

Sustainable Emergency Assistance

Aid beyond the Crisis

Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CCA	Climate Change Adaptation
CONCORD	European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development
DCV	German Caritas Association
DKH	Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe
DNH	Do No Harm
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DZI	German Central Institute for Social Issues
ECHO	Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department of the European Commission
EU	European Union
ESÜH	Strategy of developing and structure building assistance
EZ	Development Cooperation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IDNDR	International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
KANK	Catholic Committee for Emergency Assistance
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NFI	Non-Food-Items
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
VENRO	Association of German Non-Governmental Development Organizations
VOICE	Voluntary Organizations in Cooperation in Emergencies
UN	United Nations
UNDRO	United Nations Disaster Relief Organization (incorporated into OCHA in 1998)
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme

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INTRODUCTION – INTENTION OF THE CONCEPT PAPER

Support of disaster victims, whether from man-made crises and disasters - or natural disasters, constitutes more than two-thirds of the aid measures carried out by the international department of Caritas Germany¹ and is its most extensive area of responsibility. Not only have the number and extent of disasters been increasing for years but also the programmatic complexity of disaster relief. In addition to immediate support, the topic of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is becoming increasingly important.

The title of this concept paper expresses the specific aim of Caritas Germany²: to provide sustainable disaster relief. Whenever possible, initial assistance should look beyond the crisis and offer starting points for later, long-term structural assistance measures. For example, LRRD³ expresses the need to better link the core field of disaster emergency assistance, classical development cooperation and disaster risk management. This requires close-knit cooperation with other actors in the humanitarian sector.

Disaster relief – or rather, humanitarian assistance⁴ - cannot be viewed in isolation from the underlying social conditions in which it is undertaken. Nor can the particular environment in which disasters are contested be overlooked. Over the years, Caritas Germany has gathered a wealth of experience in supporting and assisting partners in Latin America, Africa, the Near and Middle East, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe. In doing so, Caritas Germany has continually refined its specific approach to sustainable disaster relief.

The concept paper primarily targets project managers, decision makers and experts at Caritas Germany as well its partners in the field. It is an important document that unites many years of practical experience with theoretical-conceptual debate on the topic, allowing for reflection on current knowledge and practices. The paper should offer a framework for gui-

dance and action and serve as a working tool for employees of Caritas, its partners and the humanitarian community. In addition, it should support professional and trustworthy collaboration on the basis of common principles and standards.

Last but not least Caritas Germany aims to offer this as an informative document for its longstanding institutional donors for emergency assistance and as record of its specific approach and working principles.

What constitutes a disaster?

There is no definition for the point at which a damaging event becomes a disaster. In the past, indicators were the number of victims (at one point there had to be at least 25 deaths, at another time 100) or the financial damage done. Today an attempt is made to define disasters according to quality standards and relative to conditions before disaster struck.

A **disaster** is “an event, concentrated in time and space, in which a community undergoes severe danger and incurs such losses to its members and physical appurtenances that the social fabric is disrupted and the fulfilment of all or some of the essential functions of the society is prevented.” (UNDRO, 1987)

“**Disaster**”: A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society involving widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, which exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using only its own resources.” (UNISDR, 2007)

¹ See also: Caritas – Leitbild, Vision, Erläuterung der Vision, strategische Handlungsfelder. Freiburg 2012. (Available in German only)

² Caritas Germany, Caritas and German Caritas Association are partially used as synonyms in this paper. If used in the international context, the term Caritas Germany usually refers to the International Department of Caritas Germany.

³ LRRD – Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development

⁴ Disaster relief, emergency assistance and humanitarian aid are used as synonyms in this paper.

As such, what does Caritas Germany stand for in disaster relief? What constitutes the mission statement, working methods, institutional expertise and strengths of Caritas Germany?

The concept paper “Sustainable Disaster Relief – Aid Beyond the Crisis” is not a handbook on disaster relief and nor does it claim to portray the current scientific discussion on emergency assistance. Instead it pursues a practice-oriented approach and primarily strives to convey a well-defined conceptual basis for action from the perspective of Caritas Germany to all parties involved.

The paper is divided into three sections. The first section outlines the basic principles of Caritas Germany’s disaster relief. The second section expands on the various phases and fields of emergency assistance. It explains Caritas Germany’s key areas of operation in providing humanitarian assistance and how these areas are linked to others.

Finally, the third section deals with the theoretical-structural frames of reference in Caritas Germany’s emergency assistance by explaining general principles and guidelines. These include key activities and fields of action as well as their political classification. This section also introduces important cooperative partners and donors.

Types of disaster

There are two main types of disaster: man-made and natural. The latter can be further broken down into hydro-meteorological (climate- and weather-related) and geological disasters:

Man-made disasters

- Armed conflict
- Displacement
- Grave Human Rights Violations
(e.g. genocide, ethnic cleansing)
- Ecological disasters
(e.g. chemical or nuclear accidents)

Natural disasters

Hydro-meteorological disasters

- Drought
- Floods
- Storms / snow storms
- Forest fires (indirect)

Geological disasters

- Volcanic eruption
- Earthquake
- Tsunami
- Avalanche

While looking for causes, it is too often overlooked that most disasters cannot be traced back to a single source but are the result of a number of different factors. There is not a region in the world where man has not influenced nature. Thus, natural disasters are often man-made. Damage caused by hydro-meteorological and geological events often become disasters due to the socio-economic context in which they occur.

1. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE AT CARITAS GERMANY

1.1 Vision and Mission of Caritas Germany⁵

Caritas Germany's goals and objectives are reflected in its mission statement⁶ and are derived from the basic principles of Catholic social teachings and Christian social ethics. The maxim "see a need and act on it" clearly expresses Caritas' decision to support people in need.

Caritas offers emergency assistance as well as reconstruction for victims of armed conflict, natural disasters and other emergencies. Caritas' sustainable emergency assistance and prevention work contribute towards promoting equality and reconciliation. Accordingly, these objectives are integrated into the development of social services and the strengthening of socio-political structures throughout the world.

Emergency assistance and reconstruction are core issues for Caritas. The range of assistance provided by Caritas endeavours to reduce the vulnerability of the poor, prevent future disasters and support community-oriented prevention efforts. The principle is: whether providing survival assistance or mid- and long-term projects – such as reconstruction, rehabilitation and structural assistance – they always strive to improve social structures. And the self-help, self-organisation and empowerment of victims always take priority.

A disaster can be caused by natural and/or man-made influences. Regardless of the type of disaster – be it a flood, earthquake or military conflict – the poorest of the poor are always worst-affected due to their higher vulnerability and social marginalisation. Ensuring the survival of these people is Caritas' highest priority. When disaster strikes, Caritas cooperates with its local partners. If necessary, its own experts are sent to the region. The relief organisation of the German Caritas Association acts according to quality standards and guidelines for humanitarian assistance.

Furthermore, the **development of social services** is a specific objective of Caritas Germany and of Caritas organisations throughout the world. Their objective is to enable suppressed and marginalised people to lead fulfilling and humane lives

and to strengthen communities. Caritas stands for socio-political progress throughout the world and for the fulfilment of human rights. In doing so, Caritas incorporates the experiences of the entire German Caritas Association into its work.

1.2 Sustainable Emergency Assistance in the Context of Community-Based Social Work

As a rule, aid measures are essential when differences abound between poor and rich, powerful and powerless. Caritas therefore sees itself as an advocate and partner for the poor as well as for victims of social marginalisation and violence throughout the world regardless of nationality, creed and worldview. Caritas aims to "*defend individual human dignity which means "to protect especially disadvantaged and weak people from exploitation and marginalization and encourage them to help themselves"*"⁷ and to help where there is need.

In addition to disaster relief, Caritas Germany can offer specific expertise and responsibility in the development and support of social service structures. Programmes are aimed at poor and socially marginalised people, who make up the majority of the population in developing countries. These groups are also the beneficiaries of emergency and disaster relief as they are especially vulnerable when disaster strikes. In social work, not only economic poverty and social hardship are decisive in selecting project beneficiaries; aid is also directed to the ill, the disabled or people with exceptional needs. In this endeavour, professional social work particularly supports self-help initiatives, grass-roots organisations, specialised institutions and local networks.⁸

With this in mind, Caritas Germany has developed a **holistic approach** in which Caritas-specific professional social work and disaster relief are linked, in order to promote strengthen local ownership and empowerment. Further aims include providing equal opportunities, reducing disadvantages and enabling participation in society and public life.

⁵ See also: Caritas. Leitbild, Vision, Erläuterung der Vision, strategische Handlungsfelder, Freiburg 2012 (Available in German only)

⁶ See also: Goals of the German Caritas Association, Freiburg 1997

⁷ See also: Goals of the German Caritas Association, Freiburg 1997, p. 6

⁸ See also: Caritas – ein weltweites Netzwerk für Menschen in Not. Die Wahrnehmung internationaler Aufgaben im Deutschen Caritasverband; in: neue Caritas spezial 1/2001 (Available in German only)

For Caritas Germany, sustainable emergency assistance means not only rapid response to a disaster but also includes preventive measures and actions that lead to long-term development. Both the timing and analytical components of these measures are significant. Immediate emergency assistance and reconstruction should not stand isolated from each other but should instead be coordinated in a manner that ignites sustainable development processes.⁹ Caritas Germany's emergency assistance goes beyond merely short-term intervention. It attempts to transform solidarity coming from the outside into aid that unites with victims' efforts to help themselves. At the same time, it tackles the underlying root causes of the crisis and gives a voice to the poor and marginalised.¹⁰

Of course, approaches differ from region to region. In a country such as Haiti, the social and economic conditions were very poor even before the severe earthquake at the beginning of 2010. Accordingly, Caritas provided both reconstruction assistance and long term sustainable development cooperation. A few weeks after the earthquake in Haiti, Chile was rocked by an even stronger earthquake – 8.8 on the Richter scale as opposed to 7.2 in Haiti. In this emerging South American nation, the destruction did not reach nearly the same dimensions as in Haiti because the buildings were more stable, the infrastructure better and disaster prevention more effective. In Chile, a relatively well developed country, assistance was primarily about implementing Caritas' guiding principle "we support the weakest". This means, in addition to emergency assistance, identifying and specifically supporting the people with the greatest needs. In Haiti, however, Caritas' approach was more strongly aimed at setting up structures to benefit the entire society.

