

**Making Humanitarian Relief Networks More Effective:
Exploring the Relationships Among Coordination, Trust and Sense Making**

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Abstract

Effective coordination of humanitarian assistance activities remains an elusive prize. This paper briefly addresses some of the reasons for what is widely perceived as a coordination dilemma in humanitarian affairs and then argues for a new conceptualization of the issue. Rather than continue to ask that more authority be vested in a single organization to secure coordination by control from the top, this article contends that it may be timely to consider whether relief organizations involved in addressing an emergency should be re-conceived as constituting social networks and efforts made to secure changes in their respective organizational cultures that encourage coordination across institutional boundaries. Since such labors imply the need to trust across organizational lines, the article explores what forms and types of trust might be employed to encourage improved coordination among relief institutions and how those relationships could themselves be conceptualized.

Introduction

The issue of how to secure improved coordination among those parties and organizations seeking to provide international humanitarian emergency relief has received persistent attention from analysts in recent years (e.g. see Minear, 2002; Macrae, 2002; Rey, 1999). This matter receives continuing consideration in the humanitarian assistance literature because all parties agree that more successful coordination of their efforts will lead to improved outcomes for those they seek to serve. The trouble is that the operating environment in which humanitarian agents must work and the typical structure of their operating relationships does not necessarily encourage broad and open cooperation among them.

This is so for a number of reasons. First, since most organizations operating in the international humanitarian assistance arena rely on donations for a share of their operating revenue, there is much competition among them for scarce resources. Another commonly cited motive to explain

why humanitarian organizations do not always readily share operations information with other institutions working to assist like or similar clients, a key factor in securing improved coordination, is the attempt to be the first entity to provide help in a “hot spot.” Often, “being first,” allows a humanitarian organization to gain media attention. That prominence, in turn, can generate new donors and possibly increased revenues. Third, humanitarian relief is provided by a disparate organizational cast of characters that includes major organizations representing the United Nations such as the United Nations International Children’s Education Fund (UNICEF), World Food Program (WFP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); key western nations and organizations (United States, European Union and their aid entities: the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and European Union Humanitarian Office (ECHO) respectively; international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) such as CARE, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Oxfam, Mercy Corps, International Rescue Committee (IRC); affected governments and, often, insurgency movements and an array of indigenous nongovernmental organizations.

In light of the organizational incentives at play as well as the structural complexity of the institutional environment, the academic literature has been concerned with seeking to understand better what conditions and characteristics of organizational structure and operation might lead to improved service delivery processes and outcomes in humanitarian relief scenarios (e.g. see Moore et al., 2003; Minear, 2002). In the absence of a single institution possessing authority and responsibility to require humanitarian organizations of all stripes to coordinate their activities, many researchers have argued that the United Nations (UN) should seek and be given sufficient powers to pursue a “coordination by command” approach, a top-down style of ensuring inter-organizational coordination (Donini and Niland, 1994). However, this notion is quite contentious among nongovernmental organizations and United Nations organizations and staff alike and, in any case, the Security Council has never accorded any UN entity such authority.

Trust and Coordination in an Inter-Organizational Network

So, while the United Nations has developed an Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) that has pursued its remit with seriousness and some success, that office does not enjoy command and control authority over even the many UN entities often engaged in humanitarian relief let alone over the other organizations involved in these emergencies (Reindorp and Wiles, 2001). As Larry Minear, a leading researcher in this field has remarked, “In my judgment, the continuing absence of effective coordination structures remains the soft underbelly of the humanitarian enterprise” (2002, p. 21). To encourage improved coordination, Minear, like many others as noted above, has contended consistently that a UN agency be given authority to command the players in the field to undertake or share certain functions to maximize the effectiveness with which their resources may be deployed. Minear, however, recognizes that this proposition is arguable and that neither the various UN organizations nor the key donor nations have thus far assented to it. Indeed, he has acknowledged that both have actively resisted it (Minear, 2002, p. 22).

