partly for reasons of low disbursement of previously allocated funds, but also because of concerns regarding the human rights situation in the country.

This pattern is not unusual. In Afghanistan, for example, the consolidated appeal routinely raises less than 30% of the funds requested; similar figures are reported for Sudan and Somalia. In Somalia, humanitarian assistance is seriously underfunded. UNICEF received only 11% of funds requested in the 1997 CAP (Spring, 1997 September 26). UNICEF has only been able to sustain its operations in Somalia through a carry over of funds raised during the acute phase of the emergency in 1991 and 1992. Since 1993, annual expenditure levels have surpassed annual income (UNICEF Somalia, 1996, December).

The decline in oda experienced in these chronic emergencies would not be problematic if there were other authorities able to assume responsibility for financing public services such as health and education. An assumption of relief and rehabilitation planning is that international support for these services is temporary, and that the government will resume responsibility for their financing and management once the emergency is "over". (Section 4.3 outlines why this assumption is problematic in terms of the institutional perspective. Here the financial dimensions are the focus.)

Interviews with personnel in the field confirmed availability of public finance is a crucial factor determining how and whether services are sustained during the transition from relief to developmental aid financing. For example, unusually in Rwanda and Somalia UNICEF provided salaries to teachers and to health workers to enable them to stay in post, as an emergency measure. In 1995/6, 50% the budget for Rwanda was allocated to supplies. In 1996/1997, this was reduced to 20%. As the emergency is seen to subside, there is a shift from a direct subsidy of service provision, to a focus on “capacity building”.
What is not clear, however, in Uganda, Rwanda or Somalia is whether the capacity exists to sustain these services financially once the direct service provision is reduced. In Rwanda, for example, teachers salaries have deteriorated from pre-war levels. Ranging from RF 7,000-25,000 per month, teacher salaries are insufficient for an estimated minimum of RF 60-80,000 required to keep a family in food alone for one month. The ending of free drug distribution in January 1998, when World Bank supported cost-recovery mechanisms for pharmaceutical supplies is introduced, is likely to increase the family expenditure.

UNICEF faces a dilemma here. It is concerned that if it tries to maintain subsidies on direct service provision indefinitely, then it will be unable to sustain funding. Furthermore, it also lets authorities "off the hook" for providing for their own populations. This argument has informed UNICEF's advocacy strategy in the DRC and Uganda where it has lobbied those governments to increase the proportion of the national budget allocated to education.

Ensuring that governments take responsibility is also seen by some UNICEF staff to contribute to a process of conflict resolution. In relation to Rwanda and the Great Lakes, a senior staff member argued that the

...the fact that foreign assistance is going to decline will force them to be more neighbourly.

Indeed, the problem of aid substituting for national investment in health and education is widespread, particularly in highly militarized environments. In Somaliland, for example, only 2% of the budget was allocated to the health sector, while the military continues to expand after every reconciliation meeting. Perhaps of more concern, in Uganda, despite high levels of GDP growth, there has been little success in shifting recurrent budgetary expenditure in favour of health and education (Chole & Cravero, 1996). By contrast, in Ethiopia there has been a peace dividend since 1991 which has been used to support social expenditure.

In the absence of governments who are willing and able to invest in public health, the impact of a reduction in the support of agencies such as UNICEF on a population's access to health care and education needs to be carefully assessed. Research in Uganda (Macrae et al. 1995a) suggests that while some members of the community were able to access private health services once relief aid ceased, for the majority, access declined. This trend has been noted elsewhere (see, for example, Stockton, 1996). In other words, as programmes change from relief to development, far from there being a progressive shift towards provision of sustainable services, entitlements and access are actually being cut.

4.2.2 Internalising the costs of war

In this setting, UNICEF has opted for a pragmatic approach, arguing that "someone has to pay". If aid agencies and national governments are unwilling or unable to pay for public investment then it is inevitable that the burden for financing will shift to the community.

In Rwanda and Uganda, the Bamako Initiative has sought to rationalise this shift in terms of enhancing community ownership of health service provision. In Uganda, a country widely considered an exemplar for development in sub-Saharan Africa, 66.3% of the population live below the absolute poverty line. The GoU and UNICEF Uganda's mid-term review consistently identifies the lack of capacity at a district level and sub-county level for resource mobilisation as a major constraint to achieving programme goals (GoU & UNICEF, 1997, November). In those northern
districts affected by insecurity, where over a third of the population is displaced, the capacity of local authorities to raise revenue is nil.

There remains a question, therefore, as to whether this approach to public sector financing is appropriate in environments characterised by chronic instability and structural economic crisis. Not only are conflict-affected populations particularly vulnerable, especially those who have been forcibly displaced, but they are not necessarily living in countries that have the capacity to provide an effective policy framework or take responsibility for the training and regulation of public sector staff.

There is also a question of whether, in the face of an absolute scarcity of public resources for health and education, and in particular extremely low salary levels for public sector workers, capacity-building interventions can be sustained. In other words, a model of capacity-building oriented towards training relies on other bodies contributing other costs to maximise that investment. In Uganda, there is some recognition of this, with the adoption of a Universal Primary Education and the doubling of the government’s education budget.

Similarly, in Somaliland, it is recognised that:

The implementation of the health sector reform will require substantial technical and financial external support (Ministry of Health, 1997).

In Somaliland, one rationale for the creation of a strategic plan for health is to attract further funding from donors. Without diplomatic recognition, however, aid to Somaliland will always be limited. In contrast to Uganda, where UNICEF applauds the provision of free primary education, in Somaliland UNICEF has persuaded the authorities that a policy of universal free health is impractical. Instead it is encouraging them to focus on developing a "minimum" package of health services.

The plan to minimise health services in Somaliland, while a pragmatic response, is a further example of an acceptance of declining standards in international responses to humanitarian crises.

4.2.3 Declining and minimising standards: the impact of declining resource flows on programming

There is an ethical question regarding the timing of the shift from an emergency mode to a developmental one. At what point and on what basis is an emergency judged to have ended? When does it become legitimate for service provision to be charged for in pursuit of financial sustainability? As one senior UN official pointed out in relation to Afghanistan, 15,000 women die each year as a result of complications in child-birth. He posed the question of when such rates become acceptable and when they qualify as a crisis? In other words, at what point should sustainability be prioritised? Similarly, the Regional Emergency Advisor for ESARO posed the question of at what point high levels of urban poverty in Addis Ababa constitute an emergency (Ressler, 1997, December).

A common characteristic of chronic emergencies in Rwanda, Sudan and Somalia is the 'normalisation' of these crises. That is, an international accommodation with and acceptance of crises. This process of accommodation is echoed in the West where there is a similar acceptance of long-term unemployment and homelessness.
In Rwanda, following the return of old caseload refugees from the region, and new caseload refugees from Zaire in late 1996, the government’s view has been that "the emergency is over". Within the UN system there is an accommodation with this analysis. Thus, UNDP is proposing a study on "The impact of humanitarian assistance on Rwanda and how to ensure a sustainable transition to development". Acceptance of this view is also implicit in UNICEF's 1998-2000 Bridging Programme for Rwanda, as a country progressively moving towards rehabilitation and development (UNICEF Rwanda, 1997, July).

Evidence for the end of the emergency in Rwanda is seen in the return of refugees, the restoration of some social services, the rehabilitation of government institutions, and the fact that per capita GNP has recovered from an all time low of $80 in 1994 to $180 in 1996. Other political, social and physiological indicators of progress are uncertain. At the time of this study, some 50% of the country had again become insecure and numbers of displaced were again increasing. The High Commission Field Operation in Rwanda continues to report on a permanent human rights crisis (HRFOR, 1997, August). In the opinion of one senior field staff:

The phrase the 'emergency is over' is just a sound bite. The 'loud' emergency is over. The question is whether it is a priority to deal with the emergency or structural problems? There are still critical problems that need to be dealt with. There are 130,000 in prison. There are 1.6 million repatriated that need to be dealt with. 60,000 child-headed households. These are not "normal" structural problems.

In Uganda, a view that the country is experiencing socio-economic progress and political stability, is contradicted by the fact that:

Almost one third of the population is engulfed in a brutal conflict which has resulted in massive death, destruction and displacement (UNICEF Uganda, 1997, February). In Uganda's northern districts, agencies estimate the number of displaced as high as 479,000, with a further 125,000 displaced in the west (UNDMT, 1997, November 27). Therapeutic feeding centres in Gulu are reported to be receiving as many as 24-30 children per week with increasing evidence of high levels of malnutrition among adolescents and adults (Gulu District Disaster Management Committee, 1997, November 26). While UNICEF has taken a lead among UN agencies in responding to the crisis, a reluctance to use the term "emergency", and a concern that any response should be within the parameters of the country programme has, in the view of some field staff, constrained the response. Defining the crisis in terms of "Districts in Especially Difficult Circumstances", suggests a diminution of the problem (UNICEF Uganda, 1997, March 12).