Disasters destroy not only material property but they also leave behind feelings of isolation, hopelessness and paralysis. Supporting victims and providing psychological and social assistance to overcome trauma are therefore just as meaningful as material assistance.¹¹ In this context, the self-help approach initially means psychosocial rehabilitation.¹² Overcoming traumatic experiences and the psychosocial stabilisation of disaster victims are prerequisites for mobilisation and active participation.

1.3. Principle of Partnership and the Self-Help Approach

The defining characteristic of Caritas Germany's emergency assistance is that - wherever possible - it emanates from the partnership principle and the complementary principle of community-based approach. So, as a rule, assistance is best placed within well-anchored local structures. Projects and programmes are planned and implemented in cooperation with **local partners**. In this way, Caritas Germany ensures not only onsite proximity to victims but also supports their personal responsibility (Principle of Subsidiary¹³) and the development of global solidarity. In its emergency assistance, Caritas trusts in the community links, experience and **expertise of local partners** as a matter of principle. Caritas supports the objectives of local partners with personnel, finances and supplies to enable them to act in a professional capacity relevant to the situation.

Primary elements of Caritas Germany's disaster relief include cultural conformity, integration through local partners and collaboration with civil society. This **development-oriented and sustainable disaster relief¹⁴ and prevention** should contribute towards the promotion of equality and reconciliation.¹⁵

Through its worldwide network, Caritas is often already on the ground as an accepted part of civil society - even before disaster strikes. Its employees have often been cooperating with local partner organisations for many years. Even after the crisis, Caritas Germany supports the affected communities through local Caritas structures. Frequently, the crisis becomes a chance for capacity building and for the organisational development of local partners. New problem-solving approaches thus result from the disaster.

Throughout the process, Caritas Germany supports self-help approaches among victims wherever possible. The needy are put in a position to create a new future for themselves from their own resources. To this end, cooperation with local Caritas workers is especially important. They are most familiar with local conditions, rooted in their home countries and hold

9 See also: Nachhaltigkeit in der Humanitären Hilfe, VENRO-Arbeitspapier Nr. 8, September 1999 (Available in German only).
10, 11 See also: Caritas – ein weltweites Netzwerk für Menschen in Not. (Available in German only).

12 See also section 2.3.2 Psychosocial Support

13 According to the principle of subsidiarity, problems should be tackled and solved on the level at which they occur. Only if this is not possible should outside assistance be sought.

14 See also section 4.3.1 LRRD – Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development

15 See also: German Caritas Association, Caritas: Unsere Arbeit, unsere Ziele, Freiburg 2000 (Available in German only).

the peoples' trust. They encourage institutional build-up and the professional qualification of local partners. They further support the development of appropriate expertise and programmes for short-term disaster relief and longer term professional social work. Caritas Germany acts according to need i.e. it takes **cultural circumstances** as well as local opportunities and resources into account in order to sustain local economic cycles and avoid new injustices. Caritas promotes sustainable development projects in order to avoid long-term dependencies.

Caritas Germany's emergency assistance is integrated into the approach of **Socio-spatial Orientation**. By linking individual households into neighbourhoods and helping to bring existing groups together the prerequisites for personal responsibility and community-organised self-help are met. When weighing priorities for support measures, the only condition is peoples' need and not the value of the material loss or damage they have suffered. **Securing basic needs takes priority**. Caritas Germany's main concern is helping the most vulnerable because they are less likely than other victims to survive without external support and find their way back to a humane life in dignity.

Deployment of foreign personnel during a disaster is only reasonable when the local Caritas needs assistance with project implementation or if local networks are no longer intact due to a disaster. In such cases, Caritas Germany deploys its own specialists and, if the need arises, sets up branch offices for a limited period of time.¹⁶ Branch offices are established when Caritas Germany needs to support local Caritas workers for a longer period of time while resolving complex issues or if there is no national Caritas organisation already present in the country.

Beyond event-driven disaster relief, Caritas Germany has supported the organisational development of local Caritas organisations for many years. This structural partner support aims to sustainably safeguard and further develop joint fields of work through strong and competent partners. Caritas Germany understands itself as a sponsor in a process carried out

by the partner that aims to incorporate experience and knowledge from the domestic work of the German Caritas Association into local contexts. It is key that the experience and knowledge of the Germany Caritas Association is not imposed onto other organisations but that the organisations work together toward a reciprocal exchange.

Support measures may include temporarily financing operational costs and structural expenses. These contributions are done independently from specific projects of emergency assistance, rehabilitation or professional social work, but are usually networked with them. As a rule, longer term structural assistance is supplemented by longer term guidance and specialised counselling for the partner organisation. This includes organisational development, training, further education and structural advice. Different organisations within the worldwide Caritas network¹⁷ therefore offer – according to their focus – further educational measures and exchange seminars. These also include further education in Disaster Preparedness, reconstruction and rehabilitation as well as LRRD.

¹⁶ See also: Konzept Außenstrukturen von Caritas international. Grundsatzpapier. 17.11.2008. (Available in Germany only)

¹⁷ For example: German Caritas Association /Caritas, Caritas Europe and other regional associations as well as Caritas' umbrella organization Caritas Internationalis. See also section 3.4.2. Cooperation in the Caritas Internationalis Network

2. CARITAS GERMANY'S FIELDS OF ACTION IN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

2.1 Emergency Assistance

Emergency Assistance, i.e. initial assistance during major disasters, is a core element of humanitarian assistance and, consequently, defined as a central objective and a key area of expertise for Caritas Germany. Rapid, professional and efficient action is absolutely essential in the emergency assistance phase. This not only ensures survival but also lays the foundations for the subsequent phases of rehabilitation and reconstruction as well as long-term follow-up measures such as professional social work. The emergency phase begins when a disaster strikes and may last several weeks. It is guided by Caritas' principles and strongly coordinated with other fields of action in Caritas' disaster assistance and professional social work.

The following section is about how disaster relief is concretely implemented i.e. how the working principles of Caritas are put into practice. It focuses on **ensuring an efficient ability to act when disaster strikes**. Thereafter, the meaning of the emergency phase as the basis for a sustainable, cross-sector and long-term oriented approach will be highlighted.

2.1.1 Operational Procedure for Emergency Assistance after Major Disasters

In order to ensure the ability to act when major disasters suddenly strike, Caritas Germany has defined specific internal processes and procedures, which are regularly monitored to guarantee they are relevant and up-to-date. The **Standard Operational Procedure for Emergency Assistance**¹⁸ describes in detail responsibilities as well as mechanisms regarding communication, financing and decision-making that come into play during a disaster.

2.1.2 Rapid Assistance Disposition Fund

Directly following a major disaster, the **phase of immediate assistance** begins. With its **Rapid Assistance Fund**, Caritas Germany can offer local partner organisations non-bureaucratic, fast and flexible financial support for relief measures directly following a disaster. In this way, the **local partner organizations' ability to act** should be improved and financial risks minimised in case of any advance payments on the side of the partner. The Disposition Fund covers direct support for victims and indirect costs incurred during the implementation as well as start-up assistance for more comprehensive, supplementary measures. The aim is to enhance project planning and coordinate assistance measures with other local stakeholders and donors during the expenditure of the Disposition Fund.

2.1.3 Rapid Response Capacities

Well-rehearsed procedures within the worldwide Caritas network make it possible for Caritas Germany, in cooperation with local partners, to ensure a rapid, needs-oriented reaction to a disaster that meets with professional standards. In order to react quickly and flexibly, Caritas Germany is able to deploy qualified personnel at short notice to support local partners.

As a rule, the initial reaction comes from the local Caritas as part of the international Caritas network. In crisis situations, a procedure is coordinated by the Secretariat of the Caritas Confederation in Rome. Caritas Germany is included in this coordination mechanism but also maintains its own contacts with local partners.

¹⁸ See also: Katastrophenmanagement bei Caritas international. Ablaufplan Katastrophenhilfe, 2012 (Available in German only)

Through its headquarters in Freiburg, Caritas Germany can send emergency assistance experts to the disaster region at short notice and at any time. In addition, it is also possible to mobilise a number of experts deployed to regional offices or who are working on projects around the world. Therefore, when disaster strikes, employees working abroad can be sent to a crisis region within their area of deployment and take over tasks, including needs assessment and partner support. As another alternative, Caritas has a roster of experts available with varying technical and regional expertise who can be deployed to the field at short notice. For this purpose, Caritas also works with partner organisations such as the Medical Mission Institute Würzburg that can release medical personnel at short notice.

Caritas Germany often participates in joint needs assessments within the international Caritas network. These rely on a pool of experts provided by the member organisations and can be assembled at short notice. This mechanism makes it possible for the Caritas network, and thus Caritas Germany, to use these shared resources more efficiently, as by combining the available technical and regional expertise of the entire network, experts can be recruited far faster than if each organisation worked alone.

2.1.4 Effective Tools for Needs Assessments

There are standardised methods for assessing needs during a disaster which enable Caritas Germany, together with its local partners and the Secretariat of the Caritas Confederation, to get an accurate picture of the situation on the ground immediately following the outbreak of disaster.