In consequence, rather than continue to contend that the present organization of humanitarian actors be changed to accord with a principal-agent view of organizational coordination—an eventuality that may be desirable but has thus far not been attained—this paper explores instead the question of whether it might be useful to argue that increased cooperation among humanitarian relief organizations operating in a given emergency be achieved by means of a particular form of increased coordination via inter-organizational consensus building. More specifically, this essay explores whether it might be useful to conceive of humanitarian organizations engaged in relief work in a specific instance as engaged in a social network and seek to build some common set of claims on that basis. If so, these organizations might be

encouraged to build individual cultures and finally, if possible, a shared culture of what Weick (2001) has dubbed “collective sense making” that might serve to ensure at least a modicum of cooperation across successive instances of engagement. Accepting such a challenge requires the analyst to consider the forms of cooperation necessary in these settings as well as the contextual conditions likely to obtain within them. Sense making demands a degree of trust among participants and in this instance that trust clearly would have to exist at different scales and perhaps be of different types to encourage inter-organizational coordination.

To address these concerns this paper first describes the structure and context of organizational relationships in humanitarian intervention scenarios in order to characterize the forms of cooperation and coordination that may be at play within them, describes that context in light of constructs drawn from the relevant literature on the role of trust in organizational effectiveness and in inter-organizational networks respectively and then posits the elements of a strategy that draws on Weick that may help researchers and organizational leaders alike develop mechanisms that increase the likelihood of improved coordination even if a more thoroughgoing top-down humanitarian relief regime is not attained. Whatever the means finally selected, realizing this potential is clearly important if these organizations individually and collectively are to maximize their potential effectiveness in situations of catastrophic need.

Mapping the Context

Minear has argued that

Coordination is multilayered, involving the orchestration of relationships not only at headquarters but also at the regional, national and field levels (2002, p. 20).

He has also suggested that

Coordination involves responding to life-and death emergencies that take unexpected twists and turns. Coordination is a messy, dynamic and evolving process. The crises that

created the humanitarian emergencies in the first place ensure that this will be true (Minear, 2002, p. 21).

Likewise, Minear has observed that effective coordination requires a number of policy instruments so as to ensure the delivery of services in a “cohesive and coherent manner” (Minear, 2002, p. 20). The strategies of choice include strategic planning, information gathering and sharing, resource mobilization, common accountability frameworks, assuring a shared division of labor in the field, maintaining workable relations with host governments and vigorous leadership.

The difficulty is, of course, that all of these instruments must be deployed in contexts that typically lack a strong central authority. So, of the tools listed, the most frequently deployed (or attained) is information gathering and sharing. Regardless of the instrument, it is hostage, to a very significant extent, to the willingness of the donors (especially) and participating organizations to adopt it. According to Jennifer Sime, an IRC humanitarian field officer during the Kosovo crisis, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has become quite adept at ensuring that such information is shared widely among organizations involved in humanitarian relief emergencies (personal interview, Sept.30, 2004). Less often, UN organizations, bi-lateral donor entities, INGOs and NGOs are able to share information sufficient to secure common accountability claims and clear divisions of labor. Indeed, dividing tasks effectively remains a key challenge since not even the UN participants play the same role in each emergency (e.g. Minear et al., 1994). In former Yugoslavia, for example, UNHCR served as lead agency because donors and UN leaders perceived the refugee issue as critical in that situation. However, the WFP served as the lead UN organization in Afghanistan on the view that food security was a critical concern in that crisis. Obviously, nongovernmental organizations and donors do not, and need not, play the same roles in each emergency. So the playing field is dynamic, the institutional players are equally dynamic and the game itself is subject to change since there are no fixed rules concerning which institutions play what roles.

This description reminds one of the famous croquet game in Alice's Adventures in Wonderland in which the balls were live hedgehogs that moved about and complained and really never quite played their expected roles, the mallets were live flamingoes who were puzzled at being asked to assume this role and proved quite unwilling to be used in their assigned role despite Alice's efforts to secure a different result. In addition, there were no accepted rules concerning who should go first or, indeed, any rules at all in this peculiar croquet game. And all the while this chaos or near chaos ruled, the Queen of Hearts rushed about the playing field calling for the heads of all whose actions she either did not like or did not understand (Carroll, 1982). Like the Queen's croquet ground, the humanitarian landscape, is populated by different agents who jealously guard their agency, a foundation that is both insecure and dynamic, and a lack of firmly accepted behaviors among the participants concerning how to relate to one another. As in Carroll's fantastical croquet match, these participants take the field in an overarching situation of few or swiftly changing rules and expectations punctuated by a chorus of the interested that exclaims loudly that "something, something" must be done and soon or the implications will not be pretty for either the afflicted or the would-be care providers.

