

ADR'S

HUMANITARIAN POLICY

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1. Introduction

ADR's vision is of a just world, in which every person is considered to be of equal value and is able to exercise his or her human rights. ADR's mission is to contribute to dismantling the causes of poverty and injustice so that all people, irrespective of their religion, gender or ethnicity may live in dignity.

Embedded within this mission is the organization's commitment to protecting and upholding the basic human rights of all people in situations of crisis resulting from disasters or conflict. From its first humanitarian actions after 2006 war, to its current range of programs and projects in contexts of conflict and disaster risk, ADR has developed significant institutional competences in this field.

As a multi-mandated organization with development and humanitarian objectives, ADR operates within the framework of Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law¹, and Refugee Law.

The following policy seeks to define and communicate ADR's approach to humanitarian action. Its aim is to support the staff of ADR and partners to design coherent and contextually-appropriate humanitarian programs in accordance with internationally-accepted humanitarian principles and standards, and implement them effectively, efficiently, and accountably.

The policy is also intended to inform beneficiaries and donors of ADR's programs, as well as its founding non-governmental organizations and other actors with an interest in understanding ADR's approach.

2. Scope of this Policy

ADR understands humanitarian action to be interventions to protect and uphold the right to life with dignity and alleviate the suffering of men and women in situations of crisis resulting from disasters or conflict. Such interventions include material assistance; temporary provision of basic services; advocacy to call on duty-bearers to fulfill their responsibilities; information and education; monitoring violations of human rights, IHL and refugee law, psychosocial support; and related training and capacity-building for affected persons and local humanitarian actors.

An integral part of ADR's humanitarian action is protection work, by which it means its efforts to prevent or cease violations of international humanitarian law and other relevant bodies of law or norms, and promoting the rights of victims to justice and remedy.

In line with good practice, ADR includes actions for early recovery and rehabilitation within its humanitarian policy and practice.

3. Human Rights-based Approach

In accordance with its human rights based approach, ADR commits to integrate human rights principles and IHL into its own humanitarian action as well as that of its partner organizations. The key human rights based approach principles participation, transparency, non-discrimination and accountability. It also seeks to influence donors and the local humanitarian communities to integrate human rights principles and IHL into their humanitarian policies, programs and discourse.

4. Humanitarian Principles

As a humanitarian actor, ADR is committed to upholding the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence as enshrined in the Four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols⁴, and incorporated into the Sphere Humanitarian Charter. The fundamental principles are defined as follows:

- The principle of humanity: means that human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found, with particular attention to the most vulnerable in the population. The dignity of all victims must be respected and protected.
- The principle of impartiality: denotes that humanitarian aid must be provided solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations.
- The principle of neutrality: aiming only to meet human needs and refraining from taking sides in hostilities or giving material or political support to parties to an armed conflict.
- The principle of independence: acting only under the authority of the organization's governing body and in line with the organization's purpose. Further, the humanitarian mandate is guiding the humanitarian intervention and there should be autonomy in relation to other actors' possible influence characterized by political, economic, military or other non-humanitarian motives.

ADR embraces the principle of accountability to rights-holders not only in humanitarian crises but in all of its work.

⁴ Geneva Conventions, 1949, available at <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/full/380?opendocument>

5. Humanitarian Standards

ADR has adopted the Core Humanitarian Standard⁶ and continues to seek to apply other relevant minimum standards in its humanitarian work. In applying quality and accountability standards, ADR seeks to make a 'people-centred' approach a reality, and to ensure that its interventions are acceptable and accountable to rights-holders above all, as well as donors and other actors. Not only ADR is committed to training its own and its partners' staff in the rationale for and the application of quality and accountability standards, it also advocates for all governmental and non-governmental humanitarian actors to adhere to these standards wherever possible.

6. Compatibility of Objectives

The 'humanitarian imperative' refers to the right to receive and to give humanitarian assistance and states the obligation of the international community to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed.

ADR believes that the provision of humanitarian assistance and protection should be combined with longer-term strategies to achieve sustainable development goals and political solutions to violent conflict. As such, it engages in a constant process of analysis to identify the most appropriate combination of strategies for any given situation. In locations where ADR has decided to respond to an emergency it is possible that existing programs may be affected temporarily (halting, delaying, reduced resources or support) to enable ADR and partners to respond, due to the humanitarian imperative.

