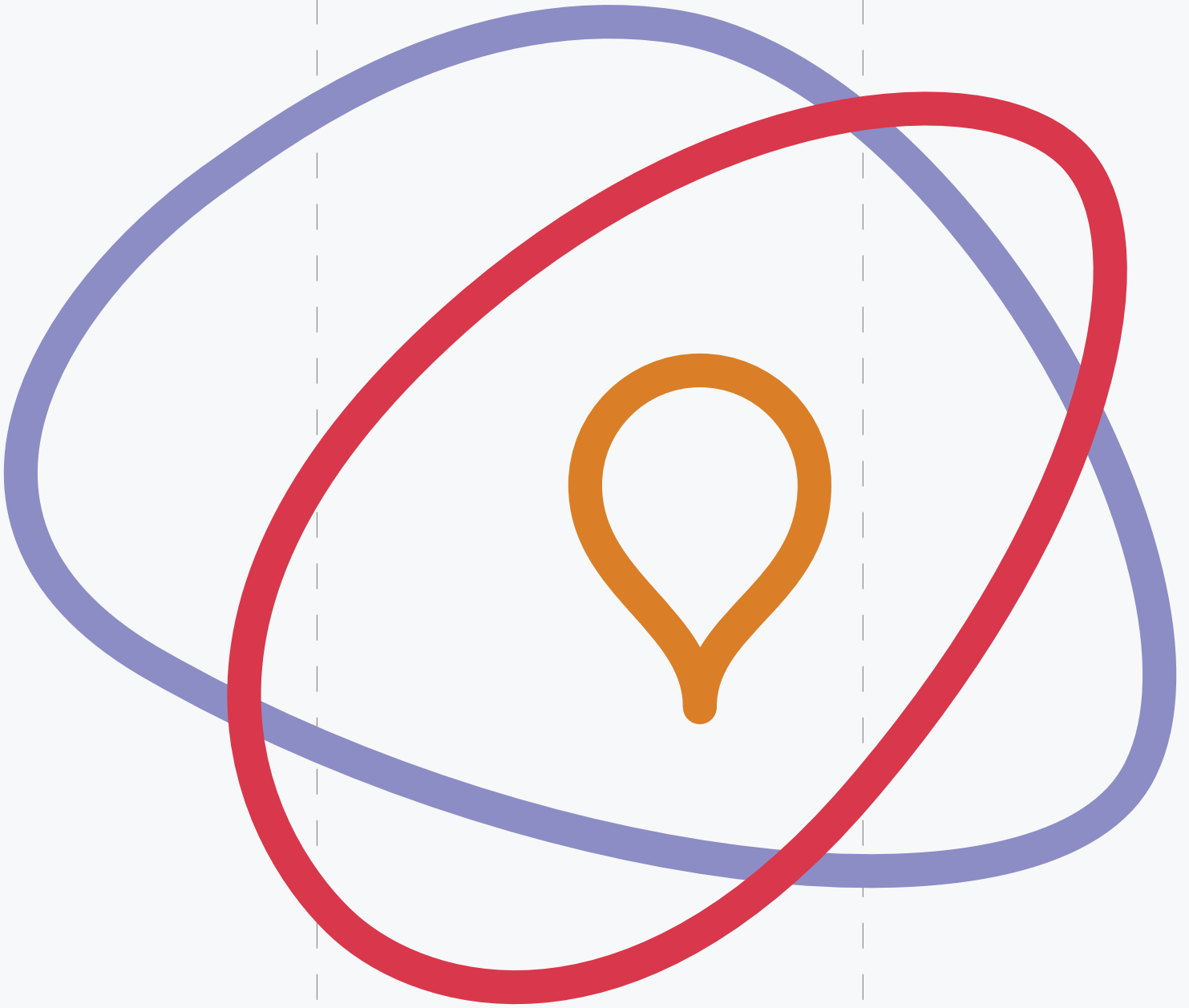




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VALE THE HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES: NEW PRINCIPLES FOR A NEW ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

For more than 150 years, the international community's assistance to those affected by various humanitarian events has been guided by four clear and succinct principles: humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. These principles have guided not only the ways in which the international community has responded to natural and human-induced disasters – they have also shaped the humanitarian system more generally. The geneses of these four humanitarian principles lie within Henry Dunant's account of the violent Battle of Solferino in 1859. This account led to the establishment of the Red Cross and the first Geneva Convention, which together gave rise to the humanitarian principles. These humanitarian principles were conceived to guide the work of the International Committee of Red Cross, but they have since gained near universal adherence within the humanitarian sector, and have been utilised to justify both action and inaction by those responding to humanitarian crises. Whilst important and necessary at the time of their inception, the maturing of the humanitarian sector, along with the increasing complexity and intensity of humanitarian events, requires a reconsideration of their relevancy and usefulness. This paper argues that these four principles are no longer fit-for-purpose to guide and shape the international community's humanitarian actions. We argue instead that four new principles would better direct humanitarian action in the current environment: equity, solidarity, compassion and diversity. We discuss the deepening complexity of modern humanitarian emergencies and resulting declining suitability of each of the four original principles, before considering the four new suggested principles.