In Sudan, the normalisation of crisis has been noted in the continuing prevalence of high malnutrition rates (Karim et al. 1996, July). In 1989, nutritional rates of between 10% and 20% triggered a major relief intervention - Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS). The 1996 CAP for Sudan recorded global malnutrition rates in 1995 ranging from an "acceptable" 13.7% to 36% in displaced camps around Khartoum, and from 16.1% to 30% in the transitional zone and Government-held areas of southern Sudan (UNDHA, 1996 February). These levels were not seen to be sufficiently serious to warrant an expansion in the relief programme; on the contrary the majority of UN agencies were adopting policies of reducing rations, and of arguing that the situation was now moving towards rehabilitation and development.

In Somalia, as in Sudan, the perception of emergency has changed (Bradbury, 1997, September). In 1992, with some 3,000 people a day dying from starvation, the situation in Somalia was described by one US diplomat "as the worst humanitarian crisis faced by any people in the world". By the end of 1993, and within a year of the US and UN military intervention, the acute emergency was
considered to have ended. At the Fourth Coordination Meeting on Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia in November 1993, donors began to focus on rehabilitation rather than emergency needs (SACB, 1996).

Although immediate humanitarian needs have declined, and numbers of refugees and internally displaced have fallen, Somalia remains in a state of chronic crisis - even before the current floods. Infant and maternal mortality rates are among the highest in the world (UNDHA, 1996a, December). A large proportion of the population is reliant on relief to meet their food needs. In Mogadishu, some 25 therapeutic and supplementary feeding centres feed 12,000 children and other vulnerable people a day (UNSC 1997, February). Cholera is now believed to be endemic in Somalia. Prior to the war the last cases of cholera in Mogadishu were in 1972. Food-wise, crop production in 1996 was almost half pre-war levels (UNCU, 1996, 16 July-2 August), a situation that will have deteriorated again with the flooding. Other sectors remain in a desperate state. While primary education is relatively well covered by international agencies, a generation of youth have missed out on education. With limited job opportunities they remain a population in urgent need of support.

One is left with two conclusions. First, that the notion of a transition to development does not address the nature of the chronic emergencies. In Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan and Somalia, humanitarian needs and the vulnerability of populations are a consequence of political and economic strategies. Large-scale population displacements in Sudan, northern Uganda, and southern Somalia, for example, serve military and economic purposes for powerful groups.

Second, the political acceptance that the emergency is over in Rwanda, the ease with which the international community has marginalised the problems in northern Uganda, the apparently "acceptable" rates of malnutrition in Sudan, and the acceptance that Somalis will periodically suffer hardships suggests there has been an accommodation with the permanence of these crises.

This is clearly demonstrated in Somalia. In 1993, with the creation of UNOSOM II, it was immodestly claimed that the international community in Somalia was embarking on:

...an unprecedented enterprise aimed at nothing less that the restoration of an entire country as a proud, functioning and viable member of the community of nations (Albright, cited in January, 1996).

Since the demise of UNOSOM, the international community's goals, as represented by the UN, have become much more modest. In the 1997 CAP, the UN strategic framework was concerned with: the prevention of recurrence of widespread humanitarian emergencies; development of more effective monitoring and response capacities for humanitarian emergencies; and strengthening rehabilitation efforts "which represent the most minimal, essential needs required for Somalia to exist in its current state of crisis" (UNDHA, 1996a, December, emphasis added). In other words, there has been a shift from nation-building to the maintenance of a population in a state of crisis.

At present there are no explicit criteria or standards laid out by international agencies which define indicators of emergency, other than when mortality and morbidity rates are above "normal". UNICEF might wish to consider this issue in order to inform the setting of standards across programmes in terms of the timing and conditions under which it shifts from an emergency to development modality. Careful monitoring of the impact of changes in populations' access to key services would also be an important role for UNICEF and might be used to inform its advocacy strategy.
4.3 The institutional transition:

4.3.1 Scaling up

A key issue with regard to sustainability, which reflects the need for a change in the institutional basis of aid programming, is scaling up. During an emergency phase, international interventions tend to be very dispersed. Individual agencies work in different areas in the context of specific projects, often linking up at the local level with district authorities and individual professionals. Relief is thus highly decentralised, often at least partially privatized, and highly fragmented.

Scaling up is a prerequisite for sustainability since it is only with a nationwide policy and financial framework that public service systems can develop equitably and effectively. Interventions at the micro-level are not only extremely time-consuming for an international agency such as UNICEF to manage - requiring tens of contracts which demand definition and monitoring - but their sustainability is limited. Community based cost-recovery systems for health and education can work only with a minimum level of wealth within that community, or a willingness to redistribute that wealth. More importantly communities require support from outside to train and manage staff, monitor standards and, for example with education, accredit outcomes. Thus, while some results can be achieved at the micro-level, unless conditions allow for a linkage between the community, local and national authorities the quality of development space is likely to remain limited.

In Rwanda, Uganda and Somalia, UNICEF has been active in facilitating the transition from the micro-oriented approach of relief to the macro-framework of development. In Uganda, it has sought to support the district administration in northern regions to enable them to continue to play a role in service provision and coordination in a period when tax revenues have plummeted and district staff have found themselves under enormous political pressure. Such a role is potentially extremely valuable. However, its success is contingent upon the wider political framework that is in place. In Rwanda there is some concern with the political framework that is developing. In northern Uganda the situation remains unresolved, and is deteriorating.

The following sections analyse dimensions of this process of scaling up from the micro-, project level to the establishment of national policy frameworks and service delivery systems.

4.3.2 Choice of implementing partners

With rare exceptions UNICEF is not an operational agency. Rather, it relies on partner institutions; these include local and national authorities, national and international NGOs, private companies and other UN agencies. A key issue in situations of chronic instability and in those where a peace settlement appears to be in place is the transition in terms of the institutions through which aid is delivered.

The legitimacy dilemma

Contemporary humanitarian crises are associated primarily with political violence. It is to emphasise this that Duffield (1994) proposed the term 'complex political emergencies'. It is comparatively rare that states actually collapse or disappear during complex political emergencies; indeed, in the past decade there are only two examples where this has occurred fully - Somalia and Afghanistan. In the majority of cases a government remains in place, and in most cases this government occupies a seat at the United Nations. In these situations, the governments are warring parties.
Those concerned with aid policy in transition, are concerned primarily with how to engage in countries where there is a process of political transition, for example where there has been a peace agreement or a change of regime by force. This process of political transition often brings into power those who have previously fought in opposition, such as the RPF in Rwanda. It is rare that, following a regime change, there is absolute security; often human rights remain extremely problematic.

Since the 1980s relief aid has been delivered largely outside state institutions. The international community has instead relied upon the UN and NGOs to disburse assistance. NGOs in particular are seen to have the advantage of being able to act in an impartial and neutral manner, in contrast to governmental authorities which constitute a warring party. In internal wars, however, the whole of society, including "civil society", necessarily becomes politicised and even militarised, often divided across religious, ethnic and racial lines. Civil society organisations may reform themselves as militia forces and actively participate in violence. The mobilisation and participation of labour groups (umuganda), church organisations and NGOs in the Rwandan genocide is a much noted, but not isolated, case in point. In these environments the concept of the "pure victim" comes under strain, and the distinction between civilian and soldier disappears.

A key difference between relief and development aid is that whereas the former is channelled largely through international organisations, including international NGOs, the latter is disbursed through national channels including national governments. The transition to development thus relies on the international community, particularly Western governments, making an assessment of the legitimacy of the national authority and a judgement as to the degree to which it is willing to support the new regime (Macrae, 1995).

In situations of political instability the key challenge is how to work in the absence of a recognised national interlocutor. In situations where there has been a change of regime by force, or during the transitional period between peace-settlements and the election of a new government, it is unclear which body constitutes the 'legitimate' and competent authority for decision-making. In Cambodia, the formation of an effective UN trusteeship marked one response to the problem of working in a political vacuum. OLS in Sudan and the Somalia Aid Coordination Body in Somalia represent other responses. More recently in Afghanistan, the strategic framework process has proposed to use the Afghanistan Task Force as an interim mechanism to act in trust for the people the country. These institutions and mechanisms, however, have emerged in an ad hoc way. There are no international protocols or guidelines for working in these situations.

Identifying a competent authority is a highly political task (Macrae, 1997b). By channelling international resources through a set of state institutions the international community is making a statement of support for that regime. The capacity of the Somaliland 'government' to govern will always be limited by the international community's reluctance to formally acknowledge its sovereignty. The acceptance of an legitimate authority also has implications for the organisation and management of technical functions. For example, determining the distribution and coverage of key services, facilitating access, regulating the training of public sector workers etc. are all tasks which imply the existence of a unified authority.