The actual impacts on/changes to programs and management of the emergency response will be determined at a country level, and should take into account existing project/programme contracts and clauses - including force majeure, the effect any temporary changes may have on partners and programs and the level of response and resources needed.

ADR recognizes that there are emergency situations when the organization, for various reasons will not respond. ADR have the flexibility to decide whether to respond to an emergency or not in consultation with ADR Management and Board. Some basic questions to guide ADR Management and Board in these decisions are listed in the box below:

⁶ <http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/CHS-Guidance-Notes-and-Indicators.pdf>

1. What capacity exists at ADR to respond? Are there organizations or institutions that are better equipped to respond?
2. What value does ADR add to the response, or what is our comparative advantage?
3. Does relevant staff at ADR operational office level have capacity to respond?
4. Does ADR have the capacity/resources to support a response? (Including administrative, management, assessment of and technical support to partners, communication, financial)?
5. Does ADR have local partners working in the specific location of the disaster?
6. Does ADR anticipate being able to raise funds for a response?
7. What are the response options for ADR in this emergency (support to partner, advocacy only, humanitarian coordination, feeding information from partners to humanitarian coordination mechanisms, trying to get funding/support for partner from other sources, etc.)
8. What will be the impact on existing programs and how will this be handled?
9. What is the situation with regard to security and civil-military coordination?

7. Mode of Operation

ADR believes in the uniquely valuable role of civil society organizations with a commitment to humanitarian principles and standards, relevant skills, local knowledge and an established relationship with populations affected by disaster or conflict. It believes that local organizations are well-placed to respond appropriately and rapidly, build on existing capacities, structures and systems within the affected communities, promote early recovery and facilitate appropriate reconstruction. It also believes in making every effort to strengthen democratic ownership and participation. For these reasons, in most circumstances ADR chooses to undertake humanitarian action with one or more of its long-term partners/stakeholder in a manner which is regarded by both or all parties as empowering and conducive to institutional-strengthening.

ADR provide directly humanitarian assistance and/or protection in coordination and partnership with local authority, regional local organizations and other local stakeholders

8. Collaboration and Coordination

In order to define the location, type and scale of humanitarian assistance and protection activities to be undertaken, ADR takes into account the needs of the affected population, the experience, skills and knowledge of existing and potential partner(s), the capacity and competences of governmental and non-governmental organizations present in the affected area, relevant international actors (e.g. UNHCR and UNOCHA) the availability of funding, and other specific requirements of the humanitarian situation. ADR and its partners seek to coordinate their humanitarian action with all relevant levels of government, international NGOs and local civil society actors, UN agencies and others, in order to contribute to a coherent and efficient humanitarian response and enhance aid effectiveness and accountability, in line with the development effectiveness agenda and the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship⁷. Where humanitarian clusters exist, ADR participates directly or through local or regional authority and organization.

9. Civil-Military Relations

When military personnel and assets are deployed for humanitarian purposes, ADR is prepared to coordinate on operational aspects of its humanitarian action but ensures that it has put in place specific measures to maintain and communicate its civil nature, independence and impartiality of decision-making.

In situations of conflict ADR only coordinates with the military on matters relating to humanitarian action if alternative civilian options have already been explored and concluded to be inexistent or inadequate, and if sufficient information exists to assess how such interactions will affect its own and other agencies' acceptance among the local population and other belligerents, the security of ADR and its partners' staff, and the protection of the beneficiary communities. In such situations, ADR seeks to develop a shared approach and strategy with other civil humanitarian agencies operating on the same principles.

There should be careful country level analysis about coordination with the military in advance of emergencies and included in the contingency plan and discussions with partners. ADR will need to take a pragmatic approach which does not contravene humanitarian principles. It is important to note that coordination with the military can be very different in situations of natural disaster vs conflict. Country offices should make use of existing guidelines for humanitarian agencies in coordinating with the military such as the Oslo Guidelines, Sphere or the SCHR Guidelines. In country humanitarian coordination mechanisms should be accessed to support ADR analysis and decision-making in this regard⁸.