1. Introduction

More than 400 large humanitarian events occur annually globally, killing over 100,000 people and directly affecting more than 120 million more (ALNAP 2018). These events are both natural and human-induced. They include earthquakes, droughts, floods, cyclones, famines, war and other civil strife leading to displacement of communities. In response, the international community provides over US\$24 billion to assist those affected to rebuild and reconstruct their lives. These funds are expended through various modes and take the form of bilateral transfers, multilateral funding, as well as aid provided through international and local non-governmental organisations that has been raised through public appeal campaigns. There is little doubt that the humanitarian response can be understood as an industry in its own right, given the tens of millions of people that are affected by these events, the hundreds of thousands of people that work in these responses, and the billions of dollars expended in addressing the needs that arise (Walker and Russ 2010).

Given the regularity, size and scope of humanitarian events, the international architecture for responding to significant humanitarian events is sophisticated (OCHA 2019). Over time, there has been the concurrent development of industry standards and benchmarks for those organisations and institutions involved in responding to these events (see Sphere 2019). The evolution of these standards and benchmarks have likewise resulted in an emerging workforce that is characterised by high levels of training and education. What has remained constant though has been the primary purpose of the humanitarian response, which remains focussed on protecting and saving life. As Slim (2015, pp. 2-3) argues, “At its best, it is a very practical affirmation of the value of human life and its unique character in each human person”. However, the principles that govern this affirmation of life must change to suit the changing humanitarian landscape.

For more 150 years, the international community’s assistance to those affected by various humanitarian events has been guided by four clear and succinct principles. These principles have guided not only the ways in which the international community responds, but have shaped the evolution of the humanitarian system itself. The geneses of these four humanitarian principles lie within Henry Dunant’s account of the violent Battle of Solferino in 1859 (Dunant 1959). This account led directly to the establishment of the Red Cross and subsequently led to the first Geneva Convention, from both of which eventually emerged the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence (Picet 1979). These humanitarian principles were conceived to guide the work of the International Committee of Red Cross, but have since gained near universal adherence within the humanitarian sector and have been utilised to justify both action and inaction by those responding to humanitarian crises. Whilst important and necessary at the time of their inception, the maturing of the humanitarian sector along with the increasing complexity and intensity of humanitarian events requires a re-evaluation of their relevancy and usefulness. This paper argues

that these four principles are no longer fit-for-purpose to guide and shape the international community’s humanitarian actions. We argue instead, that four new principles would better direct humanitarian action in the current environment: equity, solidarity, compassion, and diversity.

This rest of the paper is set out as follows. Section 2 discusses the changing nature of the humanitarian environment before Section 3 identifies the increasing unsuitability of the current humanitarian principles. Four new principles are introduced in Section 4 before concluding in Section 5.

2. The Changing Humanitarian Environment

The international humanitarian environment has changed significantly since the humanitarian principles were first proposed. According to the UNHCR, in 2017 there were 68.5 million people forcibly displaced, including 40.0 million internally displaced people, 25.4 million refugees (over half of whom were children), and 3.1 million asylum seekers, as well as around 10 million stateless people (UNHCR, 2018, p. 2). Perhaps most alarmingly, the rate of people being newly displaced each day has increased from around 11,000 per day in 2003, to some 44,400 in 2017 (UNHCR, 2018, pp. 2 & 7).

The international humanitarian system has responded to growing concerns about the changing humanitarian environment with two new ‘global compacts’ – which are both non-binding under international law. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration was adopted in Marrakech, Morocco at the Intergovernmental Conference on the Global Compact for Migration on 11 December 2018 (UN, 2018a). Only 164 countries formally adopted it, with the United States, Hungary, Austria, Italy, Poland, Slovakia, Chile, and Australia among those refusing, despite the non-binding nature of the compact. Fears that it would sanction or facilitate illegal immigration led to violent protests in Brussels (Goodman, 2018). A week later, on the 18th of December 2018, 180 countries signed the new Global Compact for Refugees, opposed only by the United States and Hungary (UN, 2018b). It consists of a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) that is intended to institute best-practise responses on the ground, and a broader Programme of Action. The Global Compact for Refugees is intended to address a gap that has been well-known for decades – namely that, as the UNHCR’s Assistant High Commissioner for Protection Volker Türk explained, the 1951 Refugee Convention focusses on the rights of refugees, but “does not specify how you share the burden and responsibility, and that’s what the global compact does” (Karas, 2018).

