

Mid-Term Thematic Review: Human Security in Conflict and Emergencies

Why Did the Human Security Theme Have a Review?

AA's Accountability, Learning and Planning System (ALPS) requires all Themes to conduct an external review during the strategic plan period (2005-2010). The purpose is to deepen accountability to our stakeholders, particularly the poor and excluded people with whom we work; also to ensure that AA processes create space for innovation, and minimise bureaucracy. Human Security in Conflict and Emergencies is the first AA Theme to conduct such a Review.

How Did We Conduct the Review?

The International Emergency and Conflict Team (IECT)¹ and Impact and Shared Learning (IASL) collaborated to produce Terms of Reference for the Review – a 'forward-looking' evaluation to critically review past work against the strategic plan, and to generate learning in order to 'work differently and better for the future'. Four consultants were commissioned to examine different aspects of Human Security work within AA. Two looked at specific Emergency Response Programmes (the Tsunami and the South Asia Earthquake), one examined AA's Human Security within the wider context, and one examined IECT's role within AA. In addition to field visits and phone interviews with key AA staff, the consultants joined IECT and stakeholders (internal and external) at a meeting in November 2007, in order to discuss initial findings. The reports were finalised in early 2008². This was followed by a meeting in March 2008 attended by representatives from Country Programmes, Northern Affiliates, Functions, other Themes, and the International Secretariat). The International Board of Trustees was also represented by Sriprapha Petcharamesree. At the meeting the findings of the Review were shared, and attendees contributed to in-depth discussions around key proposals for future action.

What Were the Review Findings?

The four reports highlighted particular **strengths** in AA's Emergencies work to date, including: adoption of a rights-based approach, partnership working, participatory approaches, taking sides with poor and excluded people, and enabling voices of vulnerable communities to be heard in the international arena. IECT received praise for its innovation, 'product' development, fundraising success, and leadership. AA's Disaster Risk Reduction Work was also highlighted as an area of great strength, one consultant commenting: "*AA is now among the foremost INGOs addressing Disaster Risk Reduction. AA has successfully reduced risk in many communities.*"

Recommendations for future work were also highlighted, as follows:

POLICY - AA should increase its policy focus on national governments. While international advocacy is important to maintain profile, advocacy at a national level is where AA is likely to have discernible impact on the poor and excluded. AA's approach should include more partnership-style work with national governments: influencing without opposing.

CONFLICT - AA needs to develop conceptual clarity of its conflict work, and to prioritise and implement more effectively in this area. AA is encouraged to develop conflict analysis methods and to ensure that all its programmes are conflict sensitive. This is an area in which AA could become a leading agency - encouraging national governments and NGOs to promote conflict sensitivity. There is also opportunity for AA to develop a role in 'protection' ie as a

¹ The team who act as 'the engine' within AAI for the Human Security in Emergencies and Conflict Theme

² For copies of the full reports, please click here: [Link to HS Review Reports](#).

defender of human rights, especially where the people and partners it works with are affected by violent conflict. Participatory Vulnerability Analysis (a strength in AA's work around natural disasters) should be developed for use in a conflict setting.

IECT WORKING METHODS – IECT is a high-functioning team, but may be a victim of its own success, with Country Programmes leaning too heavily on IECT to manage their Human Security work. Senior Management should ensure early preparation and budgeting for Human Security work at country level, supported by integration of relevant goals and activities within regional and country plans. IECT should focus on building Country Programmes' capacities, and taking a supporting rather than leading role

EMERGENCY RESPONSE – Although much of AA's emergencies work has been high in quality, the organisation has been inconsistent in its responses to disasters. This has caused confusion among staff and stakeholders, including donors. AA's leadership should make clear that basic disaster response is mandatory. IECT should not be held responsible for disaster response, but should work to ensure that responsibilities are fulfilled by Country Programmes.

STRATEGY – the Human Security Strategic Plan should be streamlined into clearer priorities, with a distinction made between activities at the international and national levels.

What Are the Next Steps?

IECT has produced a management response to the Review and a proposed appendix to the Human Security Strategy, designed to address the Review's recommendations. This was endorsed at the last meeting of the International Directors. A copy of the response is appended for your reference, and for noting by the Board. This sets out the changes that IECT will make as a result of the Review, and in an effort to enhance the quality of the organisation's Human Security Work. IECT will also soon be communicating the findings and impact of the Review more widely throughout the organisation.