The central instrument for this is the Caritas Internationalis Emergency Tool Kit which has been made known and introduced to the entire network. Caritas disaster experts use this instrument to assess needs and compile emergency project proposals. The network regularly offers further training for local personnel on the use of the Emergency Tool Kit.

2.1.5 Early Warning and Prevention

Major disasters can occur suddenly, often as a natural calamity such as an earthquake, volcanic eruption, which then develops into a disaster within a few days or hours (flooding). They can also occur more slowly, as in an armed conflict, hunger crisis or drought. For disasters which do not happen suddenly, Caritas Internationalis has a well-rehearsed procedure at its disposal for observing critical developments that have the potential to escalate into major disasters.

2.1.6 Working in Conflict Regions

Working in conflict regions is a special challenge for Caritas because the responsibilities differ in many ways from emergency assistance following natural disasters.

Humanitarian workers operating in areas of armed conflict must be especially aware of the implications of their work. Projects such as the construction of a hospital could, for example, be used by one of the warring parties to improve its image. Or, food distribution centres could be misused in order to arrange forced recruitment. When deciding on humanitarian operations, it is not always easy to clearly identify and reach vulnerable groups and not to unintentionally support political or armed actors which try to benefit from humanitarian aid. Therefore, sound knowledge of the local situation, diplomacy and sensitivity in relations with local actors are of fundamental importance for Caritas.

Caritas Germany often gives returning refugees a chance to restart their lives by providing seeds and tools to replant their fields. A further example of operations in areas of conflict are projects for child soldiers in which Caritas helps boys and girls come to terms with their experiences and supports their reintegration into their families and villages. In this and in comparative areas, Caritas Germany, as an organisation, has a special responsibility towards its employees because the extreme circumstances and the victims' distress stretch our employees to their limits. At the same ti-

me they work in an environment in which they themselves could be attacked by one of the parties.

Working in areas of conflict is further aggravated by the fact that, compared to natural disasters, donor support and thus Caritas' operative potential is much less. For the victims of armed conflicts such as civil wars, often not even one tenth of the funds for victims of natural disasters such as tornadoes, earthquakes or floods is donated.

2.1.7 Safety and Security in Humanitarian Assistance

Safety and security is becoming an increasingly important issue for Caritas Germany due to changing framework conditions and a generally increased security risk in many project countries.

Caritas' central safety and security strategy is "safety through acceptance", i.e. the indigenous populations' acceptance of neutral, target-group oriented work as well as close involvement and coordination with local structures and civilian society. The partnership principle, which is at the heart of Caritas' vision, therefore contributes to increase the safety of Caritas' work.

Of course, Caritas Germany cannot rely solely on the strategy of "safety through acceptance" but supplements this with safety management adapted to the specific situation. This includes the development and implementation of local safety and emergency plans through branch offices and individual overseas staff members. In addition, safety-related equipment is provided and further educational measures on safety-related issues are provided for overseas and central office staff. Safety and security is an important consideration when selecting appropriate locations for offices and staff accommodation. If necessary, the buildings are protected by walls and unarmed security guards. And, as described in the section on civil-military cooperation (3.6.2), Caritas Germany maintains a distance from all armed groups.

The conditions for Caritas Germany's safety and security management are summarised in its Safety and Security Framework¹⁹. Specifically, it deals with procedures and responsibilities in times of crisis and provides behavioural guidelines for all Caritas Germany staff working temporarily or permanently in insecure areas. It also offers guidance on the creation and implementation of local safety plans for overseas staff and offices in insecure areas. In especially insecure countries, close collaboration and cooperative joint safety management also exist within the Caritas network and with other humanitarian organisations.

For Caritas Germany, the issue of personal safety also includes the ability of its overseas staff to deal with conflict and stress-laden situations. They have access to appropriate stress debriefing following traumatic events. Within this context, Caritas staff, as employees of a Christian organisation, must be especially sensitive with regard to religious conflicts.

2.2 Disaster Risk Management in Humanitarian Assistance

The number and intensity of natural disasters and the damage caused by them has increased in recent years due to global changes; in particular environmental degradation, population development, urban development and climate change. This trend has been reinforced by human intervention in natural ecosystems, poverty, unequal distribution of resources and knowledge, as well as corrupt government leadership. The prognosis of the IPCC²⁰ is bleak regarding the relationship between climate change and the increase in extreme weather events with catastrophic effects. Preventive and mitigating measures are more essential now than ever before.

Disaster Risk Management is of great significance for humanitarian assistance because Disaster Preparedness measures can contribute to minimising future damage and avoiding loss of human life. This can reduce the need for

¹⁹ Sicherheitskonzeption Caritas international. Konzeptentwurf. Januar 2013 (Available in German only)
²⁰ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

humanitarian intervention. Disaster preparedness is also developmentally sound because disasters and their effects destroy development efforts. In addition, this approach is economically sound because it is less costly to administer

Disaster Risk Management

includes all measures taken prior to a natural disaster that aim “to avoid or limit the impact of a natural calamity on the community”.²¹

disaster preparedness than it is to remove the effects of disaster.

Experience in disaster relief shows that directly following a disaster, politicians’ and society’s readiness to

implement Disaster Preparedness measures is greatest. Disasters can be used as “windows of possibility” to implement positive change towards improving the situation as early as possible instead of rebuilding only the “status quo ante”. Against this background, the discussion of a sound link between immediate emergency assistance and development cooperation has received strong impetus in recent years. At Caritas Germany, Disaster Preparedness is understood as an integral part of a coherent LRRD approach (see sections 3.2.1 and 4.3.1), and is a central element of its long-term approach to community-based development cooperation.

2.2.1 Disaster Risk Management in Caritas Germany’s Mandate

For many reasons, the poor are most affected by natural disasters. They are the most vulnerable because they often live in dangerous places or insecure buildings. They have less education, less power, less income and fewer resources at their disposal. All of these factors increase their vulnerability during disasters.

Caritas takes the needs of the poor as a starting point for its disaster preparedness efforts. Sooner or later, recurring serious disasters will always reverse development processes and well thought-out emergency assistance will be required, especially for the poor. Thus, they are Caritas’ main target group and Caritas is therefore especially committed to

maintaining close links between emergency assistance, disaster prevention and the structural alleviation of poverty. For many years Caritas Germany has supported worldwide disaster preparedness projects. Together with local partners, natural dangers are analysed and locally adapted solutions are sought. These can include technical changes e.g. building of retention dams or terraces to protect from erosion but also structural changes such as the construction of health stations.

²¹ See also: BMZ (Ed.): Disaster Risk Management. Contributions by German Development Cooperation, Berlin 2008

Disaster Risk Reduction

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is a proven method of community-based disaster prevention which is utilised and continually developed by Caritas and its partners.

Its main focus is a process in which social units (e.g. communities) actively address issues by dealing with the links between development and disaster. The communities prepare for future disasters by identifying and analysing potential risks, creating and implementing local plans of action as well as monitoring and evaluating change through a participatory process. The aim is to reduce peoples' vulnerabilities and improve their resilience. In doing so, communities take responsibility for decisions and implement disaster prevention measures.

Building Resilient Communities. A Training Manual on Community-Managed disaster Risk Reduction. Cordaid and IIRR. 2007.

Deciding factors also range from the support of social change processes to self-organisation and participation in local decision-making processes. Important instruments for DRR also include early warning systems and effective emergency plans.²² These centre around a community based participatory approach and embed all measures into socio-environmental community work.

In this context, disaster preparedness opens doors for further change. Caritas supports the affected population to find solutions for their own specific problems and deal with existential issues that directly concern them in a proactive and self-determined manner. This not only reduces the vulnerability of the community in the face of disaster but also ignites other long-term social changes. With DRR as a first step, the community often systematically becomes aware of other marginalised groups within the population such as the elderly, children and the disabled. Within the scope of community-developed

safety plans for expected local natural disasters – whether a flood, an earthquake or another type of disaster – the communities consider, often for the first time, the concrete needs of marginalised groups while working with them. This fact alone often marks the beginning of profound social processes within the communities aside from the substantial reduction of the negative effects of disasters. DRR cannot prevent negative impact but strengthens the resilience of communities.

2.2.2 Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management

In many places, the negative impact of climate change can already be sensed: Increasing numbers of tropical storms, droughts in East Africa, more frequent and severe flooding in Bangladesh and unstable monsoon rains in India are all examples of extreme weather that have led to further hunger, increased poverty and dependency. As a result, vulnerable groups are confronted with immense challenges exacerbated by climate change. It is probable that conflicts over the distribution of land, water and food, and climate change-induced conflicts within and between nation states, will increase.

People particularly affected by the impact of climate change are those least responsible for global warming and who already live in poverty. They are often entirely exposed due to unsatisfactory coping strategies and because they have no savings, storage silos, insurance or social security. The disastrous living conditions that prevail especially among the poorest people in developing countries – often women and children – will continue to decline.

With appropriate disaster preparedness efforts, Caritas supports endeavours to counteract this decline and reduce susceptibility to climate-related natural hazards, particularly for the poor. According to the DRR approach, traditional measures of DRR are supplemented by specific components of Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). These include, for example, enhanced farming methods, improved construction of housing in safe locations and upgraded water management systems.

²² See also: Caritas international (Ed.): Katastrophenhilfe, Freiburg 2009. (Available in German only)

Caritas supports local processes of climate change adaptation. These include risk analyses, disaster prevention as well as disaster preparedness. The negative effects of climate change can be reduced by integrating increased risk awareness, precautions and adaptation strategies into development.