While the end of the war in Syria may see the return of some of the more than 5 million of those who left (UNHCR 2019), the other major drivers of increased flows of people across borders in recent times seem to be longer-term phenomena that are likely to increase in intensity. The most recent climate change projections, for example, suggest that sea-level rises may be much great-

er over the next 50-100 years than had been anticipated even ten years ago, when the consensus was to expect slightly under one metre of sea-level rise by 2100. “For 2100, the ice sheet contribution is very likely in the range of 7-178cm but once you add in glaciers and ice caps outside the ice sheets and thermal expansion of the seas, you tip well over two metres” (McGrath, 2019). Further, looking beyond 2100, the “ice sheet contribution by 2200, for the +5°C scenario, is 7.5 m as a result of instabilities coming into play in both West and East Antarctica” (Bamber et al. 2019). These projections are at the upper end of what the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had envisioned in its Fifth Assessment Report in 2014:

Nicholls et al. (2011) estimate that without protection 72 to 187 million people would be displaced due to land loss due to submergence and erosion by 2100 assuming GMSLRs [Global Mean Sea-Level Rises] of 0.5 to 2.0 m by 2100. Upgrading coastal defenses and nourishing beaches would reduce these impacts roughly by three orders of magnitude. Hinkel et al. (2013) estimate the number of people flooded annually in 2100 to reach 117 to 262 million per year in 2100 without upgrading protection. (IPCC, 2014, pp. 381-382)

The World Bank also recently analysed projections for three regions – Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and Latin America – and found that “climate change will push tens of millions of people to migrate within their countries by 2050 ... without concrete climate and development action, just over 143 million people ... could be forced to move within their own countries to escape the slow-onset impacts of climate change.” (Rigaud et al. 2018, p. xix). Low-lying countries such as Bangladesh are particularly vulnerable, with one model predicting “between 3 and 10 million internal migrants over the next 40 years, depending on the severity of the hazards” (Hassani-Mahmoei & Parris, 2012, p. 763).

This is a very different humanitarian environment from that which existed immediately following the Battle of Solferino or during the first half of the 20th century when the humanitarian principles were first conceived. This changing environment calls into question whether these principles remain fit for purpose or whether alternative principles must now be considered.

3. The Increasing Unsuitability of the Humanitarian Principles

The humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality have been a core component of the successful development of the humanitarian architecture and implementation. Humanity, neutrality and impartiality were adopted in 1991 in UN General Assembly resolution 46/182 (1991), with ‘independence’ added in General Assembly resolution 58/114 (2004) (OCHA, 2012, p. 1). These principles were necessary and appropriate at the time they were distilled, given the manner in which the global community was geared towards responding to humanitarian events. Proposing these principles are no longer adequate in the present environment does not diminish their historical value. Rather, it is a simple rec-

ognition that they are now less suitable to guide understanding and response to a changing world.

Humanity

Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings. (OCHA, 2012, p. 1)

Such an unequivocal statement of intent has been invaluable in setting the primary goal of humanitarian response and the boundaries around which this work takes place. Giving prominence to human suffering where such consideration was once lacking has been a core achievement of this primary humanitarian principle. Acts of inhumanity, such as those witnessed during the Battle of Solferino, rightly demanded a response. Suggesting that the principle of humanity should no longer stand as one of the four pillars of humanitarianism is not to argue against the principle per se, but rather is to recognise that wider considerations within this new humanitarian environment must now be prioritised.

Anderson’s (1991) call to ‘do no harm’ when responding to humanitarian events during periods of conflict is relevant to all humanitarian events. Within a changing humanitarian landscape, particularly one that is characterised by climate change, previous humanitarian responses may risk compounding on-going human suffering. For example, humanitarian agencies will be required to make:

very challenging and unpalatable choices if they wish to be effective and relevant to the evolving context in which they work. In extreme circumstances this may well require them to walk away from traditional community-based development activities for those that are most vulnerable and will be most affected by climate change. However, the scale and intensity of predicted climate change will mean that continuing to work with such communities will not only be unsustainable, but delay a necessary adaptive response of evacuation that would otherwise occur. It could also be perceived as a waste of scarce resources that could be used more effectively and efficiently in communities that have greater chances of sustainably adapting to their existing environment. Failure to recognise the impact of climate change will result in a failure of current practices and a failure to do no harm by continuing to work with communities that may well not survive climate change (Clarke and Cruz 2015, p. s21).

Seeking to reduce human suffering requires alternative approaches to humanitarian work within this new environment, ultimately requiring considering whether business as usual responses to long-term irretractable (environmental) disasters is in the best interests of those affected (Clarke and de Cruz 2015). This is not to suggest that those affected be left unsupported, but rather that a wider response must be considered where the immediate focus on addressing human suffering may simply damn affected communities to on-going and repeated suffering within an environment that has irrevocably been changed by climate.