Overall, the literature suggests, and personal interviews¹ recently conducted with several humanitarian relief workers confirm, that the context of relief operations exhibits the following characteristics:

- Multiple organizations with multiple missions and different frames of accountability at different scales—United Nations, single nation/bi-lateral, host nation, nongovernmental organizations, international nongovernmental organizations and with no single agency to coordinate their actions authoritatively
- Participating organizations share a concern that relief occur efficiently and effectively but in ways that serve their perceived institutional interests and missions. This orientation

may or may not facilitate coordination among and between organizations depending upon other contextual conditions

- By definition, the stakes in relief scenarios are high for participating organizations and those afflicted alike
- Most organizations are connected to one another in principle in their desire to provide aid effectively but they are tied to each other only episodically in practice and in widely varying ways (short term or fiscal year contracts, information sharing, broadly shared interest in alleviating and preventing suffering)
- Given the urgency, multi-faceted character and complexity of humanitarian organization operating environments, mistakes are likely and may have profound consequences for those served as well as for the relief organizations
- Turnover among humanitarian organization staffs is high and many workers are not even full time members of the organizations with which they are serving but instead, contract hires with limited experience and training, who are expected to work long hours under difficult conditions for a limited period
- The “facts” of the situations being addressed are often unclear or in dispute whether the emergencies are human produced (war, genocide, terror) or natural (earthquakes, floods, famine)
- Time pressures are real for all organizations concerned. Often, an inadequate response can mean death or injury or profound loss for hundreds or thousands
- Host nations vary strongly in their institutional and fiscal capacities, as well as their political willingness, to respond to the emergencies within their bounds
- In-country nongovernmental organizations may vary widely in their capacities to partner with UN or INGO organizations to offer relief and are likely to guard their autonomy jealously whatever their capacities

- Accurate information concerning the needs of those displaced or suffering is critical and typically difficult to obtain with accuracy
- Many organizations active in humanitarian relief work together in nations in successive emergencies so there is at least general awareness—at the institutional level in any case—among these institutions of the aims and competencies of at least some other principals in the field with them².

Humanitarian Interventions as Loosely Coupled Inter-Organizational Network Environments

One way to conceive of this organizational context and its jumble of loosely connected entities in a particular case is to imagine that it constitutes an inter-organizational and multi-functional network aimed at creating and sharing knowledge (of conditions) and of diffusing that knowledge to network participants to mobilize resources to address those circumstances. Viewed in this way, the challenge to network participants is both to ensure an accurate rendering of needs and to mobilize the appropriate organizations or portions of organizations in the humanitarian network to respond rapidly and effectively to those needs. But, as is well recognized, this does not just happen across organizations. It must be organized and nurtured. This must occur in ways, as Minear reminds, that cross humanitarian (participant) organization boundaries if the appropriate capacities are to be brought to bear in the appropriate places and in ways that alleviate suffering. Donors, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other network members must see it as advantageous or at least not disadvantageous to cooperate and to coordinate their activities with others so as to maximize collective effectiveness. Information and knowledge are needed by all network participants to develop the forms of cooperation necessary among the organizations to enable rapid adaptation to what is, by definition, a turbulent and uncertain environment.

Following Grandori and Soda (1995), Newell and Swan have identified three major forms of inter-organizational networks (2001, p. 1292). Each of these network types appears to be characterized by different forms of coordination. According to Newell and Swan (2001)

Social networks are based primarily on personal and interpersonal exchange (such as an alumni network). In contrast, bureaucratic networks are underpinned by formal agreements and formally identified roles and coordination mechanisms (such as a research consortium). Proprietary networks are both relatively formal and are also founded on some financial or intellectual property rights (such as a joint venture) (p. 1292).

Irrespective of network type, effective inter-organizational coordination demands that institutional boundaries be bridged so available assets (broadly understood) may be mobilized or shared to address the common claim (the immediate humanitarian emergency). Coordination is essential both to provide services effectively and to overcome the barriers implicit in working within an environment of at least quasi-autonomous units. Social networks are characterized by the fewest formal coordination mechanisms while proprietary networks exhibit the most (Grandori and Soda, 1995).

The “typical” (if such exists) humanitarian relief environment appears to include a relatively weak bureaucratic network and a social network of variable strength. Rarely are humanitarian organizations joined in strongly proprietary ways. Table I illustrates the typical actors and incentives for interaction available in humanitarian relief scenarios.