UNICEF's programme in Rwanda displays the classic form of the institutional transition aid agencies make in a context of political change. In 1993, as government authority weakened, there was a strategic shift away from support channelled through the state, to support channelled through NGOs. In the immediate aftermath of the genocide, the majority of resources were channelled through some 80 "partners", including government ministries and 48 international and national NGOs (UNICEF Rwanda, 1997, February). By 1997, however, UNICEF's primary partner was the
government; NGO partners had declined to 23 (7 local and 16 international). As UNICEF has changed from a relief mode, so the strategy has changed from subsidising service provision to building capacity of government counterpart institutions. In Somalia, in the absence of a recognised state authorities, UNICEF disburses much of its assistance through 99 international and Somali NGOs. This crucial limitation to “scaling up” presents an inherent obstacle to the development of sustainable public services.
In the case of NGO partners, UNICEF uses project agreements to specify the conditions under which it works. In the case of Rwanda, project agreements state that UNICEF and the NGO will work in the basis of:

...their respective mandates, sharing as a common aim the well-being of women and children...,[the NGO and UNICEF] are committed to the generally accepted principles of participatory, sustainable development and development oriented humanitarian assistance.....Services should be provided and material assistance should be distributed impartially without discrimination, direct or indirect because of race, creed, nationality, status or political belief or any other circumstance.

The principles laid out in this agreement clearly articulate the conditions under which UNICEF works with NGO partners. Its capacity to monitor adherence to these conditions appears limited, however. Further, with the prominence given to the CRC and CEDAW in Rwanda it is surprising that no mention is made of the CRC in the project agreements. This study suggests there is room for UNICEF to develop contractual arrangements based on clear set of agreed principles, commensurate with its mandate. This need is more urgent as UNICEF contemplates strengthening links with business.

Much less clear are the conditions under which UNICEF engages with governmental authorities and non-state entities. The country programme framework is designed to maximise accountability of international agencies to the sovereign governments as members of the United Nations. As such, they reflect the era of unconditional sovereignty. The emergence of rights-based aid, as couched in the CRC, is in tension with this approach and highlights the fact that aid agencies have multiple accountabilities. In addition to responding to the demands of the state, agencies such as UNICEF also have responsibilities to their constituents, and to donor governments who publicly at least profess an interest human rights and wish to ensure that aid resources are not sustaining poor governance.

Humanitarian aid is a particular form of rights-based aid programming. Its reliance on working outside state authorities, and in the absence of alternative mechanisms to ensure accountability, has led to widespread criticism by governmental authorities that it represents a neo-colonial form of international engagement in the developing world. Conditions that reflect Western-driven value systems, it is argued, are imposed by Western organisations, sometimes by staff who have little or no background of the country concerned (see, for example, Pupavac, 1997).

UNICEF is caught in the middle of these views. On the one hand it is clearly trying to be a rights-based organisation, referring to the CRC as the basis for its actions. On the other it is an international organisation, which necessarily has to work within a state-centric system, but is also committed to respecting the independence and capacities of developing countries. It is also concerned to avoid a situation where international agencies establish systems which run in parallel to the public administration. Such parallel systems are inherently unsustainable and arguably unaccountable.
Very practical dilemmas are involved here, such as UNICEF’s relationship with the Ugandan government in the wake of forcible encampment of villagers in the north. Similar dilemmas arise over UNICEF’s position on villagization and reeducation camps in Rwanda. The dilemmas involved in the agency’s relationship with the humanitarian wings of the movements in southern Sudan have also been noted (Karim, et. al., 1996).

At an individual country level, some innovative work is occurring to address this. The Humanitarian Principles Programme in southern Sudan is an example. The development of a monitoring plan for the implementation of the CRC in Rwanda is another (UNICEF Rwanda, 1997, August). At present, however, guidance seems to be lacking in UNICEF as to how country staff are to reconcile these conflicting cultures and values of the organisation, so as to inform the selection of partners and determine the conditions under which they work together. Currently it is left to country programmes to decide. While this may allow for a more flexible and complex situational analysis, it leaves rights-based principles open to individual interpretation, preference and political influence.

Advocacy, including quiet diplomacy, has an important role to play here. The constructive engagement strategy pursued in Uganda, for example, has reportedly led to substantive progress on the issue of child abductees in the country. However, advocacy alone is unlikely to be sufficient. Effective political analysis, regular mechanisms for monitoring different parties' adherence to the principles of CRC, and agency-wide guidelines for determining what UNICEF should do if these are violated are required.

Such analysis is required to satisfy the conditions proposed by Lautze and Hammock (1997) with regard to the desirability and feasibility of capacity-building - what they call the “c&w” test. They use this test in relation to coping mechanisms, but the principle remains valid for public systems and services. First, is the community capable (C) with or without outside assistance of reinforcing these systems. Second, are these systems worthy (W) of being reinforced. The second question in particular is useful in overcoming the idea that all capacity-building interventions are equally desirable.

4.4 Locating the causes of crisis

The need for new forms of analysis and understanding is a clear demand of field level staff. In complex emergencies, the dearth of reliable information is an acute problem (see, for example, Keen and Ryle, 1996). UNICEF, with a requirement to undertake detailed situational analysis of women and children in order to establish a baseline for country programme goals, is better placed than most UN agencies to undertake analysis. The difficulty of doing such analysis in a rapidly changing environment is illustrated by the reliance on outdated socio-economic indicators in many programme documents.

The growth of information networks such as IRIN, and the work of UN human rights agencies, has increased the amount of political analysis available on which to base strategic decisions. The utilisation of this information, however, can be problematic. This point was noted in the 1996 review of OLS (Karim, et. al, 1996), where the space for independent political analysis is constrained by UNICEF's relationship with government and non-government entities such as the SPLA.
The continuum model is unable to describe the dynamics of complex political emergencies; this is why it is rejected by field staff. It is unclear, however, that UNICEF as a result of its experiences in complex emergencies has developed an alternative form of analysis. This study suggests that changing definitions of emergencies over time are driven by wider organisational and international concerns, rather than improved analysis and empirical evidence. Rwanda is a case in point.

Pre-war UNICEF Rwanda country programme documents are notable for the lack of political analysis or any mention of ethnic tensions (UNICEF Rwanda, 1988, February). The pre-war understanding of the structural causes of Rwanda's "development challenges" were identified as balancing the needs of a rapidly rising population and the human and natural resources available to meet those needs (UNICEF Rwanda, 1993 December). In other words, a largely Malthusian analysis. This analysis continues to inform UNICEF's programme in Rwanda, and is used to explain the now extant 'ethnic problem'. The major area of innovation in UNICEF's programming from pre-war to post-genocide Rwanda lies in the area of "behavioural change".

The formulation of a programme based on the legal and moral framework of CRC and CEDAW signifies a change in the perception of the crisis to one that is about human rights. It also signifies a shift to strategies concerned with effecting behavioural change. The shift, which is made explicit in Uganda in programmatic terms, is evident in the emphasis placed on psycho-social trauma programmes and peace education.

Within a framework of the CRC and behavioural change, UNICEF Rwanda has adopted a "positive approach to social reconstruction"; that is, one based around "a child’s positive influence on society". According to the MPO, the aim is to come up with:

...a compassionate approach based on self-esteem and the capacity to solve conflicts in a peaceful and constructive manner. In this light, the 1998-2000 programme will be a transition from emergency to development (page 41).

The implication of adopting the CRC and CEDAW, with the increased emphasis on behavioural change, is that the crisis in Rwanda is now defined in terms of the way that a society treats its children, rather than as a political problem, an economic problem, or an international problem.

Significantly, in a climate of declining oda, the normalisation of crises, and the erosion of humanitarian standards, this form of analysis increasingly locates causes of the crises within countries in transition. That is, in their weak social institutions, lack of capacity, lack of awareness or knowledge, or irrational behaviour. Locating the causes within the societies in crisis, and increasingly assigning the solutions to the poor, marginalised and victimised through enhanced community participation and financing of social services, sustains a myth that development is occurring and that developmental aid can build on this to increase the pace of progress.
5.0 Issues and Implications

5.1 Tackling “transition”: reframing the problem

The terms of reference did not call for the study to yield specific recommendations, nor are the researchers confident that there has been sufficient time, particularly at field level and at headquarters, to justify definitive conclusions. Rather, as indicated in section 1, this study is seen as part of a longer term process of debate and policy innovation within UNICEF. This section thus synthesises the findings of earlier chapters and provides some proposals for future policy development and practice.

This study has sought to unpack and critique the term “transition”, and has suggested that for UNICEF what is really at issue are three distinct areas of concern:

- How to maximise developmental space in situations of instability and extensive abuse of human rights by state and non-state entities;
- Whether and how relief and development aid can contribute to conflict reduction and prevention;
- How to link different modalities of aid and overcome the existing schism between emergency and development budget lines.