For example, countries with areas that are particularly vulnerable to repeated catastrophic weather events, or semi-permanent inundation in the near future, such as parts of coastal Bangladesh, may require a 'triage' approach. A triage approach would recognise the tragic reality that some areas cannot be saved, and that encouraging people to stay by patching up communities through repeated humanitarian interventions only makes things worse – particularly in contexts with ongoing rapid population growth. Such tragic circumstances require durable long-term solutions involving non-coercive relocation and resettlement to areas where humanitarian funds can help build a secure future, rather than pouring money down a drain in an area which has no viable future. Such an approach would require long-range planning and preparation and an integration of humanitarian concerns with longer-term developmental considerations. The operational lens can no longer simply be 'humanity' in the sense of the alleviation of immediate suffering, since this may well reinforce settlement patterns that lead to much greater suffering in the longer term.

While it does seem counter-intuitive to argue that the principle of 'humanity' and the immediate alleviation of short-term human suffering should not automatically drive humanitarian responses, the premise of this argument is on the changing nature of the humanitarian environment. This requires a recognition and acknowledgement that humanitarian aid agencies "cannot continue to provide assistance to communities in ways that do not recognise the scale of the contextual changes affecting these communities when resources could be utilized more effectively to influence change in other communities that they can influence more effectively" (Clarke and de Cruz 2015, p. s31). Within this new setting, in large part characterised by the challenges of climate change, a short-term focus on addressing human suffering in a reflexive, haphazard manner without understanding the dynamic context may in fact end up exacerbating suffering. There is a risk that being driven to address human suffering will limit humanitarian responses to the immediate and not allow for more systemic responses that are increasingly being driven by environmental changes.

Neutrality

Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature. (OCHA, 2012, p. 1)

Neutrality is proffered by some as a universal principle, the gold standard to which all humanitarian organisations worthy of the name should adhere at all times and in all places. Others see neutrality more as a pragmatic context-specific policy that may need to be cast aside under extreme circumstances to protect the innocent. The linchpin of this debate then, is the question of whether strict neutrality under all circumstances should be a core principle for humanitarian organisations. We argue here that this is neither possible nor ethical.

Peacekeepers played a vital role in protecting innocent lives in countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands. Lieutenant-Gen-

eral Roméo Dallaire, the UN Force Commander in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide, also maintains that with an extra 5,500 troops and a more robust mandate, the UN force in Rwanda could have largely prevented the slaughter of more than 800,000 people there (Dallaire, 2003, p. 547). After the genocide, high-ranking officers from several countries validated Dallaire's strategy (Feil, 1998). In January 1994 though, when an informant leaked plans for the impending slaughter, Dallaire urgently cabled UN Headquarters in New York for permission to seize four large militia weapons caches in the capital, Kigali. UN headquarters refused (Dallaire, 2003, pp. 142-147).

It can be legitimately argued that being perceived to take sides in any conflict increases the danger to NGO staff. Perhaps, but some NGOs may also be longing for the simpler days when wars were fought mainly between the regular armies of sovereign states and 'neutrality' was universally understood. In an age of irregular militias, we cannot presume that a single notion of neutrality is universally shared, for three primary reasons:

First, NGOs may not realise it, but their 'neutral' humanitarian work of reducing the suffering of a vulnerable population also happens to be a classic counterinsurgency tactic, since it can reduce local sympathy and support for militant groups (Galula, 1964). NGO work that reduces local grievances, that breaks down cross-cultural stereotypes, and that builds trust and understanding between former enemies, can run directly counter to the interests of militant power-brokers.

Second, since resources are generally fungible, NGO medical or nutritional support in one actor in a theatre of conflict, may free up resources to be used for combat elsewhere. For example, if a Western NGO is undertaking 'strictly apolitical humanitarian work' in one part of the territory controlled by a rebel commander, then that 'apolitical' work may well free up some of his logistical and medical resources to support frontline military operations. NGOs which fail to understand the fungibility of resources are also likely to be perplexed when their claims to political neutrality are met with derision by opposing forces.

Third, many 'civilian' militant groups hold firmly to a doctrine that anyone who assists their enemies becomes an enemy, and so they have no compunctions about targeting other civilians. In this worldview, if an NGO provides humanitarian assistance to the militants' enemies, or if it promotes enemy ideologies, such as the right of girls to an education, then it has shown itself not to be neutral, despite its protestations to the contrary based on its own (probably Western) understanding of neutrality. On the 12th of June 2007, Taliban gunmen in Afghanistan shot six young girls walking home from school, killing two (Bearak, 2007). To the Taliban, the girls' attendance at school represented the beachhead of an enemy ideology and as a result they became as much enemies as any foreign soldier. In such contexts, an NGO building schools for girls or training their teachers becomes an enemy too. Neutrality is not possible, since a shared understanding of what constitutes neutrality is absent.

The critical point is that almost all NGO work is inherently political since it affects power relations, resource distributions and the relative popular appeal of different political actors. An NGO does not need to be receiving funds from a foreign government, or cooperating with military forces, for some militant groups to perceive its work to be just as serious a threat as a military offensive. Work that an NGO may perceive as being apolitical and neutral, may be viewed, with good reasons, as highly political by other actors in a conflict environment.