IECT Management Response to the Human Security Review

What We Want to Achieve, and How We Aim to Achieve It

1. AAI has reliable responses to emergencies, based on capacity in-country

- Establish a policy for AA on disaster preparedness and response, with IDs giving due attention to investment and compliance.
- Modify the role of IECT to increase focus on capacity building.
- Develop guidelines for disaster response, including working with partners.
- IECT to work with Boards of Affiliates

2. AAI has clear and common internal understanding of, and reputation on, conflict sensitivity and protection

- Review conflict staff grade and requirements, and invest in extra staff to build capacity for better protection programming and conflict sensitivity.
- Make use of Austcare protection potential (e.g. Austcare to hire expert to link with AA and provide protection advice?)
- Communicate clearly conflict risk reduction ideas across AA
- Develop PVA, psychosocial, and protection as approaches to conflict
- Showcase our successes, articulating better existing protection or conflict sensitivity work.

3. AAI has a clear common human security policy agenda with specific tasks at local, national and international levels, improved delivery at national level, and improved strategic alignment at international level

- focus policy priorities, to have a single international objective and no more than two national objectives in DRR, appropriate assistance, and conflict and protection.
- Review staffing to improve coordination, northern advocacy, policy capacity in the South, and advocacy at country-level.
- Establish Human Security links for policy in Northern Affiliates as well as Southern.
- Revise IECT Advisor role for more support on policy.
- Invest in consistent involvement in protection and early recovery UN clusters.

4. IECT is a more effective organisational unit within AA

- Make more use of AAI and Affiliate capacities, allowing less investment by IECT on policy communication.
- Shift DEC support role to AA UK.
- Increase work on capacity building.
- Continue to support fundraising.
- Communicate clearly IECT's role and added value to AA

5. The Human Security Strategic Plan is more achievable and recognizes human security in conflict and emergencies as a cross-cutting issue

- Recognise that the overriding strategic objectives remain sound, but revise outputs and points of focus on the Strategy, as set out in the attached appendix (below).

Suggested 2008 Appendix to the 2005-2010 Human Security Strategic Plan

The Human Security Review recognised that the strategic direction articulated in the 2005-2010 Human Security Strategic Plan remains valid, but recommended clearer prioritisation. Taking in to account the Review, the subsequent Human Security Network Meeting, and an internal evaluation of the organisation's progress against existing objectives at the mid-term stage, the following is a suggested Appendix to the 2005-2010 Human Security Strategic Plan, drawing out the priorities for action for 2008-2010, which cut across the existing five strategic objectives.

Key Priorities for Action:

1 Disaster Risk Reduction

- i) Help poor communities to increase their resilience against emergencies and to be more prepared.
- ii) Support the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action.
- iii) Focus on adaptation to climate change, and contribute our experience to networks on climate change mitigation and justice.

This will be supported by policy work: on an **international** level on appropriate mechanisms for climate change adaptation funding; and on a **national** level on effective implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, climate-proof development work, and effective use and reach of climate adaptation funds.

2 Emergency Response

- i) Respond to emergencies in line with AA disaster response policy, with focus on saving lives, helping people restore livelihoods, overcome mental stress, and claim their rightful share of available assistance.
- ii) Build AA's capacity to respond to emergencies and conflict in a timely, efficient and appropriate way, including through developing a coherent system of deployable human resources, training, preparedness tools, funding mechanisms, and emergencies policies and procedures.

This will be supported by policy work: on an **international** level, advocating for people-centred policies and practices in the early recovery and protection cluster working groups; and on a **national** level, participating, and encouraging partners to participate, in UN-led humanitarian response reforms in co-ordination and financing.

3 Conflict and Protection

- i) Build the capacity of staff and partners to undertake conflict analysis, and to achieve conflict sensitive programming.
- ii) Improve the security of women, particularly in post-conflict environments.
- iii) Support poor people to raise their security concerns with authorities and advocate for action to address those concerns

This will be supported by policy work: on an **international** and **national** level, advocating for protocols and action to improve the protection of women affected by conflict; and pushing for funding into, and strategies for, conflict-prone and conflict-affected areas to be conflict sensitive.

Making it Happen

IECT will focus on capacity-building within Country Programmes, and better documenting and sharing of institutional learning around emergencies and conflict.

Outcomes by 2010

- States will have signed up to a new binding Kyoto protocol, and Carbon emissions will have reduced.
- A binding international protocol on the use of cluster munitions will have been implemented.
- Poor people will be more aware of the hazards they face, and taking action to be safer.
- Schools will be disaster-proof and will be teaching safety to children.
- The Hyogo Framework for Action will have been effectively implemented.
- The International Framework for Protection will be globally implemented and respected.
- NAPAs will be implemented in a way that takes into account people's needs.
- Governments' disaster response will be improved, with appropriate and transparent assistance.
- Fewer women will be subject to gender-based violence in situations of conflict and emergency.
- AA's Country Programmes will respond to emergencies in a timely and effective manner, assisted by a coherent preparedness and response support system.
- AA's programming will be context-aware, and will not exacerbate local or national tensions.
- AA's Country Programmes and national partners will be participating in UN-led humanitarian coordination mechanisms and policy initiatives, particularly early recovery and protection clusters