The term “transition” is being used by UNICEF to encapsulate these parallel strands of analysis, but at present is insufficiently developed to provide practical and policy guidance. Rather, it shares many of the limitations of other concepts such as the relief-development continuum and post-conflict rehabilitation.

As earlier sections have argued, while rejecting explicitly the idea of the relief-development continuum, continuum thinking continues to predominate the institutional culture in UNICEF. Specifically, there is an expectation that where country programmes have been “interrupted” by emergencies, they will be resumed.

Further, there remains little analysis of the profound impact of the political context in which UNICEF works. Figure 3 below aims to capture how, depending upon the level of security and the extent to which a central authority is recognised, aid modalities change. While there is some room for manoeuvre to apply development aid programming in complex emergencies, the amount of space expands extremely rapidly, and the modalities of aid delivery change profoundly when a new regime is in place and is recognised internationally.
The international aid community has developed mechanisms for dealing with situations of political transition in countries such as Cambodia, El Salvador and Mozambique. However, these mechanisms have remained premised on the idea that peace and political change will be sustained; where they are not, as is commonly the case, different responses are required. It is this twilight zone of dealing with chronic instability, and of sustained crisis of governance in particular (the grey shaded area in Figure 3) which constitutes the primary challenge not just for UNICEF, but for the international community at large.

In the absence of significant improvements in security, in the formation of a recognised central and unified authority, and in the capacity to scale up interventions from the individual/household level to national systems, there is likely to be very limited space to move from humanitarian to developmental strategies. Indeed, not only may it not be feasible to do so, but it is often unethical to attempt to apply developmental strategies, with their emphasis on sustainability and their dependence on identifying legitimate partners with whom to work. Rather than relief and development being complementary, they are in fact different strategies, differing in their meaning, modality and mechanisms for implementation.

The equation has become more complex still as, on the one hand the aid community has sought to move towards rights-based programme, while on the other an increasingly
assertive, pan-African movement has emerged in governments which questions the legitimacy of the growing list of conditionalities on aid.

While individuals within UNICEF are keenly aware of these dilemmas and debates, they have not yet been acknowledged clearly by the organisation as a whole, nor has a strategy been articulated to respond to the demands of working in situations of chronic instability. Below are identified some dimensions of the problem that such a strategy would need to address.

5.2 Examining organisational culture and values

5.2.1 Proud to be a humanitarian agency?: reviewing organisational culture

Chapter 3 argued that UNICEF was involved in emergencies only reluctantly. This situation is particularly unfortunate given that in practice UNICEF has demonstrated a significant comparative advantage relative to other organisations in the UN. In Rwanda, for example, UNICEF took a lead role in the non-food sector; in Somalia and Somaliland UNICEF is the lead agency working in the health sector; in southern Sudan UNICEF is the lead agency for humanitarian response.

UNICEF has therefore established not only a significant body of field experience but a growing reputation for its work in emergencies. Richardson (1995) cautioned that UNICEF could no longer rely on its capacity to work with non-state entities and unrecognised governments as a significant comparative advantage. This he saw as being eroded by the fact that other UN agencies and NGOs were increasingly entering spaces once occupied almost exclusively by UNICEF. In fact, UNICEF is still working in countries where other agencies can define only limited operating space. Such a presence potentially gives the organisation considerable comparative advantage to respond to changes in the political environment as these emerge. This potential is difficult to realise, however, while emergencies remain marginalised in the structure and thinking of the organisation.

One approach to overcoming the reluctance of UNICEF to engage seriously in these environments is to reframe the issue. UNICEF consistently talks of relief and of emergencies, only rarely referring to the concept of humanitarianism.

As earlier sections have argued, the concept of “emergencies”, with its implication of transitory crisis interrupting an otherwise progressive process of development, is becoming less and less relevant. The major challenge is how to respond to protracted political crises which result in chronic vulnerability and distress. The concept of “relief” remains premised on an outmoded idea of emergency; in other words, the provision of material supplies for a brief period to sustain populations during temporary crisis, so enabling them to resume their usual methods of production after the hazard has passed (Duffield 1994).

By contrast, the concept of humanitarianism avoids the implications that disasters are time-limited, and simply interruptions of a developmental process. Humanitarianism is concerned not simply with the delivery of material supplies (relief), but also with the process and values according to which it is delivered. In particular, humanitarianism asserts the values of relieving suffering, maintaining human dignity and the allocation of resources in a neutral and impartial manner. These principles are the same as those endorsed by UNICEF throughout its work.
Adopting a values-based approach, rather than one based on an overly simplistic distinction between emergency and non-emergency situations, might help the organisation to overcome the perception that there is a hierarchy of quality of work, with relief being a second-rate activity.

*Proposal:* That UNICEF assert confidently the essentially humanitarian nature of its mandate, which is to enhance the survival and protection of children in any circumstances. The organisation’s obligation to work in an impartial and neutral manner in order to serve the needs of children is reflected in its mandate.

*Proposal:* UNICEF needs to acknowledge and celebrate its achievement and comparative advantage in providing a relatively sustained presence and response in situations of chronic political emergencies. Such recognition would ultimately result in improving the quality of its work in these environments, since it would overcome the current perception among staff that UNICEF’s humanitarian work is neither valued nor rewarded. Recognising the importance of this role would also justify allocation of appropriate resources, including human resources, to support staff working in the most difficult circumstances.

Senior management needs to acknowledge the humanitarian role of UNICEF and allocate sufficient financing and human resources. Staff need to feel confident to resist pressure to move overly rapidly to a developmental approach where this would compromise humanitarian principles. In order to do this, political and moral support from senior management is required.

### 5.2.2 From needs-based to rights-based programming

The shift from portraying itself as an emergency to a humanitarian agency is paralleled in the wider shift currently underway within UNICEF, from a needs-based to a rights-based approach to programming. The rights-based approach, and particularly its assertion that unless and until basic human rights are respected development cannot take place, is perhaps of greatest relevance in chronic political emergencies. By definition, however, these are the same circumstances where holding actors to account for violations and preventing them is most difficult.

Review of documentary material and the field visits for this study highlighted the pressures and dilemmas the shift from needs-based to rights-based programming raises in situations of chronic instability.

- *The need for consistent, rather than selective, application of the CRC*

The legitimacy of the CRC as an advocacy tool derives from the fact that the majority of member states of the United Nations have ratified it, with important exceptions such as the United States. If UNICEF is to use the CRC as a central plank of its programming, it needs to ensure consistency in its application. Not to do so risks compromising the integrity of the organisation and implying that the CRC do not apply universally, but can be interpreted selectively.
UNICEF has developed a highly decentralised management structure, which empowers the Country Representative to analyse the country environment and to negotiate the specific shape of UNICEF programme in collaboration with the relevant authorities. This decentralization is seen by many to be a key strength of the organisation, but it is also a potential weakness if it results in inconsistency.

The case of child abductees is one example where there is, effectively, an international problem, arising in part from the involvement of the Government of Sudan in the conflict in northern Uganda. While the Uganda programme had worked hard to advocate on behalf of these children, up until the time that this fieldwork was undertaken, reportedly the Khartoum office was less willing to get involved in the issue because of the political risks of doing so. What this example shows is the need to monitor the extent to which UNICEF programming is responsive to child rights; in other words, to clearly identify organisation-wide standards against which country programmes can be evaluated in relation to the CRC.

Proposal: UNICEF should develop improved systems to monitor how country offices interpret and apply the CRC, and in particular the principles which guide negotiations with governments and other political/military forces in terms of their enforcement. In addition to support to country level staff, more analysis is required of how the organisation is responding to the particular demands of the CRC, both in terms of project content, for example, interpretation of Article 39 of the CRC, and in terms of how the organisation should negotiate the transition from an international aid organisation with a primary focus on service delivery to one focusing increasingly on advocacy and child rights.

It also highlights the need for country-based staff to draw on support from the highest levels at regional offices and headquarters in order to confront belligerent parties. Country Representatives who have to deal daily with such parties may find that it disperses pressure on them, if they can draw on outside support.

Proposal: At present several staff reported that they did not feel sufficiently robust leadership was being applied from the organisation’s senior management with regard to the application of the CRC. Country-based staff should be able to draw extensive support from regional offices and headquarters to negotiate with belligerent parties regarding CRC. Staff should be clear of the relative priority the organisation attaches to advocacy of child rights in relation to other more traditional areas of activity.

EMOPs’ initiative in developing training on humanitarian principles, which will include five workshops in 1998 is to be welcomed as an important opportunity to increase staff knowledge of human rights and humanitarian law in emergency situations.
• UNICEF and the state

In taking on the rights of the child, UNICEF is stepping out into difficult territory. UNICEF’s strength and credibility derive in considerable part from its position as part of the United Nations systems. However, in situations of chronic political instability, the weaknesses of a state-centric approach quickly becomes apparent.