2.3. Reconstruction and Rehabilitation

According to Caritas Germany, sustainable emergency assistance also incorporates reconstruction and rehabilitation. Caritas understands rehabilitation not only as the restoration of infrastructure and the reconstruction of destroyed buildings but also the restoration of social services. Here Caritas Germany uses a community-based socio-environmental approach with special emphasis on the most vulnerable members of society, e.g. the disabled, the elderly and children.

For Caritas Germany, reconstruction becomes a key function following a disaster in which the course for the extent and character of further cooperation with the local population is set. If the entire community is actively involved in reconstruction, new insights often surface, meaning that Caritas, together with the affected population, can respond to emergent social concerns. This process can also lead to reconciliatory and peace promoting activities. In the same way, reconstruction plays a key role in providing access to other programme sectors. In this way, for example, buildings reconstructed with disabled access can often raise the partner and the local population's awareness of disabled people's rights. Holistic approaches to reconstruction can often be combined with vocational education, which in turn strengthens the local economy and social structures.

For example, Caritas Germany provided emergency assistance and reconstruction following a strong earthquake on the island of Java in 2006. Many earthquake victims survived but with serious disabilities. These people, mostly arm or leg amputees or quadriplegics, were socially accepted – in contrast to people born with mental or physical disabilities. Pro-

jects in the areas of living space, health, social care and employment led not only to the rehabilitation of people with disabilities acquired following the earthquake but also initiated a process affecting the entire society which could lead to the integration and inclusion of all disabled people.

With its reconstruction programmes, Caritas Germany strives not only to restore pre-disaster conditions but also to improve prevailing conditions and decrease vulnerability in future disasters. Reconstruction offers communities affected by a disaster a chance to learn from past mistakes and emerge stronger from the crisis. Reconstruction can begin as soon as victims' survival has been ensured through self-help and aid from the outside. The type of aid differs according to the type of disaster, its victims and the phase of reconstruction²³.

This might include:

- Aid to restart agricultural production, for example by providing seeds, agricultural tools and food for work programmes.
- Replacement of destroyed equipment for fishermen and craftsmen and livelihood assistance to create new sources of income.
- Self-help aid to reconstruct housing.
- Aid to reconstruct destroyed social institutions and social services.
- Aid for returning refugees or for their resettlement as soon as the political situation allows.
- Educational opportunities for children and adults; apprenticeship programmes for refugees.
- Support for the integration of especially vulnerable population groups, through the reconstruction and restoration of social structures, including support of CBR programmes / Community Based Rehabilitation for the disabled).

In this way, Caritas Germany takes into account disaster victims through many phases of aid: from initial disaster relief to the restoration and strengthening of the local physical infrastructure and social structures; from the first sack of rice to training as an electrician; from emergency housing to the integration of the disabled.

²³ See also: Caritas – ein weltweites Netzwerk für Menschen in Not (Available only in German)

2.3.1. Rebuilding Homes and Social Infrastructure

Basic principles for Caritas' commitment in the area of home reconstruction following disasters are human dignity, solidarity, subsidiarity, justice, advocacy and sustainability. If these principles are applied to construction and housing, it is apparent that Caritas primarily seeks to be a professional service provider and "facilitator" of reconstruction programmes and seeks not to implement itself. Caritas actively involves the affected people in the entire process of reconstruction. This should support not only personal responsibility and ownership but also learning and education. A division of responsibilities ensues in which the affected people take over the role of actors in this system. They are the authoritative parties for conception and planning and decide on project design. Caritas Germany offers professional assistance and remains responsible for ensuring compliance to minimal standards, non-negotiable conditions and working principles as well as providing earmarked funds and overseeing the project management. These basic working principles of Caritas are also binding for implementing local partner organisations.

Providing emergency shelters, rebuilding homes and social infrastructure as well as sustainably restoring settlement structures are of central importance in disaster relief. Under extremely rough conditions, many victims need adequate housing immediately. In recent years, together with its partners, Caritas has supported complex and multifaceted aid programmes worldwide to restore homes destroyed by armed conflict or disaster and has implemented some of these programmes under its own responsibility. In Haiti and Indonesia, reconstruction projects following the earthquakes were accompanied by educational measures on "earthquake-proof construction". In Bangladesh, meeting halls that can also be used as raised shelters during flooding were built in cooperation with affected communities. Reconstruction, often linked with disaster prevention, is always a means of supporting social infrastructure.

Through its numerous programmes, Caritas Germany has gained many practical findings from its work and has developed and tested different instruments for project work. A specialist paper by Caritas Germany about "Emergency Shelters and Housing Construction Programs in Disaster Areas"²⁴ clarifies central concepts, explains the meaning of Caritas Germany-specific tasks and courses of action and expounds on some distinctive features and problematic issues.

2.3.2 Psychosocial Support

Many victims feel helpless and powerless following disasters. Their basic assumptions about life have been shattered. They suffer sadness and loss and undergo traumatic experiences with short and long-term consequences. But this state of helplessness and powerlessness need not become chronic. A new start and reconstruction should be possible. This is the main challenge of aid measures: how can the victims quickly influence their own lives and find a way out of their state of victimhood?

Caritas' Guiding Principles for Psychosocial Support

Psychosocial support begins at the crossroads between outer conditions (characterised by a crisis situation following a natural disaster or war / post-war situation), stressful interpersonal relationships (family, clan, ethnic group) and personal disposition (resources, resilience²⁵, age, gender, health, education).

The main focus of Caritas Germany's psychosocial support programmes are needy, suffering, weak, disabled or disadvantaged people. With these programmes, Caritas Germany strives to help the victims and recognise the apparent opportunities in a new start following a disaster. With the help of all participants (partners, victims, aid workers), new models of development cooperation should be established as soon as possible following a crisis situation. Any material and structural aid is only as effective as the ability of the victims themselves to use these opportunities. Traumatized, helpless people cannot take advantage of aid offers and are not in a position to participate in reconstruction and reorientation.

²⁴ See also: Caritas: Fachkonzept. Notunterkünfte und Wohnungsbauprogramme in Katastrophengebieten. Wie viel Wohnung braucht der Mensch? 2009. (Available only in German)

²⁵ Resilience refers to the ability of people to adapt to and quickly recover from acute shock or chronic stress due to unstable situations, crises, conflicts and extreme natural disasters without endangering mid and long-term life perspectives. (According to DFID: Defining Disaster Resilience, 2011)

Experience has shown that the long-term effects of unresolved trauma become apparent in increasing domestic violence, drug consumption and chronic illness. Violence which develops into an increasing spiral is also an expression of such unresolved psychological situations. Therefore, psychosocial support is always a contribution to a country's peace and reconciliation and Caritas' concrete contribution towards long-term stability and the sustainable improvement of the situation following a disaster.

Two fields of Caritas Germany's work in psychosocial rehabilitation are derived from the above-named prerequisites:

- Personal, direct assistance as psychosocial intervention and
- Structural assistance which creates the outer framework conditions for this.

Offers such as the following are available for victims:

- Urgent psychological care
- Awareness training and Psycho-Education
- Longer term psycho-social rehabilitation through counselling
- Psychological, psycho-social and socio-cultural intervention that caters to the particular culture with the aim of avoiding long-term consequences
- Support and self-help groups
- Set up of support structures that simultaneously encompass a (disaster) prevention function.

In addition to its direct assistance, Caritas Germany also approaches the area of psychosocial rehabilitation as an interdisciplinary topic for all areas of work with the aim of re-establishing personal autonomy and supporting human dignity.

With its structural aid, Caritas Germany develops organisational structures together with its partners and victims in order to offer the victims their own scope for action and active participation. An example of this is the psychosocial project "Window for Life"²⁶, which supports traumatised victims of the war in Afghanistan for which Caritas Germany set up and organised counselling and psychosocial support.

2.4. Food Assistance and Food Security

Even though the percentage of starving people has been on the decline in recent years, the absolute number of starving people is still high. According to current estimates by the FAO, 870 million people starve i.e. one in eight worldwide.²⁷

For Caritas Germany, nutrition and starvation are important topics within the context of ensuring survival and keeping people healthy during disasters. People in poor countries often suffer from malnutrition or underfeeding especially in those countries that are additionally struck by disaster. This results in greater susceptibility to disease and a higher diet-related mortality / morbidity rate. Furthermore, disaster often limits the victims' ability to care for themselves so that they must often rely temporarily on food aid from the outside in order to survive.

Food Security means that at all times, everyone has access to an adequate amount of food, which covers their daily nutritional needs for a healthy and active life.²⁸ Instruments of food security aim for this long-term goal. Every individual has the right to sufficient and balanced food. This not only involves the constant supply of food but also a stable income and access to markets.

In emergency situations, Caritas provides food aid in order to reduce the effects of a rapid onset disaster. In this case, food aid has the short-term goal of guaranteeing the survival of as many people as possible as well as providing transitional aid to set up sustainable development structures in the mid-term. The corresponding budget item of the Germany Ministry of Foreign Affairs an important contribution to this end. Caritas provides targeted food assistance and supports refugee camps especially during natural disasters and armed conflicts. Caritas only implements food assistance programmes supplementary to government and UN aid (especially WFP and FAO). In order to provide comprehensive support, food assistance is supplemented with non-food items (NFI) for daily use.

²⁶ See: Window for Life – Ein Fenster zum Leben. Die psychosoziale Arbeit von Caritas international in Kabul, Freiburg 2006. (Available in German only)

²⁷ WFP: Hunger worldwide – Numbers and Facts (<http://de.wfp.org/hunger-statistik>) and FAO: The State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2012.

²⁸ World Food Summit, 1996

If possible, Caritas considers the long-term perspective in the early planning phase, even in pure food emergency programmes which are implemented to overcome an urgent and immediate emergency situation. Important aspects here comprise in particular the prevention of longer term dependence on food aid, respect for the local culture and the dignity of the beneficiaries. Being deeply rooted in local structures, Caritas strives to support the existing self-help potential of the affected population together with its local partners, no matter how small that potential may be. Personal contribution is integrated wherever possible.