Table I

Humanitarian Relief Network Actors, Revenue Types and Incentives to Cooperate

Organization Type	Roles	Revenues and Incentives
United Nations	Single Year Contracts with INGOS and NGOS by specific UN entities- UNHCR, UNICEF etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination responsibility via UNOCHA including accountability claims • Information sharing • Shared Mission Claims • Resource Mobilization and alignment
Donor Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fiscal Year Donations • Emergency donations to all other network participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability Claims • Shared Mission Claims
Ingo's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor Derived Revenues • Shared Mission Claims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts with UN and donor governments • Information Sharing • Resource Mobilization and alignment
NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor Derived Revenues • Shared Mission Claims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts with host governments and INGOs • Information Sharing
Host Governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own Source Revenues and donor derived revenues • Shared Mission Claims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique knowledge of political and social landscape • Information sharing

Trust, Networks and the Humanitarian Environment

Organization scholars agree that trust is an essential attribute for cross-organization cooperation or coordination. Organization development specialists have sought for some years to build trust among firms in the business sector to reduce transaction costs and to curb the potential for exploitative opportunism in inter-organizational relationships. Scholars examining the role of trust in these sorts of dealings have “widely acknowledged that trust can lead to cooperative behavior among individuals, groups and organizations” (Jones and George, 1998, p. 531). It seems likely that trust plays a vital role in establishing the conditions for effective coordination among otherwise separate organizations in the humanitarian relief environment.

Trust has been defined in numerous ways and analyzed in a variety of contexts. While there is no single “correct” view of trust, Zaheer et al. (1998) have offered a tripartite definition that appears to capture many of the essential attributes of the idea. For these authors, trust is “the expectation that an actor (1) can be relied on to fulfill obligations, (2) will behave in a predictable manner, and (3) will act and negotiate fairly when the possibility for opportunism is present” (p. 143, references omitted). This conceptualization entails first, an “expectation” rather than a “conviction,” meaning that there is the possibility of betrayal, an inherent feature of trust (Zaheer et al., 1998, p. 143). Zaheer and his colleagues also distinguish between dispositional and relational trust. The former describes an individual’s attitudes regarding the trustworthiness of others in general while the latter is concerned with interactions with a particular person in a specific dyad. This distinction is important in network dynamics as it points up the likelihood that individual participants must first be disposed to trust and thereafter, actually to extend trust to another across organizational boundaries. This implies the importance of different forms of trust in inter-organizational relationship building.

Indeed, previous research suggests that there are a variety of types of trust (e.g. Sako, 1992; Zaheer et. al. and Jones and George, 1998; Ring and Van de Ven, 1994; Meyerson et. al., 1996; Newell and Swan, 2000; Brouesma, Buckley, and Ghauri, 2003). These scholars’ specific constructs are summarized—following Newell and Swan—in Table II below. The Table depicts four basic types of trust that typify organizational relationships including those that are constructed on the basis of personal ties, those built on contextual cues, those that are developed on the basis of perceived competence and those that result from contractual obligations.

Table II
Types of Trust

Trust Type	Description
Companion	The trust that an organization boundary spanner (those individuals actively interacting with members of another organization) places in her counterpart in a network organization that is based on judgments of goodwill or friendship
Competence	Trust that is extended based on the perceived ability of the other to carry out needed tasks
Commitment	Describes a setting in which parties will trust one another as long as each behaves in a fashion consonant with contractual agreements between the parties.
Swift	Trust that is based on the reality that it is easier to extend trust than it is not to do so in conditions when individuals and organizations will work together only for short periods. Based on contextual cues rather than interpersonal ties.

Table II suggests strongly that the burden for the would-be coordinator in humanitarian relief situations is to develop the conditions in which participants in some organizations accord participants in others a sufficient measure of the most effective forms of trust available. This would enable players to cooperate sufficiently to offer a coherent strategy or to maximize the effective use of scarce resources in rapidly evolving environments. Two characteristics of the environment make this task somewhat more auspicious than an attempt simply “to herd cats.” First, INGOs and principal donor government agencies often work together in successive emergencies. The IRC, CARE and MSF, for example, may be expected to provide aid wherever needed and so often work on emergencies in nations together. To that extent, their strengths and weaknesses as well as missions and operating routines may become better known to donors and to other INGOs and governments. This makes the humanitarian environment somewhat more stable than it otherwise might be. On the other hand, these organizations often hire short-term contract employees for help with emergencies and these are often untried or inexperienced and that fact carries with it considerable risk. So, while these “known” institutional quantities may yield a disposition to trust among other organizational players based on their perceived competence, that disposition is likely to be a qualified one.