At times, some NGOs seem to have lost their bearings altogether, choosing their idea of neutrality – even from UN peacekeeping forces – above people’s wellbeing. General Dallaire (2003, p. 493) tells of a surreal encounter amidst the ashes of the Rwandan genocide:

[Military] doctors and nurses from the Canadian field hospital ... came across a small NGO aid station where hundreds of people were waiting to be treated. Many of the patients were lying in the sun and even dying at the doorstep of the inundated facility. When the military doctors and nurses in their Red Cross armbands offered to help, the NGO staff actually refused. They feared losing their neutrality more than losing the lives of the patients at their door. The Canadian medical teams brushed aside their objection, scooped up the whole stranded group and transported them to the waiting staff at the field hospital.

Impartiality

Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions. (OCHA, 2012, p. 1)

There are two primary reasons why impartiality is no longer fit for purpose as a humanitarian principle: Firstly, impartiality has clearly not been borne out in practice. Certain regions and populations have received far more in terms of resources and assistance than others. Realpolitik, strategic concerns and sheer logistical challenges have made responses to humanitarian crises uneven, but political considerations are playing an increasingly important role. Let us consider two examples:

i. The world’s 25.4 million refugees include 5.4 million Palestinian refugees under the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) (UNHCR, 2018, p. 2). Some of these refugees have been waiting more than 70 years for a resolution to their plight – a prospect which seems to diminish with each passing year. Political considerations led the United States to cut US\$300 million from UNRWA’s budget in January 2018, which threatened “general education for 525,000 students, essential primary health care for 3 million patients and food assistance for 1.7 million refugees.” (UN, 2018c). While some other countries have stepped into make up some of the shortfall, UNRWA has also been forced to cut staff and programs.

ii. In recent years, China has undertaken a large-scale program of persecution and interment of up to one million Uighurs, who are mostly Muslim, in its western Xinjiang province (BBC News 2018). For obvious reasons there has been a limited and muted humanitarian response to what may be the largest forced interment of people since the Second World War. Being such a powerful state, China has simply told the rest of the world not to interfere in its internal affairs (Wescott, 2019). Other non-democratic states, such as Saudi Arabia, have encouraged China, saying it has every right to stamp out ‘religious extremism’ in whatever way it sees fit (Al-Jazeera, 2019).

Secondly, blind impartiality would not necessarily lead to the most efficient use of resources and the relief of the greatest suffering. Impartiality sounds like a noble aim, but it does not deal adequately with the inevitable trade-offs that would exist even in the absence of political considerations by donors. Sheer logistical and geographical considerations mean that it is vastly more expensive to assist some displaced populations compared with others. On the one hand it may be argued that every person should have an equal right to assistance – and there is truth in this. On the other hand, putting this principle into practice strictly would mean, given a limited assistance budget, that fewer people could be helped than if a more efficient approach were adopted. Such an approach would inevitably lead to a greater focus on more concentrated displaced populations with fewer logistical challenges. We would agree of course, with the response that there should be more resources available so that such choices should not have to be made. But given limited budgets, is the most humane principle really to adopt strict impartiality rather than greatest efficiency?

Independence

Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented. (OCHA, 2012, p. 1)

If humanitarian responses were strictly independent, we would expect victims of weather-related disasters, wars and famines to have an equal probability of being assisted – perhaps with variations based on logistical costs of accessing victims in remote geographic areas. There are innumerable examples however, of the lack of independence of humanitarian actions, due to factors such as strategic influences – the preferential treatment of allies, and perhaps most pervasively, the muting of political advocacy by NGOs due to a (not unfounded) fear of upsetting government grant-making agencies or donor constituencies.

There is also something equivalent to the ‘panda effect’ that is found in nature conservation: high-profile, appealing species, such as pandas, are easier to raise funds for than less-appealing species. Similarly, vastly disproportionate sums are raised for high-profile disasters, especially those with dramatic video footage, compared with more slow-motion disasters in more obscure locations. Local disasters in rich countries will also usually raise

more money than equivalent disasters in poorer countries.

There is also a growing threat from what might be described as the privatisation and corporatisation of the search for durable solutions to persistent global problems, including humanitarian disasters. In his book *Winners Take All*, Anand Giridharadas (2019) offers a scathing critique of the global elite's self-appointed role as providers of the solutions to the problems which they themselves have created. With states increasingly abrogating responsibilities to wealthy global elites and philanthropy, there are certain types of solutions that are never entertained – such as significantly increasing taxes, or strengthening environmental regulations, labour laws or building codes. It is presumed that market solutions are always to be preferred, that governments and regulators are generally incompetent, and that great wealth reflects a superior intelligence or insight, rather than having anything to do with entrenched privilege or power. Certain social attitudes reinforce this view, such as the myth of the 'self-made man' – particularly prominent in the United States – which routinely ignores the contribution of society to any business's success, including factors such as the provision of a skilled workforce by the public education system, a robust and reliable legal system, transport and utilities infrastructure, the benefits of previous government investments in health, technology (e.g. the internet) etc.