As part of a comprehensive programme approach, Caritas also uses food assistance to reach especially vulnerable beneficiaries in order to facilitate access to or to address important issues, such as gender awareness, HIV/AIDS, environment and children. Caritas implements food assistance as a carefully planned part of a comprehensive strategy for long-term food security, through integration into Livelihood Projects and as an incentive to further education and training. At the same time, Caritas takes action against the “dumping of agricultural products” in developing countries and the distribution of surplus from developed countries under the guise of humanitarian assistance. In emergency situations, Caritas purchases locally or regionally and procures surpluses from other parts of the country or neighbouring countries. This reduces not only transportation costs but also strengthens regional and national agriculture markets while respecting local eating habits.

Caritas implements specific mid and long-term food security measures to support those parts of the population suffering from starvation so that they are able to care for themselves in the future. This especially concerns transitional development assistance measures for which the BMZ has a special subsidy scheme.³⁰

As laid down in the development-oriented LRRD approach, the distribution of seeds, fertilisers and tools has proved to be effective in many Caritas emergency assistance projects. Likewise, other income-generating measures and cash-for-work or food-for-work programmes are examples of offering

Food Assistance is a measure to counter starvation and nutritional crises and to improve the nutritional situation in the short to mid-term. It usually involves the distribution of externally financed food or food purchased regionally and locally using money from donor countries. The timely start of food assistance, ensuring continuity in supply, distribution in adequate amounts as well as the balanced compilation of the food (food baskets²⁹) are of utmost importance. Important criteria for successful food assistance during disasters are thorough analysis, good planning and logistics and access to the needy.

food-insecure households support work, which not only strengthens their purchasing power but also gives them flexibility and self-esteem. Appropriate food security measures continue to consist of projects that improve infrastructure and in doing so, secure market access for agricultural products. “Food for asset creation”³¹ is another example and is frequently supplemented by the provision of seeds and training.

2.5 Forgotten Disasters

Thanks to the generous support of donors and the public, Caritas Germany has provided support in all major disasters in recent years. However, there are still a number of “forgotten disasters” that the general public seldom notices and that receive insufficient financial support through public funds. In spite of limited financial support, it is a special concern of Caritas Germany to address this imbalance and purposefully focus on these forgotten crisis. Therefore, Caritas Germany finances with funds under its direct control, mainly resulting from un-earmarked donations, worldwide measures to address forgotten disasters.

Caritas Germany especially focuses on protracted crises. Typical examples of these medial “forgotten disasters” are recurring food crises in the Sahel as well as refugee crises in Sudan or the Democratic Republic of Congo. Often, small-scale disasters such as flooding in Paraguay, hurricanes in

²⁹ The amount and compilation of food rations should correlate to the guideline values in the SPHERE Handbook.

³⁰ Transitional Development Assistance (Entwicklungsfördernde und Strukturbildende Übergangshilfe – ESÜH)

³¹ Food for work links food aid with the implementation of public work programmes or income-producing measures in order to create added social value which goes beyond salaries.

Central America or droughts in Central Asia are neither noticed by the media nor considered for (public) aid funds. What these crises all have in common is that the reason for their sudden onset originates in structural problems which are challenging to address. As a rule, short-term measures alone are insufficient to ensure sustainable improvement. Therefore, Caritas Germany concludes that an integrated long-term programme approach is essential to address the underlying root causes.

The most frequent issues in complex crisis situations are structural poverty and chronic malnourishment - independent from season and crop yields - of certain parts of the population. Often, secure access to food and high prices are the main problems which affect the poorest of the poor. Social redistribution problems are aggravated by poor government leadership or the absence of government structures. In addition, armed conflicts often further deteriorate the situation, for example, in Somalia. Here a combination of short-term humanitarian assistance and long-term oriented structural support is essential. Not only in its public relations but also through persistent advocacy work aimed at public supporters, Caritas Germany stands up for this approach in order to increase donor commitment for complex crises.

3. GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS OF DISASTER RELIEF

3.1 General Principles of Caritas Germany

Impartiality, neutrality and independence are the most important and generally valid principles of humanitarian assistance. Caritas Germany strictly adheres to these principles. They are anchored in international humanitarian law and draw their strength from the fundamental moral principle of **humanity**. In modern form, these principles are included in a number of national and international agreements and standards of humanitarian assistance to which Caritas Germany has committed itself.

Impartiality means that it is need which determines who receives assistance. Caritas Germany helps all people in need regardless of their ethnicity, religion or political views. The principle of **neutrality** means that in a situation of conflict, no one takes sides with one of the parties involved. However, this does not mean that Caritas closes its eyes to collective injustice and violations of human rights. Caritas only takes sides, as such, in order to engage in advocacy efforts to protect victims of violent conflict. A further essential prerequisite for Caritas' humanitarian assistance is its **independence** from political or economic interests. In its aid efforts, Caritas is obligated to preserve its autonomy and declares the humanitarian mandate its single guiding principle.

3.1.1 The Code of Conduct

The "Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief"³² was concluded in 1994 and is supported by approximately 300 humanitarian organisations. The Code of Conduct is a behavioural codex based on the Humanitarian Charter. Its underlying catalogue of values and norms is recognised within the humanitarian community as its general ethical and legal basis for action. Its key element is the humanitarian imperative which states that humanitarian aid must be solely oriented on the demands of the emergency. "What is meant is that in emergency situations, it is the right of all people in all countries of the world to receive humanitari-

an aid as well as their responsibility to provide it."³³ Furthermore, basic principles of humanitarian assistance such as impartiality and independence are explicitly outlined.

The following is a shortened version of the 10 key principles and summarises the central statements of the Code of Conduct:

1. The humanitarian imperative comes first.
2. Aid is given regardless of the race, creed, or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
3. Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
4. We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.
5. We shall respect culture and custom.
6. We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.
7. Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
8. Relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
9. We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
10. In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified humans, not hopeless objects.

3.1.2 The Twelve Basic Rules of Humanitarian Assistance Abroad

The humanitarian organisations and federal ministries belonging to the "Humanitarian Aid Coordinating Committee" (see also Section 4.4.4) have agreed upon "Twelve Basic Rules of Humanitarian Aid Abroad". These basic rules are essentially identical to the norms and values defined in the Code of Conduct.

See: http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Aussenpolitik/Humanitaere-Hilfe/Grundregeln_node.html

³² See also: Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations in Disaster Relief (<http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/code-of-conduct/code-english.pdf>)
³³ VENRO Working Paper No. 14: Humanitarian aid put to the test. Principles, criteria and indicators to ensure and monitor quality in humanitarian aid, August 2005

3.1.3 The European Consensus on Humanitarian Assistance

In the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, the European Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission are obligated to collaborate closely with one another in order to implement the cooperative vision of the European Union (EU) on humanitarian aid as stated in the Consensus. The EU and its member states are obligated to adhere to the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence as well as to respect international humanitarian law as stated in the Consensus. EU humanitarian action aims to save lives, reduce and prevent human suffering and preserve human dignity. The Consensus emphasises the significance of the different implementing partners that carry out humanitarian aid for the EU such as the UN, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other humanitarian NGOs.

See: http://www.caritas-europa.org/module/FileLib/Consensus_en.pdf

3.1.4 The SPHERE Project

A group of NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, launched the Sphere Project in 1997 to develop a set of universal minimum standards in core areas of humanitarian assistance. The project aims to improve the quality of assistance provided to people affected by disasters, and to enhance the accountability of the humanitarian system in disaster response. More than 4,000 employees from 400 organisations in 80 countries contributed to the development of the Sphere Handbook. Its first edition was published in 2000. Key elements are the Humanitarian Charter as well as Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response in all sectors relevant to humanitarian assistance (water supply and sanitation, nutrition, shelter and health services). Furthermore, cross-sector topics such as gender awareness/empowerment, psychosocial support, HIV/AIDS, environment, Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction as well as vulnerable groups (children, the elderly, and the disabled) were included. A fully revised edition was published in 2011.

Sphere is based on two core beliefs: first, that all possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of calamity and conflict; and second, that those affected by disaster have a right to a dignified life and therefore a right to assistance. Sphere is not just a handbook but a process of collaboration. It incorporates an obligation to quality and transparency, involves a broad process of collaboration and is an expression of commitment to quality and accountability. The international umbrella organisation, Caritas Internationalis, is an active member of the Sphere Project Management Committee.

See: www.sphereproject.org

3.2 Professionalism and Quality in Humanitarian Assistance

As described above, Caritas Germany's emergency assistance is based on clear principles, criteria and indicators to ensure the quality of its work. Caritas Germany has contributed to this development, in close collaboration with other NGOs and under the umbrella organization, VENRO.³⁴ Furthermore, Caritas' efforts in accountability, transparency and constant monitoring are reflected in the "Guidelines on Combating Fraud and Corruption in the Project Work of Caritas Germany" (see also Section 3.5). Caritas Germany is in constant dialogue with the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) about standards, concepts and strategies related to professional humanitarian assistance.

Professionalism is a necessary precondition for the implementation of the theoretical-conceptual principles, to which Caritas has pledged to adhere. Caritas Germany's publication "Charity requires Quality" clearly states that the sole intention to assist disaster victims is not sufficient to provide effective emergency assistance. In a global environment in which development approaches and practical challenges face competitive grant proposals, donor interests and political interests, Caritas measures itself against international quality standards and continually develops the quality of its disaster relief in order to do justice to changing global conditions and satisfy the increasing expectations of international institutional donors.³⁵

³⁴ See also: VENRO Working Paper No. 14: Humanitarian aid put to the test. Principles, criteria and indicators to ensure and monitor quality in humanitarian aid. August 2005

³⁵ Caritas: Barmherzigkeit braucht Qualität – Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der Humanitären Hilfe, Freiburg 2007.