If this is so with competence based trust it is likely to be true in spades for swift trust. Swift trust is extended only for limited periods on the basis of perceived capacity. While participants may trust a participant at the start of their relationship in a relief situation, a single miscue can foul this opportunity for the remainder of the emergency and certainly for organizational relations in the next. Moreover, even the regular staff of these organizations turns over rapidly and so, the ability of an official in one organization to be able to know a professional in one or more organizations involved in a humanitarian effort well and leverage that friendship tie on behalf of improved cooperation or coordination among their organizations is likely to be limited. That is, the would-be coordinator/facilitator of humanitarian action may not simply count on companion-based trust to assure inter-organizational cooperation either. In addition, the capacities of NGOs will vary from nation-to-nation and even year-to-year within nations as does the political and fiscal will of affected governments to cooperate. Finally, donor interests and inclinations may also change with the specific context and through time so these too may not simply be taken for granted. As with the Queen of Hearts' croquet game, both the rules and the field for humanitarian action may change even as the match proceeds.

As for commitment based trust, if a coordinator must rely on “the contract” to secure cooperation and coordination it seems likely that matters between the organizations involved have already descended to a difficult place. Commitment without the other forms of trust is unlikely to yield coordination on a sustained basis (Dirks and Ferrin 2001; Newell and Swan 2000). The reciprocal is not true making this form of trust perhaps the most formal but also in many respects, paradoxically, the most fragile.

This analysis helps one to understand better what forms of trust might be available, as well as at what scale to seek to secure coordination across organizational boundaries in humanitarian

emergencies. None of these types of trust can confidently be assumed to be available in every instance or even in particular relief episodes. That said this is not to argue that these possible avenues for cooperation should not be explored or that participants and would-be coordinators should not seek to employ them. To the contrary, to the extent that competence, commitment and companion based trust can be used to foster cooperation, they should be so employed.

Nonetheless, it seems clear that none of these forms of trust typically exists in the humanitarian environment because participating organizations or their employees self-consciously define open and rapid coordination as in their self-interest and seek to pursue that end as a part of their central vision. Trust is a necessary but perhaps not sufficient condition for effective inter-organizational coordination in emergency relief situations. Another set of dispositions or habits of action embedded in the organizational cultures of the institutions involved might be needed. Karl Weick's (1993) conception of collective sense making may provide just the sorts of characteristics desired to encourage organizational capacity to secure coordination in a dynamic and "headless" environment.

Collective Rationality, Sense making, Organizational Culture and Boundary Spanning in a Turbulent Environment

The humanitarian environment relies on the principals involved in the organizations to develop sufficiently robust ties of trust to secure coordination in the absence of a strong central agent formally requiring it. But such trust is unlikely to develop *a priori* to assure inter-organizational cooperation given the competing incentives and turbulence operating in the environment. So, perhaps would-be coordinators and organization leaders alike should consider a strategy that seeks to secure change in the organizational operating routines and cultures of the major UN and INGO entities that commonly are critical in relief operations in ways that support trust and that

address the complexities of humanitarian relief environments. These changes would be aimed at ensuring that major relief organizations would encourage their employees to boundary span, to secure improved cohesion across organizations, as they sought to deliver relief services. In short, in lieu of a top down strategy of hierarchic integration and coordination, UNOCHA and major donors might work with important humanitarian partners to refashion their organizational cultures to align more closely with the demands of the environment in which they operate. Such a stance would require, however, that participating organization leaders recognize the transitory character of their operating environment and find means to integrate inter-organizational coordination into their conception of their institution's core mission. The connection between coordination and the alleviation of suffering as understood by each major humanitarian organization would have to become paramount for all involved organizations if it ever is to evolve to drive their cultures.

This is a moral contention ultimately. It is not driven by a rationalist calculation of narrowly defined organizational demands but a commons-based claim that improved coordination will yield better outcomes for those being served. But this stance would require more than rhetoric. It would require building teams in primary humanitarian organizations that abandoned more traditional forms of rationally derived thinking concerning top-down coordination in favor of a contextual rationality driven foremost by the needs of the clients being served. Weick has described contextual rationality as

Action motivated to create and maintain institutions and traditions that express some conceptions of right behavior and a good life with others. Contextual rationality is sensitive to the fact that social actors need to create and maintain intersubjectively binding normative structures that sustain and enrich their relationships. (1993, pp. 634-635).