Humanitarian approaches which arise from or are dependent on this elite milieu are unlikely to be independent and are unlikely to countenance solutions which in any way question or undermine the system which supports the power-base of that elite.

4. The New Humanitarian Principles

Within an environment of increasing intensity and events, the humanitarian system itself has to change. Certainly, the professionalisation of the sector in recent years reflects such a change. Professionalization requires knowledge and qualified people to meet standards and to ensure appropriate responses to crises (Carbonnier 2014). While the humanitarian sector was conceived out of this spirit to respond to human need, the increasing complexity of humanitarian disasters as well as the significant resources expended within these responses does require there to be a higher level of accountability (Walker and Russ 2011). The need for donors to be assured their funds are being effectively and efficiently used to respond to these events is becoming increasingly important (Walker et al. 2010).

As part of the ongoing evolution of the humanitarian sector, and in light of these changes, it is necessary to reconsider the premises of the sector more fundamentally. The humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality are no longer fit for purpose. An alternative set of principles are now necessary.

Table 1 New Humanitarian Principles

Equity
Solidarity
Compassion
Diversity

Equity

Equity is a multidimensional, dynamic concept. We may distinguish between equity in opportunity, versus equity in outcome. We may focus on current equity across genders, regions or socio-economic classes. Or we may additionally consider intergenerational equity, which introduces concern for longer-term dynamic concepts such as climate change and ecological sustainability. We may also consider equity across different dimensions that affect vulnerability and resilience to disasters, particularly education, health, employment alternatives, and geographic locality. Obviously, a poor, illiterate girl with a disability in a remote community vulnerable to climate change faces vastly different prospects than a well-educated urban professional man. A disaster response which allocated resources equally to each of them would arguably not be equitable.

This raises the question of the extent to which an equity-oriented humanitarian response in an immediately post-disaster setting, should be cognizant of and seek to redress previous inequities. It may not even be possible. But in circumstances where it is possible, should it be a consideration? It is simpler to say 'No'. To say 'Yes' would entail potentially difficult resource allocation decisions – difficult practically and logistically, but perhaps most of all, politically. Much depends on the influence of different levels of government and their degree or responsiveness to local communities and their needs. It is safe to assume however, that poor, illiterate girls with disabilities are not a strong constituency politically anywhere, and so are likely to be neglected in a post-disaster setting, just as they are in normal times.

Intergenerational inequity is likely to be felt most acutely in the areas of climate change and ecosystem destruction. In models of the economic impacts of climate change, damage estimates tend to hinge crucially on the choice of 'discount rate', namely the rate chosen to discount the future. The higher the discount rate, the less we value future generations. Some economists dispute this reading, arguing that the choice of discount rate should be guided by estimates of future economic growth, so that it is okay to discount the future, since we assume that those generations will be much richer. But the likely temperature rises of anywhere from 3-5°C in the next hundred years will produce a different planet, more like that which obtained during the Eocene Period some 40 million years ago. With an essentially geologically instantaneous planetary warming, there is no reason whatsoever to expect that future generations will enjoy rates of economic

growth similar to those of the recent past. As Stern (2016, p. 408) warns:

Most current models of climate change impacts make two flawed assumptions: that people will be much wealthier in the future and that lives in the future are less important than lives now. The former assumption ignores the great risks of severe damage and disruption to livelihoods from climate change. The latter assumption is 'discrimination by date of birth'. It is a value judgement that is rarely scrutinized, difficult to defend and in conflict with most moral codes. (see also Stern, 2013).

Two further areas of equity will be considered briefly: equity in consideration of species, and equitable insurance markets.

First, it is arguable that in focussing only on humans, the humanitarian community is failing to take seriously enough the interconnection of species and humanity's utter dependence on the web of life. It is well known that the preservation of ecosystems such as mangroves and coastal wetlands can provide protection from disasters such as cyclones. But how many humanitarian projects include assistance for non-human species, or for the rehabilitation and repair of destroyed ecosystems? It is of course possible to make compelling arguments that certain 'higher' species such as apes, dolphins and elephants should be granted a degree of 'personhood' due to their superior intelligence and purported proximity to human persons. This may help, in a limited sense. But how much more important is the broader recognition that the well-being of human beings is inseparably linked to rich biodiversity and healthy ecosystems.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES Secretariat, 2019) estimated that more than one million species are at risk of extinction due to human activity. Does this not constitute a humanitarian emergency? Not because we are now stretching the definition of 'humanitarian' beyond its original intent, but because we are finally recognising that humans are not separable from nature. If ecosystems collapse, human 'civilization' will surely follow. Could there be a greater humanitarian emergency?