In this paper, the concepts of quality and professionalism are sometimes used synonymously.

³⁶ See also: Common Statement. Diakonie Emergency assistance. Caritas, 2004.

A prerequisite for this is an adequate emergency response capacity that includes a central administration, decentralised local structures and mobile operative field units. Professional personnel management and qualified personnel as well as adequate technical equipment (vehicles, logistics, and means of communication) and information/communication structures are just as important. Professional operations also require sufficient financial resources. Furthermore, issues concerning needs assessment, coordination and impact assessment must be clarified.

Caritas Germany's distinctive quality standards require that professional action in humanitarian assistance is not only limited to the operative i.e. technical dimension but also includes ethical and political obligations. Caritas Germany acts in accordance with the agreed minimal ethical standards whose foundation is always to respect the dignity of the affected people. "People in need are also subjects of their own actions with their own dignity and the ability to shape their lives themselves", as stated in the cooperative declaration between Caritas Germany and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe. "We see not only the needs of disaster victims but also take their dignity, their responsibility for themselves and their communities and their aspirations seriously".³⁶ Types and methods of support are oriented towards preserving or restoring the dignity of people in need. However, humanitarian assistance does not take place within a political vacuum. Professionalism also means contemplating the political dimension of our own actions and countering political monopolisation and exploitation at all levels.

3.3 Emergency Assistance Procedures at Caritas Germany

3.3.1 LRRD – Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development

The LRRD approach is an integrated concept that bridges the gap between long-term development assistance and short-term emergency assistance. The LRRD approach is consistent with Caritas Germany's conception of itself as a humanitarian organisation and is in tune with its operating methods and specific procedures. The EU Commission states the advantages of LRRD in a nutshell: "Better 'development' can reduce the need for emergency assistance; better 'relief' can contribute to development; and better 'rehabilitation' can ease the transition between the two."³⁷

LRRD is a reaction to the fact that there is often a large gap between emergency and development aid.³⁸ In practice, a bridge between the two is not easily built. Bridging this gap is more likely to succeed if emergency assistance considers coping strategies right from the beginning and incorporates the victims' need to restore their livelihoods.

LRRD refers to the gradual replacement of emergency assistance through rehabilitation programmes which endeavour to restore the economic and social situation of the victims and ease the transition to mid and long-term development cooperation. The LRRD concept strives to thwart the outbreak of new crises and optimise the impact of aid measures.

In this regard, practical experience has shown that LRRD-phases do not follow a linear model but often occur simultaneously - especially in situations of violent conflict. Transitions to development cooperation are marked by recurring setbacks due to reoccurring eruptions of violence. The concept of the "LRRD Continuum" shows that short and long-term support run alongside one another.

³⁷ European Commission: Communication from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: Linking relief, rehabilitation and development. 1996

³⁸ See also: VENRO, Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (VENRO Working paper No. 17). 2006

³⁹ Under secondary effects we mean events which are not directly related to the disaster but which can exacerbate the original impact of the disaster on an already vulnerable population. For example, the outbreak of epidemics due to sanitary conditions following earthquakes or avoidable death due to insufficient treatment of wounds.

⁴⁰ See also Section 1.3 Principle of Partnership and Self-help Approach

Top priorities of Caritas Germany's emergency assistance are the protection of lives in the aftermath of disasters, the alleviation of victims' most urgent needs and to ensure that the secondary effects³⁹ of the disaster do not result in even worse consequences for the victims than the disaster itself. This is more likely to be successful if the victims and well-rooted local organisations take on a proactive role in overcoming the disaster. When conditions allow, Caritas works closely with local partners and local Caritas organisations are its partners of preference.⁴⁰ An advantage of this is that they are present on the ground even before a disaster has struck and are familiar with local conditions. Moreover, a local organisation will remain active long after the initial aid phase has ended. The crisis can offer a chance for structural change and a sustainable improvement of livelihoods.

Caritas Germany ensures the active participation of vulnerable groups in the planning and implementation of projects. Often this can be accomplished through existing church or other local (self-help) structures. Emergency projects can build on their experiences and knowledge of local conditions and in turn become further developed and strengthened in the course of the project.

Caritas Germany also emphasises the participative character of initial and emergency assistance that – as a rule – is done by the local partner and begins immediately following the disaster. Caritas Germany's initial emergency assistance measures are geared towards the entire affected community and include, for instance, basic supply of drinking water, food and the provision of temporary shelters. The first components of broader emergency assistance programmes are often organised with the local partners and the local communities within hours of the disaster, with the financial support of Caritas Germany and following well established procedures.

In situations in which Caritas Germany feels the need to take direct action (for example because the local partner has insufficient capacity to address the disaster), Caritas Germany still adheres to the principles of partnership, community-based and sustainable assistance. Local partners as well as benefi-

ciaries maintain a proactive role as far as possible. Caritas Germany aims to lay the foundation for personal responsibility during the rehabilitation phase following emergency assistance and respects and supports the ability of the victims to help themselves. Even when Caritas provides relief goods, this approach to emergency assistance must be supported through appropriate choice of the relief goods and the chosen mode of distribution.⁴¹

Against the background of this approach and the LRRD concept, Caritas Germany's projects are implemented in various phases in which support is provided. Caritas makes clear distinctions between: emergency assistance – rehabilitation - development cooperation – disaster prevention.

This model serves as a guiding principle for Caritas to plan projects in the named categories and in this way work as closely as possible with local partners and the affected population. In reality, these phases are inextricably linked and cannot be separated. Measures to restore livelihoods often overlap with the continuation of pure emergency measures which stabilise the victims' situation (e.g. during food shortages) and disaster prevention measures have to be mainstreamed with development cooperation or reconstruction (e.g. setting up an early warning system).

Because of Caritas Germany's close links to local structures at community and national levels, disaster preparedness plays an important role within the context of LRRD.⁴² In many regions with a high risk of disaster, Caritas supports local efforts to reduce vulnerability to disasters, lessen the impact of disasters and empower people affected by disasters to help themselves. Disaster preparedness projects are an intangible part of Caritas Germany's and its partners' professional community-based social work. Ideally, such projects are already implemented before disaster strikes. However acute emergencies often trigger disaster preparedness projects and thus initiate change within society or incorporate existing forms of self-organisation within local communities. Such processes require long-term commitment as well as continuing, professional supervision adapted to local conditions and ca-

⁴¹ In this way, e.g. following an earthquake, large tents are appropriate for use as a central gathering point for instance.
⁴² See also Section 2.2 Disaster Risk Management in Humanitarian Aid

pabilities. Caritas Germany and its partners are well-experienced to provide the necessary support.

The LRRD concept as practised by Caritas Germany builds on cross-sector diversity. This is a particular quality feature when paired with programme demands for long-term comprehensive partner relations.

3.3.2 Impact Management and Evaluation

Caritas Germany welcomes discussion about the effectiveness of its emergency assistance. As a learning organisation, Caritas subjects itself to critical performance review in order to realistically estimate its own contribution to sustainable and efficient humanitarian assistance: *“Collaborating with local partners, we want to shape our assistance effectively and economically. During rapid onset natural disasters, we want to provide survival assistance that is fast, flexible and willing to incur risks. It should not debilitate suffering*

people but instead support them as subjects of their own actions to once again master their own lives. We want to provide prevention strategies that enable the population to better protect itself from disasters and build up long-term, sustainable living conditions.

In doing so, we are aware of the limits of our possibilities and we must – like other humanitarian organizations – experience that projects can also fail: A reconstructed health center does not automatically lead to improved health care for the poorest in the region – the chains of cause and effect are too long and complex in situations that we and our partners can only partially influence. Together with our partners, we have also gained experience from past projects, which helps us to continually improve our work. We do, however, find it essential to do this more systematically and to make a more concerted effort to question project impact.”⁴⁴

Support processes of international cooperation⁴³

	Emergency Assistance	Rehabilitation	Development Cooperation	Disaster Risk Management, Prevention
Cause	Acute emergency	Damaged infrastructure	Structural instability	Increased vulnerability, high-risk areas
Our support goals	Ensure survival	Reestablishment of livelihoods.	Support processes of sustainable development	Sustainably lessen risks which threaten livelihoods
Timeframe	Short-term	Mid-term	Long-term	Mid to long-term goals
Activities	Supplying drinking water and food Temporary shelter Medical aid Assistance for refugees	Reintegration measures Reconstruction Support self-sufficiency capacities	Counseling and further education Small loans	Build up and strengthen the ability to recognize, assess and evaluate risks Strengthen local crisis management systems

⁴³ Source: Caritas and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe. Impact Orientation in Humanitarian Aid, 2013
⁴⁴ Ebd.

Caritas endeavours to analyse the intended positive as well as non-intended negative impact of its work. The aim of impact analysis is to further develop project work and operational tools as well as external and internal communication. Ultimately, it is about learning from experiences and mistakes.⁴⁵

Furthermore, evaluations are increasingly important for institutional donors in Germany and the EU to which Caritas Germany wants to prove the positive impact of its projects and satisfy their expectations. This is why Caritas pursues the systematic use of impact analysis in emergency assistance – from fieldwork to informative project aims and indicators up to corresponding monitoring and evaluation systems as well as the further qualification of its employees and project partners. In step with actual practice, Caritas Germany and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe have developed a concept that contemplates the special mandate of emergency assistance.⁴⁶ It focuses on clearly stating what impact should be analysed in both organisations' humanitarian aid and by what means. In this way, Caritas Germany endeavours to establish the basis for impact-oriented action.