⁷ <http://www.goodhumanitarianandonorship.org/gns/principles-good-practice-ghd/overview.aspx>

⁸ Further references to Civil-Military relations: *Steering Committee on Humanitarian Response (SCHR) Position Paper on Humanitarian-Military Relations (SCHR is an INGO alliance)*:

[http://ochanet.unocha.org/p/Documents/Steering%20Committee%20for%20Humanitarian%20Response-%20SCHR%20position%20paper%20on%20humanitarian-military%20relations%20\(2010\).pdf](http://ochanet.unocha.org/p/Documents/Steering%20Committee%20for%20Humanitarian%20Response-%20SCHR%20position%20paper%20on%20humanitarian-military%20relations%20(2010).pdf)

Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Natural Disasters (also called the Oslo Guidelines): <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/pageloader.aspx?page=content-products-products&productcatid=8> *Civil Military Guidelines and References for Complex Emergencies* <http://www.unocha.org/> *Civil Military Relations in Armed Conflict* <http://www.unocha.org/>

10. Duration

When engaged in humanitarian action, and especially to rapid onset disasters, responding in a timely fashion to minimize human suffering is a key humanitarian objective for ADR. In protracted crises ADR seeks to design and undertake longer-term humanitarian action, funding permitting.

At the outset of all humanitarian projects and programs, ADR designs a 'phase-out' strategy which seeks to define how ADR and its partners will wind down and stop relief activities and, where possible, make an effective transition into recovery, rehabilitation and/or back to development. 'Phase-out' strategies are regularly reviewed during all humanitarian projects and programs.

11. Project Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning

ADR recognizes that the complexity of humanitarian crises and the required pace of response place particular demands on all aspects of project management, but particularly on post-disaster assessments, project design, and monitoring processes. ADR staff has developed specific tools for humanitarian interventions.

12. Gender

ADR is committed to incorporating gender analysis into all stages of the humanitarian project cycle, and to developing projects and programs that are responsive to the differentiated needs and vulnerability factors of women and men, despite of age, cultural – and religious expression, ethnicity, social- and economic status, sexual identity, disability. ADR recognizes that humanitarian crises can present opportunities to promote women's strategic interests and actively seeks to identify and make use of these. As a fundamental step, and in line with UNSCR 1325 (2000)⁹, it ensures that women are appropriately represented in organizational structures at the community level and have access to resources to implement their ideas.

At the same time, ADR endeavors to ensure that humanitarian assistance and protection reduce specific vulnerabilities experienced by women ADR acknowledges the widespread and/or systematic use of sexual violence as an instrument of conflict¹⁰.

⁹ http://www.un.org/events/res_1325e.pdf

¹⁰ As stated in Security Council Resolution 1820

As such, it requires staff and partners to incorporate strategies to prevent and respond to acts of sexual and gender-based violence into all aspects of humanitarian action, and to support the development of the capacities of national institutions to assist victims of sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations (UNSCR¹¹ 1820 and 1888).

13. Intersectional Analysis

ADR takes an intersectional approach to analyzing vulnerability in order to take into account the complexities of each context. It recognizes that vulnerable groups may include (but not be limited to) those differentiated by gender, age, cultural and religious expression, socio-economic status, health status, sexual identity, disability and ethnicity. In its humanitarian interventions ADR prioritizes the sectors of the population it considers to experience multiple vulnerabilities or extreme vulnerability, that have the lowest capacity to meet their own needs and recover from disaster or conflict.

Given that children are usually among the most vulnerable sectors of the disaster or conflict-affected population, ADR ensures that its staff and partners are aware of and seek to implement the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action¹².

14. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

ADR understands that the scale of a disaster depends on the physical, economic, political and socio-cultural vulnerability of the population exposed to a particular hazard, and the limitations of institutions to address the situation. The simple existence of hazards, and occurrence of natural phenomena, does not have to result in a full scale disaster; rather, the impact of disasters is largely created by humans, as a result of inequity in terms of access to resources and power.

For these reasons, ADR regards tackling disaster risk as means to address injustice, requiring an approach that addresses both the effects and the root causes. As such, it is committed to strengthening local DRR Unit capacities at all levels, integrating DRR strategies and activities into its humanitarian and long-term development interventions, and advocating for pro-DRR policies and budgets at local/regional, national levels. In its humanitarian work, ADR will always seek to develop opportunities and implement actions that enable communities to respond and recover in ways that increase their capacity to deal with future shocks and stresses.

As climate change is increasing the risk of extreme events and disasters, ADR recognize that in order to be successful, DRR efforts must consider future risk patterns induced by climate change.