The limited application of state-centric approaches are apparent in relation to the difficulty of providing technical assistance. They are even more pronounced as the organisation moves from providing technical support to providing a critique of the prevailing climate in relation to child rights.

At present, UNICEF lacks the instruments to work in environments where states are either/both weak and/or belligerents in protracted conflicts. As soon as it resumes developmental mode, UNICEF resumes a state-centric pattern of organisation and management. This presents significant tensions with the agency’s interpretation of its rights-based mandate, or at least it presumes that rights will have to be negotiated.

This is new ground. Human rights NGOs such as Amnesty International and the Minority Rights Group are increasingly seeking a role which goes beyond a conventional research-denouncement-advocacy model of human rights work. Development NGOs are freer than UN agencies to speak out against violations of human rights as they are not accountable to states. For UNICEF, an international aid organisation seeking to develop a rights-based approach, defining the principles according to which it seeks to improve compliance with the CRC is a complex but important task. Defining how and when trade-offs should be made with governments, and whether and what types of sanctions UNICEF can and should deploy in the face of consistent violations is important if child rights are to provide a rigorous and effective basis for UNICEF programming.

Proposal: UNICEF needs to work with Country Representatives in situations of chronic political instability to identify how the tensions can and should be managed between its role as an advocate of child rights and that of an international organisation, working primarily through governments in order to boost national capacity. Establishing procedures for how UNICEF responds when these conflicts are not satisfactorily resolved, for the presentation of information on child rights violations to UN and other international political bodies, and for sanctions that can be applied need to be identified clearly and discussed.

• Rights aren’t free

A third implication of the rights-based approach is the need to maintain balance in UNICEF’s programming strategy between rights and advocacy on the one hand, and service provision on the other. There is a risk that UNICEF increasingly turns to advocacy tools instead of service provision, rather than in addition to service provision. Duffield (1997) has suggested that current trends in global aid policy place greater emphasis on changing the behaviour of governments and people, than on achieving more equitable distribution of international resources, including equitable distribution of health and education services.
While realisation of many “negative” rights such as the right to be free of torture, threat of death etc are cost free, “positive” rights such as that to education, health (and therefore life) do entail costs.

UNICEF recognises the risk that the emphasis on rights can be abused by certain parties, and used to justify a withdrawal of international resources for basic services. It is thus necessary to robustly defend the need to maintain resource flows in parallel with advocacy strategies. This UNICEF has done at national levels, for example lobbying the new Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to increase its allocation of the public budget to health and education.

Particularly important in this context will be to ensure that UNICEF is analysing and reporting on the impact of reductions in international transfers of resources on the capacity of families, communities and countries to fulfil their responsibilities for protection and service delivery. There is also a need to lobby donors for adequate resources and appropriate policies, eg regarding service provision.

Proposal: In collaboration with other relevant agencies, including NGOs and other UN bodies, UNICEF should identify the impact of declines in international aid funding on child welfare in countries suffering from chronic political stability. Unless and until these are clearly articulated, donors will consider themselves justified in funding only a small proportion of appeals. In this context, UNICEF may inadvertently adopt a punitive approach to rights-based programming. In other words there is a risk that UNICEF may confuse inability of states and populations to raise sufficient resources to meet their basic needs with an unwillingness to do so. Undue emphasis on advocacy and training, without equal consideration for resource transfer will not yield sustained improvements in child welfare, but will antagonise governments and populations and damage the organisation’s credibility.

5.3 UNICEF relations with other bodies: old and new challenges

5.3.1 UNICEF in a changing UN landscape

The proposals for UN reform laid out by the Secretary-General in July 1997 have implications for UNICEF’s capacity to respond to situations of chronic political instability. Rather than reviewing the changing context, the UN reform proposals take as a starting point existing mandates and then seek to identify gaps and overlaps in their coverage. This approach has resulted in two changes of potential significance to UNICEF:

- Attempts to enhance the coherence of political and aid responses in post-conflict situations. Specifically, DPA will chair the Executive Committee on Peace and Security and will be responsible for coordinating UN agency responses following peace settlements and presumably where there is a UN or UN mandated peacekeeping presence. UNICEF is not represented on the ECPS, its likely channel of communication to the Committee is through UNDP. At present, UNICEF has only limited dealings with DPA.

Proposal: UNICEF should work to strengthen its links with DPA, and indeed with key political fora such as the Security Council and General Assembly. Particularly important will be to ensure that DPA understands and respects UNICEF’s obligation to remain neutral in the interest of children. UNICEF needs to establish a clear policy
to clarify whether it sees the use of its resources as potentially complementary to a political process or as part of a political process. In the view of the researchers, UNICEF should resist attempts to subsume welfare interventions under a political umbrella because of the risks of these being used selectively by different parties. UNICEF should strive to be politically informed but not politically driven.

A second characteristic of the UN reform process is that it is tending to compartmentalise relief, rehabilitation and development more strongly, and as such adopts a linear view of the continuum. Thus, responsibility for response is seen to pass from ECHA to ECPS to the ECD, chaired respectively by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, DPA and UNDP. This approach contrasts with the wider critique of the continuum and of the concept of “handover” of responsibility. Notably, none of the reform documents reviewed provide guidance in terms of the conditions under which different “phases” can be defined as starting or stopping. In other words, the boundaries of responsibility remain blurred and are likely to be determined by a process of inter-agency negotiation or donor positioning.

Proposal: UNICEF should continue to work to inform the UN reform process in relation to relief-development linkages in situations of chronic instability.\(^\text{38}\) In particular, it needs to advocate for clearer definition of the criteria according to which different agencies take and delegate lead responsibility for UN activity, and to define mechanisms for cross-Committee interchange in relation to different countries.

5.3.2 New Challenges

The UN reform process and associated initiatives are raising new challenges.

The World Bank is becoming a significant player in post-conflict rehabilitation, or at least is formalising and systematising its role. The creation of a new, high profile unit for post-conflict recovery is an important initiative, as is the fact that the World Bank is to have a seat on the ECPS so improving the opportunities for Bank-UN agency collaboration.

Proposal: UNICEF needs to establish close contacts with the new World Bank post-conflict unit with the aim of improving the Bank’s understanding of the role of UNICEF and identifying ways in which the two bodies might better collaborate. The Bank’s extensive “buying power” in these situations means that UNICEF policy initiatives developed during the conflict/emergency risk being sidelined during rehabilitation/development stages. UNICEF might play an important role as the Bank adopts a watching brief approach to counties in crisis; in particular, UNICEF could provide the Bank with information regarding the development of the social sector and options for the future.

A second important initiative is the UN strategic framework (SF) process, developing most quickly in Afghanistan. This process aims to enhance the coherence of relief activities, and between relief and development agencies, and between the aid and political spheres. It also aims to facilitate dialogue between different UN agencies, and between them, relevant authorities in Afghanistan, NGOs and the donor community. In particular, it has aimed to identify a mechanism to overcome the governance vacuum in the country.

At present, UNICEF is not represented at headquarters level in the Afghanistan SF process, nor are other specialised agencies.
Proposal: UNICEF should watch carefully the strategic framework process as it is likely to form a model for the future, and to have implications for UNICEF’s work in Afghanistan and elsewhere. It should aim to secure a voice or at least observer status in this exercise.

5.3.3 Old Challenges

UNICEF needs to continue to work on its relations with UNHCR. In Rwanda, for example, through its involvement in repatriation and resettlement UNHCR was increasingly involved in activities which would once likely have been in the domain of UNICEF, and which certainly have an impact on the latter’s activities in the health and education sectors. UNHCR’s financial dominance in situations of political transition is second only to that of the World Bank which usually follows in its wake.

Proposal: UNICEF needs to go beyond memoranda of understanding and towards a process of policy partnership in key sectors. UNHCR lacks the sectoral expertise of UNICEF, yet is able to attract resources for interventions. UNICEF needs to examine why it is not getting as involved in rehabilitation interventions, whether it would be desirable to do so, and if so whether this should be in a direct, operational fashion or through working with UNHCR and its partners to better define sectoral policy.

In each of the four “transitional” countries reviewed for this study (Rwanda, Somalia, south Sudan, Uganda), bilateral contributions to sustain service provision actually declined after the acute phase of the emergency was seen to be over. This had direct implications for communities’ access to services. In Rwanda and Somalia, UNICEF relied on carrying over emergency funds in order to sustain its support over several years. At present, UNICEF has no detailed information on the impact of these declines on access to services.

Proposal: Donors are reviewing their policies in relation to relief/development, war/peace linkages at the same time as many UN agencies. There appears to be little interchange between these different domains, however. UNICEF, in collaboration with other UN agencies and perhaps with NGOs (the IASC may be one mechanism) should promote debate with DAC members regarding the financing of basic services in situations of chronic instability. Identification of appropriate instruments to finance medium term interventions, and of requirements of donors to improve financial and narrative appeals and reporting would be important outcomes. Encouraging donors to review the effectiveness and limitations of specially created rehabilitation lines such as OTI and the European Commission’s Special Rehabilitation Programme for Africa would be useful.