Furthermore, Caritas Germany has introduced a binding framework for evaluating its projects in its Concept Paper - Evaluation.⁴⁷

3.3.3 The Do-No-Harm Approach in Disaster Situations

A large part of humanitarian assistance is implemented in regions with potential, past or even ongoing conflicts. There are clearly defined methodical requirements in development work to avoid non-intended negative impacts on a (potential) conflict situation (Do-No-Harm Approach).⁴⁸ Caritas Germany strives to implement comparative standards of conflict sensitivity in humanitarian assistance. Broad-based studies on the impact that emergency assistance measures have on chosen conflict situations prove that any humanitarian and development intervention always becomes part of the conflict situation and can influence it both positively (peace promoting) or

negatively (conflict escalating). The demands of time, efficiency and effectiveness on humanitarian assistance complicate the conduct of a comprehensive analysis in advance of an emergency operation.

Caritas is committed to the Do-No-Harm (DNH) approach in its humanitarian assistance. Therefore, it strives to use chosen instruments of conflict-sensitive project management in addition to the usual elements of project management. In their concept paper "Impact Orientation in Humanitarian Aid,"⁴⁹ Caritas and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe included the Do No Harm check as an instrument of impact analysis and as an alternative to the analysis of negative impacts.

With the DNH-Check, Caritas Germany seeks to attain the following objectives in its humanitarian assistance:

- Reduce the risk of non-intended negative impacts of emergency measures on conflicts or tensions within society.
- Define intended objectives and actual impact more clearly and examine their reciprocal interaction within the corresponding situation.
- Gain further knowledge of the conditions under which humanitarian assistance takes place, especially of the various stakeholders and interest groups and their roles within the society as well as the way in which they can best be integrated into humanitarian assistance measures.
- Thoroughly embed relief efforts into the societal, socio-cultural and structural context.
- Support current or upcoming changes in society.
- Increase the sustainability of aid measures so that their conflict-sensitive format builds the basis for extension in line with longer term structural development cooperation in terms of LRRD.

45 See also Section 3.3.3 The „Do-No-Harm“ Approach in Disaster Situations

46 Caritas Germany and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe. Impact Orientation in Humanitarian Aid, 2013

47 Caritas Germany, Fachkonzept Evaluation, Freiburg 2011. (Available in Germany only)

48 See also: <http://www.donoharm.info/>

49 Caritas and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe. Concept Paper. Impact Orientation in Humanitarian Aid, 2013, p. 10.

3.4. Cooperation and Partnerships

3.4.1 Our Project Partners

An important attribute and one of Caritas' strengths is worldwide cooperation with a network of local partners. Over the years, close cooperation with local partners, who speak the language of the affected people and live in the same cultural context, has guaranteed an exceptionally close relationship with local communities. In this way, effective emergency assistance, but often also longer term and sustainable development measures, can emerge. In close collaboration with local partners Caritas develops solutions and concepts to provide effective and contextualised humanitarian assistance. Caritas Germany also handles financial resources, advisory and support functions and carries long-term responsibility for the project. Preferred partners are members of the Caritas Confederation. Nevertheless, Caritas closely cooperates and coordinates with other humanitarian organisations in order to address social injustices worldwide.⁵⁰

3.4.2 The Cooperation within the Caritas Internationalis Network

In emergency assistance, Caritas Germany operates closely with the worldwide network, Caritas Internationalis. In this confederation, currently 164 national Caritas associations are organised according to common statutes in order to provide humanitarian assistance worldwide and implement long-term development projects. Joint agreement with other coordinating structures at national and church levels increases the efficiency of its work. Agreement and coordination between the independent national Caritas associations primarily takes place through the secretariat of Caritas Internationalis in Rome and its seven regional offices. For the German Caritas Association (DCV), collaboration with the regional structure Caritas Europa and its 46 members is of great importance.⁵¹

3.4.3 Coordination and Cooperation of Emergency Assistance at National and International Levels

Caritas Germany works closely with a number of church-related and non-denominational humanitarian organisations at national and international levels. Objectives include strategic coordination during humanitarian disasters, joint advocacy on humanitarian topics and the creation of synergies in projects and programming. Many years of partnership associate Caritas with the humanitarian organisation of the Protestant Church, Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe. Besides mutual support of emergency assistance projects and cooperation on operative issues, both organisations jointly advocate in the name of the most vulnerable. In a common statement, both organisations affirm their partnership principle: *"We hold the same views based on common ethical standards not only in our aid programs but also in the public eye and with regard to policy. We follow the same approaches and aims and endeavour to cooperate with other humanitarian organizations in a coordinated manner."*⁵²

Caritas Germany is an active member of VENRO, a voluntary association of about 120 German aid organisations and funding providers for emergency assistance and development cooperation. Important for the work of Caritas is VENRO's working group for Humanitarian Aid which Caritas participated in the founding of and into which the most important financial donors of humanitarian assistance are incorporated. Through VENRO, Caritas Germany participates in discourse with civil society and politics on current issues related to humanitarian assistance. These issues are jointly represented vis-à-vis the German Government. However, concrete project-oriented coordination does not take place at VENRO. At the European level, Caritas Germany coordinates its activities through the NGO umbrella organisations VOICE (Voluntary Organizations in Cooperation in Emergencies) and CONCORD (European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development). Internationally, Caritas cooperates with numerous multilateral organisations such as the World Food Program (WFP) of the United Nations, the High Commissioner for Refugees of the United Nations (UNHCR), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as well as with local, national and international NGOs.

⁵⁰ See also: Caritas, Leitbild, Vision, Erläuterung der Vision, strategische Handlungsfelder, Freiburg 2012 (Available in German only)

⁵¹ See also: Caritas: Ein weltweites Netzwerk für Menschen in Not. A worldwide network for people in need, Freiburg 2000 (Available in German only)

⁵² See also: Common Statement. Caritas. Diakonie Emergency assistance, Freiburg 2004.

3.4.4 Public Sector Partners for Cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance

Caritas Germany is an active member of the “Coordinating Committee for Humanitarian Aid”, a forum for discourse and coordination between the German Government and humanitarian NGOs as well as other institutions that are active in the field of humanitarian assistance. The Coordinating Committee meets regularly to discuss basic topics of humanitarian assistance and convenes on an ad-hoc basis on major disasters at the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Together with an NGO representative, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs chairs the committee, which is also responsible for humanitarian assistance within the German Government.

The task force for the emergency assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs administers funds from the German Government for humanitarian assistance under Title 687 72, “Humanitarian Aid outside of Development Aid”. Humanitarian assistance funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs aims to ensure the survival of disaster-affected people and to address their immediate needs. The special needs of the most vulnerable groups are especially addressed. Assistance is provided on the basis of humanitarian distress caused by natural disasters, armed conflict or lengthy, complex crises.

Caritas Germany is in regular contact with the BMZ regarding the budgetary title “Transitional Development Assistance” (ESÜH). At the EU, the Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department of the European Commission (ECHO) has provided financial funds for humanitarian assistance since 1992 and is one of Caritas’ major institutional donors. Through various forums at European level, Caritas participates in regular dialogue with ECHO on further development of the EU humanitarian assistance strategy.

3.4.5 Cooperation and Distribution of Tasks between Catholic Assistance Organisations and Other Institutions

Caritas Germany chairs an emergency assistance committee called KANK (Catholic Committee for Emergency Assistance) consisting of German Catholic aid organisations. Coordination meetings are held regularly under the aegis of Caritas. Caritas Germany has a cooperative agreement with Misereor, the German Catholic Bishops’ Organization for development cooperation, to coordinate the transition between emergency assistance and development assistance. Caritas also has a long-standing partnership with Malteser International.

Caritas Germany also uses funds from the German Bishop’s Conference to implement its disaster relief projects. The Association of German Dioceses supports the work of church aid organisations with funds from church tax. Caritas Germany receives an annual fixed grant from this fund for emergency assistance projects and for programmes following disasters and the subsequent reconstruction phase. In addition, other Dioceses and religious communities support the work of Caritas on a regular basis.

Donations cover a large part of Caritas Germany’s financial resources and are a prerequisite for equal standing with public cooperation partners. With those funds under its direct control, Caritas Germany is in a position to operate independently of public donors and is in a position to decline funding if it would compromise Caritas Germany’s neutrality.

3.5 Finances – Transparency and the Fight against Corruption

Private donations as well as public and church grants are the financial base through which Caritas Germany funds emergency assistance projects. The basic principle for the work of Caritas is trust. Donors trust that Caritas Germany uses all donations to implement the stated humanitarian and development goals of Caritas Germany and that these are efficiently

directed for the benefit of the most vulnerable. Although cooperation with local partners is based on reciprocal trust, Caritas project management takes necessary precautions to ensure that all funds are used efficiently and transparently and for the intended purpose (e.g. earmarked donations).

Especially in emergency assistance operations – where substantial amounts of money are implemented under time pressure – handling these funds requires sensitivity and specific measures for close monitoring. Caritas Germany's accounting regulations and procedures ensure the necessary transparency and accountability. Each step – from receipt of funds up to Caritas' use of funds – is clearly documented and audited both internally and externally.

Caritas Germany is obligated to observe the principles for administration, expenditure and accounting of funds that are laid down in the Common Financial Standards and binding for the international Caritas network. Moreover, as a member of the NGO umbrella organisation VENRO, Caritas Germany is required to observe the behavioural codex "Transparency, Organizational Leadership and Control" adopted in December 2008.

For the award of contracts and benefits, e.g. in the procurement of emergency goods or the deployment of auditors and counsellors, Caritas Germany adheres to international regulations, which correspond to those in public administration. A procurement handbook developed by Caritas defines binding internal procedures.