What might a humanitarian response to ecosystem collapse and species destruction look like? It would certainly include expanding the remit of humanitarian organisations and greatly upskilling them in the areas of ecosystem health and biodiversity, as well as fostering greater cooperation with environmental agencies and scientists.

The second area for discussion is the inadequate provision of disaster insurance and other risk management strategies for poor people. For those of us who live in wealthy countries with well-functioning insurance markets, and who can afford to avail ourselves of those services, the extreme vulnerability of the uninsured poor can be near impossible to imagine. In the rich countries we tend to view disasters as terrible events, but events that ultimately may be recovered from – in large part due to insurance payouts and assistance from wealthy gov-

ernments and fellow citizens. For vulnerable people in the poorest countries, a disaster can mean an absolute, irrecoverable loss, whose effects can cascade down the generations, plunging a family, village or even entire district into permanent, intergenerational poverty.

Solidarity

Solidarity conveys the collective obligation we have to address the needs of others. This principle of solidarity sits in stark contrasts to that of impartiality which not only places a barrier between 'us' and 'them' but insists that there be this separation and absence of judgement of the circumstances in which others find themselves. Being impartial recuses us from an active stance in monitoring the actions of others. Such a position minimises both the responders' ability to act soundly, but also provides a signal to those transgressing the rights of others that they will not be held accountable for their actions. This weakens the environment in which a humanitarian response is required, and most specifically in those instances when the humanitarian emergency results from human action such as conflict or famine.

National sovereignty results in the state having responsibility for their citizens and precludes other states interfering in the internal affairs of another nation. However, the international community has recognised not only the limits to this independence, but has also determined that there are instances where there is a responsibility beholden on other states and their agencies to protect citizens in another state. These instances of the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) were set out in 2001 (ICISS 2001), and endorsed by all UN member countries at the 2005 World Summit. They are currently limited to preventing instances of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Under this international framework, the notion of national sovereignty is superseded by the responsibility to protect citizens under threat of these specified actions.

Within the humanitarian context, the principle of solidarity can be conceptually extended beyond the specified circumstances agreed to in 2001. Humanitarian workers have always held a self-appointed mandate for action and response. Conceiving of this mandate in terms of being in solidarity further strengthens the role humanitarian actors have following humanitarian events. Having solidarity gives them licence to make judgements as to the causes of an event (specifically human-induced events) and to therefore shape their response in light of these judgements. Being freed from conscious impartiality allows a greater range of styles and modes of response. This freedom is further intensified by being consciously responsible for others. Solidarity requires action and precludes inaction. Action that is based on judgement is more able to be critical and therefore more able to address causation factors rather than just consequences. Solidarity rather than impartiality, demands humanitarian actors seek to focus resources at the core of humanitarian events. Such solidarity makes advocacy and direct action on behalf of those affected a clearer and explicit component of humanitarian responses. It also heralds a

greater holding to account those responsible for these human-induced events as they are being publicly and actively assessed.

Solidarity is also required in recognising the challenges that resettled refugees and asylum seekers may face in new countries with very different cultures to those in their home countries. Solidarity here requires resources and nuanced resettlement and support strategies from host countries, and also a willingness on the part of refugees and asylum-seekers to honour the norms and laws of their new countries. One of the tragedies of recent years was the way the initial welcome of Syrian refugees in Germany, which saw cheering crowds lining the streets, swiftly turned into a bitter backlash in the wake of the mass rapes of some 1200 German women on New Year's Eve 2015/16:

Authorities now think that on New Year's Eve, more than 1,200 women were sexually assaulted in various German cities, including more than 600 in Cologne and about 400 in Hamburg. More than 2,000 men were allegedly involved, and 120 suspects – about half of them foreign nationals who had only recently arrived in Germany – have been identified. (Noack, 2016).

No culture is perfect, but very clearly, significant populations of refugees come from cultures where patriarchal misogynistic attitudes towards women are still widespread. A clash of cultures in liberal democratic countries is inevitable without careful preparation and well-resourced cultural education programmes. If these cultural disparities are not managed well, they are likely to fuel right-wing anti-immigration political forces.

Compassion

Compassion is a powerful human emotion. It moves one beyond empathy and appreciation of another's perspective to action. Compassion allows us to experience the pain and suffering of others. As such, compassion connects one human to another at a very personal level. It requires an active and human response rather than a programmatic reaction. In an increasingly hostile environment with natural and human-made humanitarian events increasing, compassion will be a foil against disinterest, lethargy or fatigue. Compassion drives the humanitarian response at the individual level. Without compassion, the humanitarian response will be weaker and more likely to be reduced to a transaction.