5.4 Programming in transition

5.4.1 Beyond the country programming approach

At present, UNICEF can operate in one of three modes: a country programme; a bridging programme and an emergency programme, lasting five, two-to-three and one year, respectively. The country programme is the normal programming mode, and rapid resumption of this modality is the objective of bridging programmes. The key difference between the country programme and the other two programming modes is that the latter
are not necessarily designed in consultation with governments, nor is the government usually the primary partner for implementation.

The country programming tool is in need of review in terms of its capacity to respond to situations of chronic instability. The researchers recognise that this issue is particularly complex and sensitive; the Master Plan of Operations is the key mechanism by which UNICEF can be held accountable to donor and recipient governments. However, the capacity of the country programming approach to ensure relief-development linkages and to accommodate conditions of protracted political crisis is limited by a number of factors.

First, country programmes cannot admit effective preparedness measures to respond to future political crisis. While UNICEF is making an important contribution to preparedness for natural disasters such as the impact of El Nino in East and Southern Africa, necessarily it cannot include in country programmes mention of potential widespread political violence.

Second, in some countries, expanding UNICEF’s capacity to respond to actual conflict has been seen to be problematic as this was not provided for in the country programme, and to initiate an emergency programme without government consent was seen to be politically difficult. This was the case with regard to northern Uganda, and was seen in part to explain the limited response of UNICEF to the needs of children in this area, and to have reduced the effectiveness of its programme.

Third, country programmes assume the presence of a legitimate and competent government and that the government should be UNICEF’s primary partner. In situations of protracted political crisis, where governments are also belligerent parties, having them as counterparts can compromise the neutrality and impartiality of UNICEF.

Fourth, definition of country programmes is an enormously complex and onerous process for all parties, and necessarily so, as it seeks to be rigorous and relies upon participation and the establishment of consensus. Such investment of senior management time may be quickly wasted if hostilities resume or there is a regime change.

Finally, the MPO is also used to set standards against which staff performance is appraised. This creates few incentives for staff to work on emergency responses in countries where these are not provided for in the country programme. More importantly, the existence of such targets may skew staff behaviour in favour of country programming goals, potentially ignoring other more immediate and significant threats to child and family health and welfare.

These are serious problems to which no easy answers are likely to present themselves in the short-term. What is necessary, however, is to discuss with senior UNICEF staff and subsequently with the Executive Board and partner governments how the need for a more flexible and realistic programming process can be met in a manner which also ensures the accountability of UNICEF’s work.

Important will be to ensure that any process of reform does not throw the baby out with the proverbial bathwater. In particular, the country programming approach does allow UNICEF to develop a long term vision and to work with national partners in determining priorities. The analysis presented by this study suggests that what UNICEF faces is less an administrative, organisational problem of what kind of planning tool to utilise, than a conceptual and constitutional problem. The conceptual problem derives from the persistence of a developmentalist orthodoxy which remains premised on stability. The
constitutional problem has its origins in the fact that UNICEF is a UN organisation, mandated by a General Assembly comprising states. In other words, the country programming approach is anachronistic not just procedurally, but it is symptomatic of an approach to international cooperation designed to respond to the post-world war II consensus regarding international relations. Any reform of the country programming approach needs to reflect this context.

5.4.2 Defining the role of EMOPs, country reps and the regions

Reflecting UNICEF’s reluctant involvement in emergencies, EMOPs has remained relatively sidelined in the organisation. The increase in staff numbers and in their seniority has reflected a need to increase the agency’s technical capacity (for example, the OPSCEN) and its ability to represent its interests in increasingly specialised humanitarian fora.

However, there remains a division between EMOPs and “normal” programming, and in particular a virtual absence of EMOPs in terms of country strategy in countries such as Rwanda and Uganda, where EMOPs is seen to have ‘handed over’ to the country programme. This has not been fully compensated for by ESARO, where expertise remains limited primarily to natural disasters. The position of EMOPs in the organisation, and their participation in country programmes reflects UNICEF’s view of emergencies as an unwelcome interruption of business.

Arguably, the limited involvement of EMOPs reflects the success of programming divisions in responding to emergencies alongside conventional development activities. If this were the case, it would raise the question as to whether EMOPs was needed at all. However, the cases of Uganda and Rwanda seem to indicate the organisation’s difficulty in sustaining these two modalities side-by-side, and that the country programming approach can undermine the agency’s humanitarian response.

The degree to which emergency programmes can and do contribute to sustainable development is questioned by UNICEF’s own figures presented to the Board in 1996 (UNICEF, 1996), and by the limited research undertaken by this study in Rwanda, for example. The degree to which EMOPs can act in a manner which links humanitarian and developmental goals is therefore limited, as much by its limited strategic capacity and involvement, as by in-country and financial constraints.

There was insufficient time to analyse systematically the structures for country programming at headquarters and the field. There would seem to be considerable variation in the decision-making processes of different country offices which influence the development of UNICEF’s strategy at field level, and result in differential capacities to respond to humanitarian needs. More detailed review of the implications of this highly decentralized approach for the interpretation of UNICEF’s mandate in situations of chronic political crisis is needed.

Proposal: While EMOPS has been strengthened in recent years, this has been largely in order to increase technical capacity to respond to acute emergencies, and to represent UNICEF in numerous international humanitarian fora. EMOPs existence, and its continued exclusion from the mainstream of country programming, reflects the persistence of a concept of emergencies that does not correspond with reality at field level. The nature of chronic political crises suggests either the need to expand
5.5 “Developmental relief” - some considerations

The term “developmental relief” is now gaining widespread currency, and is part of the growing orthodoxy that strategies once confined to the sphere of development aid should be incorporated into humanitarian aid programming. This report has suggested caution with regard to the adoption of such an approach. On political grounds the need to acknowledge that resumption of development aid relations assumes that a unified and legitimate state is in place. This section also highlights two very practical constraints: first in relation to assumptions re: the sustainability of aid programming in chronically unstable situations, second in relation to how UNICEF can operationalise its programmes working through project partners in these highly politicised contexts.

5.5.1 Sustainability and standards

To a greater or lesser extent, explicit in UNICEF’s approach to relief-development transition is the idea that development by definition implies sustainability. This is especially so in terms of financial sustainability; in other words, that relevant authorities (governments, district authorities or communities) will have sufficient resources to sustain services. Similarly, at an institutional level, there is an assumption that a stable, competent and legitimate central authority will be in place to provide the security and regulatory framework required to sustain infrastructure and to regulate service provision. Equally, assumptions are made regarding the legitimacy of civil groups as a means of sustaining services.

The case studies and other research indicates that these assumptions are highly questionable in situations of chronic instability. Development, or at least developmental approaches, can no longer be defined solely or primarily in terms of their sustainability. Indeed, there is a risk that by prioritising sustainability, other objectives, such as continuity of access, poverty alleviation and indeed the very survival of children and women will be lost.
Proposal  The case studies and other research suggests that in the “transition” from relief to development, an important factor driving international aid programming is the desire to reduce direct subsidies for service provision. In other words the move from relief to development is often characterised by reductions in aid flows for direct service provision. Whereas standards for minimum provision are being developed in relation to emergencies, similar standards do not exist for development situations. Prior to attempting to adopt developmental approaches to its programming in chronic emergencies, UNICEF should undertake an empirical analysis of the actual scope for development. In particular, before reducing its involvement in direct service provision, it should conduct detailed research on changes in mortality and morbidity, household incomes and livelihood strategies. In addition, UNICEF should monitor the impact of the withdrawal of subsidy for service provision on access to health and education services. Finally, it should set standards and define criteria (physiological and technical - for example, in relation to health and education systems) which clarify when it sees countries as facing an emergency situation and when it can be described legitimately as a development situation.

5.5.2 Choice and management of implementing partners

In its work, UNICEF is dependent upon governmental and non-governmental partners to implement programmes; it is rarely directly operational itself. If UNICEF programmes are to reflect the values of the organisation, it is important that its partners understand and share these values.

In situations of chronic instability some of the groups which UNICEF identifies as its partners are also participants in the conflict, either directly through orchestrating military action, or indirectly as political actors. Not only formal government at national and local level is implicated in violence; civil society, including church and women’s groups are also highly politicised and, as in Rwanda, may constitute the mechanism for implementing orchestrated campaigns of violence. It is important to emphasise that many individuals become involved in this process unwillingly; health workers, for example, can face enormous pressure to treat military personnel more quickly and extensively than civilians or to allocate drugs partially to one group rather than another.

In this environment, choices about partners become extremely difficult. Not only does UNICEF often face considerable political pressure in-country regarding its choice of partners, but the range of partners usually declines as violence increases, and civil groups retreat or their personnel are killed or flee.