3.5.1 Monitoring and Accounting, Administration and Publicity Expenditures

Caritas Germany regularly reports on the use of entrusted funds, for instance in its annual financial accounting reports. In addition, the annual report publishes information on the type of assistance provided, the sources of funding and the spending for administration and advertising. In addition to its own internal control mechanisms, Caritas Germany's finan-

ces are subject to various external audits e.g. by the German government and the EU, among others. Regarding public relations and donor advertising, Caritas is obligated to fulfil ethical standards as stated in the binding guidelines of VENRO⁵³.

Administrative and advertising expenditures refer to all expenses which cannot be clearly ascribed to tax exemption. Nevertheless, these expenses are essential and reasonable for the work of Caritas Germany. The extent of administrative and advertising costs is an important indicator which provides private and public donors with information on how Caritas uses entrusted funds, what percentage of such funds reaches the beneficiaries and how efficiently Caritas Germany operates.⁵⁴ According to the German Central Institute for Social Issues (DZI), administrative and advertising costs under 10 % are considered low. At Caritas Germany, these expenditures account for approximately 8 % of the annual budget. durchschnitt bei ca. acht Prozent.

3.5.2 Fighting Corruption in the Work of Caritas

Measures to fight fraud and corruption are part of the provisions met for a transparent and responsible use of entrusted funds. Emergency assistance is especially vulnerable to fraud and corruption because these programmes are often implemented in settings with corrupt structures. Furthermore, the programmes are often carried out under pressure and in challenging circumstances (e.g. armed conflict, post-disaster situations). In addition, the sheer volume of financial funds and aid goods required in crisis situations may lead to less accuracy in their distribution and proper use of these funds and goods.⁵⁵ Therefore, Caritas Germany has developed guiding principles that describe concrete measures and binding codes of conduct, which seek to eliminate fraud and corruption⁵⁶. These include e.g. auditing partner organisation before beginning cooperation, concluding of precise and binding project agreements, the dual control principle for decisions affecting finance and procedure, internal and external auditing, procurement controls as well as codes of conduct for employees.

⁵³ VENRO Leitlinien für Öffentlichkeitsarbeit und Spendenwerbung (Available in German only)

⁵⁴ See also: German Central Institute for Social Issues (DZI): Werbe- und Verwaltungsausgaben Spenden sammelnder Organisationen, www.dzi.de (Article available in German only).

⁵⁵ See also: Georg Cremer: Corruption and Development Aid. Confronting the Challenges, Freiburg 2008

⁵⁶ See : Caritas Germany. Guidelines on Combating Fraud and Corruption in the Project Work of Caritas Germany, Mai 2009.

3.6 Key Ethical and Political Issues in Humanitarian Assistance

3.6.1 Neutrality and Independence in Humanitarian Assistance

As described before, humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality are the paramount principles of Caritas Germany. Impartiality and neutrality are interlinked whereas impartiality and independence are prerequisites for neutrality. For Caritas Germany, neutrality is much more than a principle but rather an essential instrument to reach vulnerable people. Especially in situations of conflict, neutrality is a prerequisite for needs-oriented humanitarian assistance as well as for the security of staff and local partners. In addition, neutrality necessitates political independence and acceptance by local actors. It is therefore essential for Caritas Germany to manage the decision-making process with regard to humanitarian assistance under its own responsibility and in a way that it is need-oriented and not influenced by outside factors:

“It is our obligation as a humanitarian aid organization and because of our Christian self-image to never let considerations of security policy drive our actions. Our work complies solely with the need and distress of the people. In addition, we would jeopardize our credibility and the credibility of our partners if our actions were to take a subordinate role to foreign policy.”⁵⁷

Within the context of fragile statehood, successful humanitarian collaboration with local stakeholders is both important and a challenge as a contribution to stabilisation of the local context. For Caritas this means taking sides with local partners that help establish civil-societal groups. Caritas Germany is convinced that the stabilisation of fragile states cannot be achieved without the strong involvement of the civilian population. In this way, taking the side of the poor and needy is a Caritas mandate.

3.6.2 Civil-Military Cooperation

The relationship between humanitarian stakeholders and the military has changed dramatically in recent years. The military has increasingly involved itself in “humanitarian” measures such as rehabilitation and protection which were previously the sole domain of humanitarian organisations. As a result, increased interactions between humanitarian organisations and the military have blurred these divisions, leading to complex questions about the character of humanitarian assistance. There is an increasing tendency to incorporate “humanitarian” assistance into political and military strategies. According to this strategy, “humanitarian” assistance should reduce the impact of armed conflict on civilians, support victims of armed conflicts and restore destroyed infrastructure as well as increase the acceptance of military intervention among the civilian population. In order to achieve this goal, the military requests cooperation between humanitarian organisations and the armed forces. This tendency is reinforced by increasing political efforts to integrate humanitarian action into general security policy.⁵⁸ Consequently, Caritas Germany takes a critical view of UN Integrated Missions in which humanitarian UN organisations are subject to the same control structures as political and military components of UN peace-keeping missions.

Caritas supports and shares positions developed by VENRO and VOICE on civil-military cooperation. These positions can be summarised as follows⁵⁹: If armed forces are active during natural disasters – e.g. with logistical support or supplying technical equipment – cooperation with the military is usually unproblematic in order to provide rapid and effective support. However, during armed conflict, cooperation with the armed forces is not acceptable as they are the parties involved in the conflict, as in Kosovo or Afghanistan. A close working relationship with the military runs the risk of humanitarian assistance being politically exploited. It raises questions about the autonomy of humanitarian organisations and actually endangers humanitarian workers because the opposing side might identify them as enemy forces. For the same reasons, Caritas is sceptical regarding demands for military protection of huma-

⁵⁷ Prelate Dr. Peter Neher, President of the German Caritas Association, Speech at the annual press conference of German Caritas Association in Berlin, June 2010. (Available in German only).

⁵⁸ A detailed analysis can be found in the following publication, to which Caritas Germany was a contributor: Caritas Europe (Ed). „Bridging the Gap between Policy and Practice. based on the The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid and Humanitarian Principles. October 2011“

⁵⁹ See also: VENRO publication on this topic: Streitkräfte als humanitäre Helfer? Möglichkeiten und Grenzen zivilmilitärischer Zusammenarbeit, Bonn 2003 (Available in German only)

nitarian assistance. A strong military presence does not necessarily increase the safety of humanitarian workers. The opposite is often the case: humanitarian workers under military protection are more likely to be attacked. Military protection of humanitarian workers and projects compromises the neutrality of humanitarian organisations, causing them to lose their credibility.

3.6.3 Protection of Humanitarian Space in Conflict Regions

According to the principles of international humanitarian law and the Code of Conduct, each individual has a right to receive humanitarian assistance irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, social status, language, nationality or religion. In order to provide humanitarian assistance following natural disasters and in areas of armed conflict, safe and unimpeded access to the victims is paramount. This so-called “humanitarian space” in which humanitarian assistance is provided has a dual character. On the one hand, in terms of physical access under safe conditions to the victims of disaster and armed conflict. And on the other hand, it is part of the internationally accepted agreement that humanitarian assistance is essential and warranted e.g. through humanitarian international law. This “humanitarian space” has become more and more endangered in recent years in that:

- Governments and/or military forces have begun to operate in crisis regions and work alongside classical humanitarian organisations in international humanitarian assistance. Usually the militaries have been assigned to keep or restore peace in fragile states and their political mandates often coincide with humanitarian activities. However, according to Caritas such assignments are not compatible with humanitarian principles and create ambiguities with regard to the role of humanitarian organisations that have been working in the countries for many years.
- Conflicting parties often impede access to the victims of conflict. Limited confidence in the neutrality of humanitarian organisations or disrespect for the humanitarian principles further limits access to victims.
- Conflicting parties try to exploit or divert humanitarian assistance for their own political and military purposes and thus undermine the principles of the neutrality and independence of humanitarian assistance.
- Humanitarian workers operate in fragile or failed states in which government structures are either too weak or do not exist to guarantee security and public order (e.g. Somalia, Afghanistan, DR Congo).
- In many countries of conflict, humanitarian workers are increasingly vulnerable. They are subjected to politically-motivated and criminal assault. Today, security risks are much more difficult to predict, particularly because acts of aggression are not definitively aimed at individual organisations but instead at humanitarian workers, who represent a vaguely rejected “international community”. Murdering humanitarian workers in conflict situations also attracts media attention.
- Some governments hinder the work of humanitarian organisations by imposing unreasonable administrative obstacles in order to “manage” or influence the access of humanitarian assistance (e.g. in Myanmar, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Sri Lanka). This practice clearly violates international humanitarian law.

In its advocacy, Caritas Germany engages in the protection of humanitarian space. Simultaneously, Caritas Germany has to evaluate the operational implications of the erosion of international humanitarian law in conflict settings.

CLOSING REMARKS

The Concept Paper presented here - "Sustainable Emergency Assistance - Aid beyond the Crisis" - stands within the general context of a number of specialist publications and working papers in which Caritas Germany has taken up a position on basic issues of its work.

This concept paper on Sustainable Emergency Assistance puts an all-encompassing bracket around the entire topic of disaster relief. Some of the issues brought up in this paper have been the subject of previous in-depth discussions in specialised publications. Attention is drawn in particular to:

- Caritas international: Fachkonzept Notunterkünfte und Wohnungsbauprogramme in Katastrophengebieten. Wie viel Wohnung braucht der Mensch?, Freiburg, 2009. (Available in German only).
- Caritas Germany and Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe. Impact Orientation in Humanitarian Aid, Freiburg 2013.

The series shall be extended in spontaneous succession.

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**Concept paper Sustainable Emergency Assistance –
Assistance beyond the Crisis**
Author: Gernot Ritthaler