¹¹http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/CCC_042010.pdf

¹² http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/CCC_042010.pdf

15. Negative Impacts

ADR endeavors to avoid any negative impacts as a result of its humanitarian action. ADR's humanitarian work shall be performed with high sensitivity to ongoing or potential conflicts.

16. Environmental Impact

ADR is committed to incorporating environmental impact considerations into its assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures, and to avoiding, where possible, carrying out any actions within its projects that might cause environmental degradation.

An important element of ADR's disaster risk reduction work is to promote sustainable natural resource management and adapt to new realities caused by a changing climate.

17. Security

The security and safety of ADR's staff is of prime importance to ADR. ADR shall have an updated security plan for each country office. These plans should reflect requirements in humanitarian situations. Security conditions and security plans shall be reviewed at the outset of a new humanitarian crisis and with appropriate regularity during any humanitarian project or program.

Any security incidents occurring are reported following ADR procedures.

18. Human Resources

Through its selection and staff development policies, ADR ensures that its staff with responsibility for humanitarian projects and programs have the necessary knowledge, skills, support and employment conditions to implement the humanitarian principles and standards outlined in this policy. In contexts of armed conflict, ADR requires that all staff and partners are familiar with IHL (International Humanitarian Law).

As stated in ADR's Code of Conduct, all members of staff and consultants are required to adhere to ADR's commitment to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries of humanitarian action.

19. Funding

ADR only seeks and/or accepts funding for its humanitarian action from sources whose principles and procedures are compatible with this policy and do not have a negative impact on the protection of beneficiaries or the security of staff or partners.

Where ADR or its partner has entered into a contractual relationship with a donor, it is responsible for meeting all contractual conditions, including all procurement requirements.

20. Implementation of Policy

ADR is committed to ensuring that operating procedures, guidelines, a capacity-development plan and a strategy is in place to implement and monitor this policy.

ADR expects all staff and partners to be familiar with the policy, to implement it, and to inform their manager immediately if they become aware of any circumstances in which it cannot or has not been implemented.

Actions and decisions relating to the implementation of this policy are taken by the General Manager of ADR. Issues of a humanitarian nature that are not included in this policy, and complex issues requiring multi-level assessment, should be referred to the General Manager or, in his/her absence, the Head of Program, prior to any decisions being taken.

21. Validity

This policy was last updated in May 2024. It is reviewed annually, and at any other time needed.

Annex 1: Glossary of Terms

The following definitions have been adopted or modified for use by ADR:

1.1 Disaster

A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society, caused by anthropogenic or natural hazards, that involves widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses and impacts, and exceeds the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.

(Adapted from UNISDR, 2009)

1.2 Disaster Risk Reduction

The concept and practice of reducing disaster risks through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causal factors of disasters, including through reduced exposure to hazards, lessened vulnerability of people and property, wise management of land and the environment, and improved preparedness for adverse events.

(UNISDR, 2009)

1.3 Humanitarian Accountability

Taking account of the needs, concerns, capacities and disposition of those affected by humanitarian crises, and explaining the meaning of, and reasons for, the actions and decisions taken in a humanitarian intervention.

(Adapted from Humanitarian Accountability Partnership)

1.4 Humanitarian Action

Material assistance and actions designed to save lives, alleviate suffering and protect human dignity and integrity, undertaken on an impartial basis during and after humanitarian crises.

Adapted from European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, 2007

1.5 Humanitarian Crisis

Situation in which there is a widespread and immediate threat to human life, dignity and integrity as a result of man-made or natural causes.

Adapted from European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, 2007

1.6 Humanitarian Protection

Actions to protect the safety, dignity and integrity of people in situations of deprivation and/or violence.

Adapted from Protection for Humanitarian Agencies, ALNAP, 2005

1.7 Humanitarian Response

The provision of emergency services and material assistance, and the implementation of protective strategies during or immediately after a humanitarian crisis, in order to save lives, alleviate suffering and protect the dignity and integrity of the people affected.

A humanitarian response from an external actor is justified under International Humanitarian Law, when the duty-bearer is not able or willing to exercise his or her responsibility.

Adapted from European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, 2007

1.8 Recovery

The restoration, and improvement where appropriate, of facilities, livelihoods and living conditions of communities that have been affected by humanitarian crises.

Adapted from UNISDR, 2009