Definition and monitoring of contracts with implementing partners is thus particularly important in these situations. Induction for partners regarding UNICEF’s values, including the CRC, and UNICEF’s conceptualisation of the relationship between relief and developmental programming would be useful in this regard. Furthermore, stronger systems need to be established to monitor partner agencies’ adherence to the terms of these contracts. At present, NGO staff interviewed by this study reported that there is little monitoring or supervision of their activities by UNICEF. Not to have such mechanisms for monitoring of contracts risks compromising UNICEF’s integrity if its partners are not acting in a manner which supports the organisation’s policy and mandate.

Proposal  A standard global contract should be devised which clearly states the organisation’s commitment to the CRC and articulates its policy in relation to relief-
development linkages. A review of the capacity available and methods used at field level to monitor adherence to these contracts is needed.

5.6 Taking the debate forward

This study represents only a modest contribution to what is likely to remain a persistent debate within the organisation, and between it and other agencies. This section tries to identify some ways in which the debate might be taken forward.

5.6.1 Working in chronic instability: not an emergencies problem

This study suffered from a number of constraints; in addition to the usual problem of time, might be added the sheer breadth of the topic. In particular, insufficient time was available to fully explore the view from the developmental side of the organisation, with relatively few interviews being carried out with senior staff in the programme division.

It is striking that most of UNICEF’s contributions to inter-agency discussions on relief-development linkages have been drafted and presented by EMOPs, and that studies such as this have also been generated by the emergencies section, rather than initiated from a broader institutional base. Such a state of affairs is not unusual - it is the IASC, for example, not the development group within the UN, which has taken the lead on relief-development linkages for four years.

This report has suggested that EMOPs, or at least emergencies, remain relatively marginalised in the organisational culture of UNICEF. It will be important that the organisation as whole reviews systematically arrangements for working in chronically unstable situations. It will not be safe to assume either that EMOPs has the capacity to develop and sustain long-term strategies, or that they will be able to “handover” countries back to programme desks once the emergency is “over”. While the Africa programme reportedly established very considerable capacity and expertise in responding to emergencies during the 1980s, the current division in programming arrangements does not suggest that there has been a fundamental adaptation in the working methods of the organisation to respond to situations of chronic political crisis.

More detailed review than was possible in the course of this study is necessary to fully understand the division of labour between EMOs, Programme staff in New York, Geneva and the Regions, and the implications of this for UNICEF’s response.

5.6.2. Evaluating field interventions from perspective of chronic instability

UNICEF has conducted a rich array of evaluations of its work. Again, time precluded a detailed analysis of these. It is likely to be fruitful to critically review and synthesise the findings of those evaluations conducted in countries experiencing chronic instability. Particular attention should be placed on understanding the impact of UNICEF’s developmental approach to emergencies on communities’ access to basic goods and services, and the financing of UNICEF operations in these environments; operationalising the CRC in situations of political transition; how UNICEF confronts the institutional transition of moving from micro- to meso to macro levels; and the implications in terms of skills for UNICEF staff of moving from an emergency to development approach.

Depending on the findings of this review, it may be necessary to commission more detailed case studies designed specifically to answer these questions at field level.
5.6.3 Participating in and monitoring other agencies’ debates

As chapters 1 and 2 and the bibliography for this study indicate, there is a proliferation of fora and material being generated internationally on the relationship between relief and development aid, how aid can contribute to a process of peace-building, and analysis of the process of political transition itself. Monitoring these debates and participating in them is likely to be important if UNICEF is to maintain and deepen its comparative advantage in this area.
Annex 1: Terms of Reference
Annex 2: List of Informants and Interviews

Washington:

Frederick Barton  Director, Office of Transition Initiatives, 12 September 1997
Polly Byers  Office of Disaster Assistance, USAID, 11 September 1997
Nat Colletta  Head, Africa post-conflict group, World Bank, 12 September 1997
John Eriksson  Consultant, World Bank, 11 September 1997
Krishna Kumar  Sector Leader, CIDE, USAID, 11 September 1997
Colin Scott  Consultant, World Bank, 12 September 1997

New York

Kate Alley  Evaluations Division, UNICEF, September 1997
Hugh Cholmondeley  UN Staff College, September 1997
Antonio DoniniChief, Lessons Learned Unit, DHA, September 1997
Elizabeth Gibbons  Senior Programme Officer, EMOPs, UNICEF, September 1997
Nigel Fisher  Director, EMOPs, UNICEF, September 1997
Kevin Kennedy  Department of Humanitarian Affairs, September 1997
Stephen Lewis  Deputy Executive Director, UNICEF
Philip O’Brien  UNICEF, September 1997
A Raven-Roberts  Programme Officer, EMOPs, UNICEF, September 1997
Ed Tsui  Policy Director, Department of Humanitarian Affairs
Pascal Villeneuve  Programme Officer, Great Lakes
Theresa Whithead  Department of Political Affairs

Geneva

John Donohue  Central and Eastern Europe Division, UNICEF, 28 October 1997
Rudolf Hoffman  Central and Eastern Europe Division, UNICEF, 28 October 1997
Peter McDermott  Deputy Director, EMOPs, UNICEF 28/29 October 1997
Eric Morris  a.i Head, Centre for Documentation and Research, UNHCR, Oct 28, 1997
Michel Perret  Agricultural Rehabilitation and Relief, ICRC, October 29 1997
Meinrad Studer  Policy Department, ICRC
Harald Siem  Emergency and Humanitarian Action Division, WHO 27 October 1997

Rwanda

Lori Calvo  UNICEF Project Officer, CEDC November 18 1997
Jean-Michel Delmotte  UNICEF Programme Planning Officer, November 18/19 1997
Luc Chauvin  UNICEF Reports Officer, November 18/19 1997
Keith Mckenzie  UNICEF Project Officer WATSAN November 18 1997
Jorge Mejia  UNICEF Programme Coordinator, November 18 1997
Lenin Guzman  UNICEF Project Officer, Health, November 19 1997
Jo Comerford  UNDP Reintegration Programme Manager, November 19, 1997
Steven Allen  UNICEF Representative, November 19/20 1997
Bob Parnel  UNICEF Security Officer, November 19/20, 1997
Mame Diagne  UNICEF Admin and Personnel Officer, November 19 1997.
James Mugaju  UNICEF National Officer for Monitoring and Evaluation Nov 20 1997
Anne O’Mahoney  Concern Worldwide Concern Worldwide) November 20 1997
J-D Kabano  Assistant Programme Coordinator, UNICEF, November 20, 1997  
Soren Buus Jensen  Senior Mental Health Advisor, UNICEF November 20 1997  
Jacques Kayigema  UNICEF EFP Education, 21 November 1997  
Venerande Kabarere  UNICEF Education Consultant November 21 1997  

Uganda  

UNICEF Senior Management Team, November 24 1997  
UNICEF Northern Area Team, November 24, 1997  
UNICEF South Western Area Team, November 24 1997  
Gulu District Disaster Management Committee November 26 1997  
UNDMT UN Disaster Management Team 1997 November 27.  
NGO Coordination Group for Northern Uganda  

Keith Wright  UNICEF, November 24/25 1997  
Ismail Mogona  Ministry of Planning, November 24 1997  
Reiko Nishijima  UNICEF PO Basic Services, November 24 1997  
Jessica Kafuko  UNICEF PO, Health, November 25, 1997  
Nelson Ophono  World Bank November 25 1997  
Comm Ochago  Ministry of Gender and Community Development November 25 1997  
Kiriti Choudhury  UNICEF Logistics, November 25 1997  
Leila Pakkala  UNICEF, November 26/27 1997  
Marcie Auguste  UNICEF/OLSNovember 26 1997  
V Van Steirteghem  UNICEF Chief of Health November 27 1997  
A Rao Singh  UNICEF Senior PO, BECCAD, November 27 1997  
Grace Kyeyune  UNICEF, IRM Officer, November 27 1997  

Kenya (Nairobi)  

Everett Ressler  Regional Emergency Advisor, UNICEF-ESARO, November 28/Dec 3 1997  
Jaap Vermeuten  Regional Relief Coordinator Oxfam Somalia, December 2 1997  
Paul Sherlock Oxfam UK/I, December 2 1997  
Ron Ockwell  Consultant to UNICEF Somalia, December 2 1997  
Hamish Young  Humanitarian Principles Programme, OLS, December 2 1997  
Ashetu Chole  Regional Economic Advisor, UNICEF ESARO, December 3 1997  
Carl Tintsman  Coordinator OLS, December 3 1997  
John Spring  Senior Programme Officer UNICEF Somalia, December 3 1997.  
Dr. Erazmus Morah  former Zonal Coordinator, UNICEF Somaliland) December 3 1997  
Aida Girma  Planning Officer, UNICEF Somalia, December 3 1997
Bibliography


Berry, J. (1997) Memorandum to: Jim Grant, Richard Jolly, Guido Bertolaso, Karin ShamPoo.