A compassionate response does not imply a hierarchy of agency or a disengagement from professional standards. Those acting compassionately do so out of genuine human love, not because of real or perceived obligations or responsibilities. Compassion cuts across gender, abilities, socio-economic level, education, qualifications, race and occupation. Not only does compassion cut across faith boundaries, it is a virtue that exists in all major religious traditions. As 85 per cent of the world's population self-profess religious belief (reference?), this point of commonality strengthens the ability of compassion to guide humanitarian response as it is a unifying emotion.

As a humanitarian principle, compassion provides space for there to be human to human connection following a humanitarian event. Whilst not minimising the value and importance of professionalising the humanitarian sector and codifying the knowledge required to respond effectively and efficiently to disasters, the principle of compassion reasserts the primacy of the personal. Immediately following a humanitarian event, those that respond first are those from the affected communities. They respond to address the immediate needs of their families, neighbours and communities. Their response is heartfelt and without hesitation. Images of survivors scrambling over broken buildings, digging through rubble with bare hands, willing themselves to find their loved ones, are now commonplace.

Genuine connection with those that are experiencing pain and distress results from compassion. This connection demands action as the person experiencing authentic compassion is moved to do so as the pain and distress is shared between survivor and responder. At this point there is a relationship formed between the two. Compassion lays bare the myth of neutrality. Where neutrality seeks to suspend judgement or involvement, compassion insists that interest be shown and an association be formed. Where a veneer of neutrality denies an emotive response, compassion delivers the freedom to actively engage. The cultivation of compassion in both donor countries and resettlement countries will also be essential aspects of durable solutions to humanitarian crises.

Diversity

Diversity reflects the differences that exist in human populations. Diversity also refers to differences between human and non-human species (Nussbaum 2017, Narayanan and Bindumadhav 2018). Consideration of diversity is a necessary humanitarian principle as it forces those acting to appreciate the differences that exist within society and to properly account for them. Diversity requires diverse inputs, diverse processes, diverse evaluation, and diverse mechanisms for involvement. It requires a more nuanced approach to responding to humanitarian events. Diversity requires taking into account a wide range of differences, such as: differences in gender (including transgender) sexuality, physical abilities, mental health, , age, nationality, language-group, ethnicity, religion, employment, -economic conditions and so forth. In contrast to the existing principle of humanity, which has the primary goal of protecting life and health and alleviating suffering where ever it may exist, diversity celebrates the differences between humans and requires that differences be highlighted and drive responses. Recognising the principle of diversity means that humanitarian responses must actively address inequalities and ensure that responses are not silent on how societies construct inequity.

Diversity between human and non-human species is increasingly discussed with the basis upon which humans are elevated above non-human species being questioned (Cochrane 2013, Kymlicka 2018). The binary of human and non-human that results in a human-centric hier-

archy must be reconsidered. The principle of diversity will insist that this existing approach be rethought as the understanding of the interactions and dependency between human and non-human species becomes increasingly evident. In humanitarian responses, the principle of humanity has limited the response to the alleviation of human suffering only. It does not allow for (or expect) active and purposeful interventions to alleviate the suffering of non-human species. This limitation is not even appropriate within a system with humans at its epicentre, since it fails to recognise the interdependence of humanity on the biosphere. But is even more questionable when diversity beyond the human species is part of the humanitarian remit.

Unlike the other new principles being argued, diversity is perhaps the most challenging. With limited resources, the primacy of humans over non-humans has been an easy default position to justify. Diversity as a principle of humanitarian action extends responsibility to respond beyond the human. Given the interdependence of the global ecosystem, the protection of all species cannot be neglected within humanitarian responses. Scarce humanitarian resources may support human flourishing and resilience even if expended on the needs of non-human species.

The principle of humanity can no longer provide a cover for overlooking the diverse needs of different cohorts within an affected society that require diverse responses (which must explicitly address inequities), nor can it exclude consideration of the needs of non-human species. The principle of diversity challenges current humanitarian practices, but ensures that those that are less visible, or who are actively marginalised, are given equal weight.

Conclusion

Much has changed since 1859. The international community now has a humanitarian architecture that is able to respond, to varying degrees, to the 400 significant humanitarian events that affect over 120 million people annually. The way the international community responds to these events has been shaped by the four humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and independence. Their near universal adherence is evidence of their value and resonance within the sector. The historical value of these principles is therefore not questioned. However, whether they remain fit for purpose must be open for consideration.

This paper has presented an argument that the humanitarian environment has changed significantly in recent years, largely as a result of dramatic increases in refugees and the social, political, economic and environmental consequences of climate change. These two forces will drive and characterise humanitarian events in the future. As a consequence, the principles that underlie and motivate humanitarian responses need to be revised. This paper recommends these new principles be equity, solidarity, compassion and diversity. It is entirely expected that these four new principles will be contested and fur-

ther alternatives will be suggested. Such a debate would be welcomed. Just as witnesses to the carnage of the Battle of Solferino demanded change to how the world responded to such events, so too must we, as witnesses to the new humanitarian environment, demand change to the humanitarian principles that will drive our future humanitarian responses.

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