“Right behavior” in the humanitarian context would require placing the need for coordinated action above immediate demands for organizational salience or aggrandizement. Contextual

rationality is closely linked to sense making which Morgan et al. (1983) argue views individuals in a particular way:

Individuals are not seen as living in, and acting out their lives in relation to, a wider reality, so much as creating and sustaining images of a wider reality, in part to rationalize what they are doing. They realize their reality, by reading into their situation patterns of significant meaning (p. 24).

In the present case, professionals in humanitarian organizations would need to be encouraged strongly by their organizational leaders not only to exchange information concerning their operations but to develop a shared sense, an ethos, that to do so was not only necessary but critical to their institution's success and to how they ordered their own lives. Since structure and roles would not routinely span organization lines and since the participants themselves could be expected to change frequently, organization leaders would need to encourage new hires to adopt a fierce determination to make boundary spanning work in the name of aiding clients. This would become an organizational expectation, much as producing timely reports might be. Weick (1993) suggests that among other attributes such structures (cultures) require that professionals acquire a habit and a determination to seek order and to improvise even in chaotic conditions (pp. 641-642).

Since humanitarian interventions create temporary networks, it is important that relief organizations come to ask their professionals to expect, accept and even thrive on ambiguity while assuming that they can create conditions in common with their counterparts in other organizations that can address those conditions successfully. These capacities amount to a peculiar form of knowledge. According to Weick successful sense makers acquire certain wisdom:

To be wise is not to know particular facts but to know without excessive confidence or excessive cautiousness.... In a fluid world, wise people know that they don't fully understand what is happening right now, because they have never seen precisely this event before. Extreme confidence and extreme caution both can destroy what organizations most need in changing times, namely curiosity, openness, and complex sensing (1993, p. 641).

When applied to the humanitarian context, it seems clear it is this singular characteristic that permits officials to create and recreate inter-organizational ties and structures that secure more effective services for clients.

Organization leaders could expect that efforts to build staffs typified by the attributes of contextual rationality and animated by an understanding of their role as sense making would reinforce the potentials of trust in social networks by demanding ongoing and repeated conversation among principals in the various organizations in the humanitarian environment around the aim of securing the most effective use of resources on behalf of those suffering. To the extent these communications occurred, they would heighten the potential for bottom up coordination and lead to more effective inter-organizational relationships and thereby to improved humanitarian organization coordination and outcomes.

Conclusion

The humanitarian relief environment has long required, but just as long lacked, strongly effective ways and means to secure coordination among an array of quasi-autonomous organizations. This paper has argued that trust is critical to that possibility and that various forms of inter-organizational interaction may lead to differing forms of trust. More deeply, however, it may be that the major humanitarian organizations need to re-imagine the task of coordination itself. Instead of lamenting (or seeking to fend off) the dearth of top down coordination mechanisms available, perhaps these institutions and their clients would be better served if they began to develop organizational cultures that actively encouraged improved inter-organizational trust and therefore more effective cooperation. One strategy for pursuit of this result would be active efforts to persuade their leaders to adopt and act upon a collective rationality and sense making approach to their organizations' missions and to the training and development of their personnel.

Over time, this approach could reshape their respective organizational cultures and result in improved inter-organizational coordination and more effective outcomes for those served. All involved would have to be patient for few tasks are more difficult than hanging human attitudes and stances toward the world. But it can be done. This approach is surely consistent with ongoing and even stronger attempts to find common ground through authoritative top-down efforts. OCHA could certainly encourage continuing rationalist coordination efforts even as leaders sought to make those types of initiatives obsolete. The result in the short to medium term of such a combined effort might just be a mixed top-down bottom-up strategy. The combination yields many friends.

Notes

¹ Interviews were conducted by telephone on September 30, October 11 and 21 with one current and two former staff members of the International Rescue Committee regarding their perceptions of coordination during the 1999 crisis in Kosovo. All served in Kosovo in 1999 during the crisis there.

² For an insightful evaluation of the relief response to the crisis in Kosovo in 1999, in which most of the aforementioned characteristics were exhibited, see Suhrke et al.'s "The Kosovo Refugee Crisis: An Independent Evaluation of UNHCR's Emergency Preparedness and Response."

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