IASC (1994b) Progress report by the Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs: Inter-agency task force on the relief to development continuum. New York: IASC.


Keen D and J Ryle (1996) “The Fate of Information in the Disaster Zone”, *Disasters* 20(3)


McDermott, P. (1994) UNICEF’s comments on draft report on working group on the operational aspects of the relief-development continuum. New York: UNICEF.


UNICEF (1997) Sub-working group on local capacity/relief-development. Input from UNICEF. New York: UNICEF.


Endnotes

1. It is important to note that the increase in the proportion of total oda allocated to relief reflects not only the increase in the absolute amounts allocated to relief, but is also indicative of relative stagnation in overall oda since the early 1990s.

2. For example, in Cambodia the process of liberalisation initiated by the Vietnamese-backed government as Soviet aid rapidly declined created an economic crisis which necessitated resumption of relations with the West and thus the lifting of sanctions.

3. Interview, Theresa Whithead, Department of Political Affairs, New York, September 1997.


5. Interview Polly Byers, OFDA, USAID, Washington DC, September 1997. It is also interesting to note that the Office of Transition Initiatives of USAID is also proposing that in addition to its work in war-peace transitions, it adapts its interventions in peace-war transitions. Interview with Rick Barton, Director, Office of Transition Initiatives, USAID, Washington DC, September 1997.


7. Thus, for example, the recent review of OLS concluded that in northern Sudan the emergency was seen to be over in many areas and on this basis relief rations were cut. This occurred without substantive evidence of an improvement in the health and nutritional status of the war-displaced population, nor of the alternative opportunities for maintaining livelihoods (see Karim et. al., 1996). Similar processes have been noted in Liberia (Apthorpe et. al., 1996) and northern Uganda.


9. The implications of the difficulty of labelling a situation as an emergency were highlighted in Uganda where one UNICEF staff member reported that the Government had not yet admitted that there was an emergency. In this context it was difficult for UNICEF to appoint a dedicated emergencies officer as this would be seen to contradict the Government’s position.

10. This euphemism is used by those involved in the strategic framework process on behalf of CCPOQ.

11. See, for example, UNICEF (1987) Children on the Frontline: the impact of apartheid, destabilization and warfare on children in Southern and South Africa, New York. This book was among the first to try to estimate the direct and indirect costs of war by providing a “balance-sheet” of its impact in southern Africa. The Machel report on the impact of armed conflict on children is in the same tradition, and has acted as a tool for sustained advocacy on this issue. Similar studies have subsequently been done by NGOs, such as Saferworld (1996), Counting the costs of conflict.


13. This sharp fall in the value of oda from members of the OECD is particularly significant given that these donors are responsible for providing by far the majority of global oda. In 1987, OECD countries provided 87% of total global oda; during the early 1990s contributions from the oil-producing states, particularly the Middle East fell steadily and by 1993 OECD donors accounted for over 98% of oda. The enormous depreciation of the “tiger economies” of East and South East Asia in recent months suggests that these countries are unlikely to become major aid donors as once predicted. Rather they are likely to revert to significant recipients of aid, particularly from international financial institutions.

14. Note, these figures underestimate the total resources allocated to emergencies as official OECD figures for emergencies do not include food aid. If this was included, for certain countries such as the USA and Canada, large providers of food aid, the proportion of oda categorised as “relief” can rise to up to 30%.

15. As a 1996 DAC paper puts it:

“...increasingly the credibility of aid hinges upon the tangible results it is able to produce. Aid has to prove that it matters not only as a moral imperative of solidarity, but also as an investment in solidifying stability” (Development Assistance Committee, 1996).

16. For example, aid policy makers tended to be assertive regarding their political neutrality and to emphasise their role in a technical development process. The emphasis on economic growth as
a primary indicator was a reflection of the perception of aid as apolitical. In the same regard, until recently the academic discipline of “development studies” has been populated by economists and agriculturalists, whereas increasingly political scientists are moving into this field.


18 The wording of the UN paper announcing this reform echoes Anstee's closely. It states:

Peace-building does not replace on-going humanitarian and development activities in countries emerging from crisis. Rather it aims to build on them, and to introduce further activities which, in addition to their intrinsic humanitarian or developmental value, are politically relevant because they reduce the risk of a resumption of conflict, and contribute to creating conditions more conducive to reconciliation, reconstruction and recovery (United Nations 1997: 40).

19 Several informants interviewed for this study pointed out that four governments had been responsible for securing the relatively stable transition in Kinshasa in late 1996: the US, France, Uganda and South Africa. It was this intense political negotiation, starkly absent from the majority of conflicts in Africa and even in Asia, which was seen to have made the difference.

20 For example, the British Department for International Development (DFID) is currently arguing in relation to Sierra Leone that the provision of humanitarian aid is likely to sustain the military junta; for this reason it is actively discouraging British NGOs from working in Sierra Leone and providing only the most limited funding for relief. In this way non-provision of aid also becomes a highly political agenda.

21 The term “relief” is used to denote the content of assistance - primarily material supplies such as food and medical aid. The term “humanitarian” refers to the processes and rules according to which relief aid is delivered, specifically in conflict situations; in particular it is interpreted to denote the principles of neutral and impartial programming.

22 Importantly, implementing agencies do have to work closely with incumbent authorities - both state and non-state entities - in order to maintain access. It is thus only at the inter-state level, rather than the level of actual disbursement of relief, that the neutrality of humanitarian is guaranteed.

23 Interview, Frederick Barton, Director, Office of Transition Initiatives, Washington, September 12 1996.

24 See also, interview with Krishna Kumar, USAID Washington, September 11, 1997.

25 See also, group meeting DHA, Geneva, October 28 1997.

26 In his 1991 report, Richardson phrases it eloquently:

What has evolved over the years is a troubling ambivalence about doing emergency relief work, something which has affected its sense of identity and has created a tension which is not always healthy. After more than forty years of existence, UNICEF is still debating whether or nor it is a emergency organisation. Even those who are quick to point to a number of reasons why UNICEF may be the best of all UN agencies equipped to do emergency work are also as likely as not to add that, despite everything they have just said, UNICEF is not really an emergency organisation. (see Volume 2, page 2).

27 UNICEF was established originally as an emergency fund to support women and children in Europe in the immediate aftermath of World War II. It is commonly stated that when the General Assembly approved the continuation of the organisation in 1950, it was on condition that it refocus its efforts on development (see, for example, Richardson, 1991). However, the researchers’ reading of the revision of the mandate is not so much that it was conditional on down-grading emergency work, as it was concerned with a geographical refocusing away from Europe and towards the newly independent countries of the Third World.

28 Interestingly, the Conventions on the Rights of the Child were also seen at first to be a potential distraction from UNICEF’s developmental work. It was only relatively late in the process of defining the CRC and organising for their adoption that UNICEF got involved (Pupavac, 1997); see also Steven Lewis interview).

29 It is the researchers’ understanding that the country representative can sanction only up to US$50,000 from the unearmarked country funds.

30 Within the UN system, for example, this professionalisation of relief has been relatively rapid. Marked by the creation of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in late 1991 and the
establishment of the IASC, the respectability of relief and humanitarian action is indicated not only by the volume of resources allocated globally, but also by the proliferation of formal and informal meetings, conferences and by the establishment of specialist journals and information systems, such as IRIN, Humanitarian Affairs.

31 There were some notable exceptions to this; some field staff felt that the focus on rights was likely to be little more than a fad.

32 This trend is evident in, for example, USAID/OTI’s approach, where the capacity of agencies to demonstrate credible political analysis is becoming more important. In Europe, DFID highlighted the issue of humanitarian principles in its White Paper, and is apparently pressing for the adoption of a code of conduct for EU donors during the UK Presidency in 1998. This is not to suggest that donors are necessarily principled in their allocation of resources, nor that they do not have their own agenda in promoting such principles. The point here is that it is likely that agencies will have increasingly to demonstrate that they have a credible political analysis underpinning their work.


34 Although the relief-to-development continuum may be considered outdated in UNICEF, it remains important in other organisations. The bi-monthly situation report of the UN Coordination Unit in the office of the Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator for Somalia, for example, is titled "From Relief to Development in Somalia".

35 Interview with Steve Allen, November 1997

36 The latter indicator of success is relative. In 1985 per capita GNP was $280. The current growth is partially based on the $1.1 billion received in aid since 1994.

37 Interview with Steve Allen, November 1997

38 Of course, UNICEF has already made substantive contributions to these debates; chairing, for example the ECHA working group on the reform of DHA.

39 Indeed, Save the Children Fund UK has carried out research which questions the concept of sustainability in countries unaffected by conflict but which are extremely poor, such as Nepal.