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...C'NECT

CONNECTING HUMANITARIAN IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES

SHAPING THE FUTURE

Photo: Madeleine Walder

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Letter from the Editors

Seemingly ceaseless natural, political, environmental, and humanitarian crises. The media bombards us with the horrors of famine in the Sahel, collapse of the Spanish banking system, earthquake in Pakistan and geopolitical crisis in Syria. Humanitarian aid is fused with military objectives and given to *genocidaires*, not to mention being used as a substitute for political interventions. Never before has awareness about and frequency of humanitarian crises been higher, nor the humanitarian space in which to deliver assistance to victims been more crowded and complicated. Clearly the landscape is wildly different from that which led to the founding of humanitarianism, by the famous Henri Dunant, 149 years ago. Innocence has been lost. The humanitarian guiding principles devised during Dunant's time are both being clung to and challenged as the justification for and methods of humanitarian action have become ever more scrutinized. Dunant's lofty ideal of providing help to the needy regardless of their denomination or gender is now insufficient to ensure the safe passage of either humanitarian aid or those who deliver it. Just as the landscape has become more cluttered, with actors, mandates and motivations, it is our job as humanitarian workers to keep up with the pace. Too often the objective behind the crowded landscape is lost in the chaos. When the limitations placed upon humanitarian action seem too severe or too complex, it is vital to remember on whose behalf we are acting. **Now let's get up and shape the future for the positive!**

NOHA Network on Humanitarian Assistance International Association of Universities

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A World in Crisis?

A commentary by Stephanie Ellis

Crisis. A world with equally strong connotations as famine. Both words that should in a world devoid of **catastrophism**, be used sparingly. There is still a reluctance to, yet both have been in the recent past, declared. In Subsaharan Africa and Europe, with the Sahel, Spain and Greece being the obvious **protagonists**. Off well maintained highways into and out of suburban Madrid, machinery for public works, underground stations, housing estates, stands abandoned after a snap decision to stop construction. After the ´**crisis**´ hit the construction industry, significant amounts of **money** are being re-directed from social services, such as schools and hospitals, to propping up the banks. Yet is this a **crisis**? Whilst no expert, only a person with eyes, this is no crisis. But it could cause one. The driver of a Combi in Germany, asked me ´I don´t think we can justify spending taxpayer money on **Humanitarian Aid**´ - do you?´

My reply: in Spain and Greece, clearly there are economic **issues** despite the fact that there are, undeniably, many people being inconvenienced, the mood appears **buoyant** and **optimistic**, people have **faith** in the economic, political, judicial and social systems to guide this transition ´**back to prosperity**´. People for the most-part have enough to eat. There are facts to support this naive optimism: there are functioning economic, political, judicial and social systems in all of these countries. In the countries in which **humanitarian aid** is being distributed, assumptions that these systems function or even exist cannot be made. What cannot be under-emphasised is that **crisis and famine** in these contexts have two very different meanings. This situation may inconvenience and lead to ´hardship´, reducing humanitarian aid would surely lead to increased mortality. What is currently needed is perspective, meaning not a denial of the current **European ´situation´** yet a ´wider view´ to determine which elements within this situation need reviewing: whether Greece should even be in the EU, for example. Reducing humanitarian aid, which has the over-publicised power to **´save lives´ is no option**. While we experience inconvenience as a result of this crisis, others experience, indirectly and directly, **hunger, disease, unemployment**, all of which combined with the pre-existing effects of **poverty and political instability,** ultimately lead to **death**. Hopefully this ´crisis´ and inconvenience will lead the citizens of the EU to gain **empathy and gratitude** for the privileged lives that are able to be led here. As one Greek person said ´we do not wish to work, we wish to be **happy**, to eat **good food** and drink good wine.´ Crisis or no crisis, this is clearly still possible, it´s time to realise that.

A Tale of Two Tsunamis

Do natural disasters really cause conflict?

The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami was both an epic tragedy and a turning point for humanitarian action. Killing over 200 000 people and affecting millions more, the tsunami triggered the largest humanitarian operation in history. Mistakes were made and practices were changed, but in looking back it seems we still have lessons to learn.

by Peter Grzic

Among the areas hardest hit were Sri Lanka and Aceh, a region on the Indonesian island of Sumatra. While both islands were in the midst of a protracted civil conflict, and both experienced widespread devastation as a result of the tsunami, the ultimate impact on the conflicts could not be more different.

In Aceh, immediately after the tsunami a ceasefire was declared and less than a year later, a peace agreement was signed. The peace agreement successfully brought an end to the conflict and has held for more than seven years. By contrast, in Sri Lanka one year later the civil war was once more in full flight. Today, the conflict is over, having been militarily won by Government forces and both sides have been accused of war crimes.

The fact that the very same event, one of the most destructive natural disasters in history, could have such different impacts on conflict leads to some obvious questions – Why? What is the impact of natural disasters on conflict? Is it a blessing in disguise or a just a curse?

As humanitarian workers we know the vast majority of our work will be focused on natural disasters, armed conflict or, worst of all, a combination of both. And if the IPCC and the vast majority of the world's climate scientists are correct, we're only going to see more frequent and more severe natural disasters. That means even if the number of conflicts remains constant, we can still expect to be dealing with a lot more of these nightmare scenarios in the future.

These complex humanitarian emergencies, mixing the worst of nature and of man (and it usually is men), present the ultimate challenge for humanitarian workers. So how is it we don't better understand the relationship between the two? Surely this must be a priority for research in our field.

"What is the impact of natural disasters on conflict? Is it a blessing in disguise or a just a curse?"

The truth is some research has been conducted, but it is all centred on one question – do natural disasters make conflicts more or less likely? Unsurprisingly the results are inconclusive.

One school of thought argues that natural disasters do make conflicts more likely. Some say disasters lead to resource shortages which in turn create, or exacerbate, conflict. Others argue that because natural disasters affect poor and disadvantaged people disproportionately, they highlight existing inequality, aggravating grievances. Still others suggest that a disaster's impact on economic growth or Government capacity indirectly makes conflict more likely.

Alternatively, there is a second school that suggests that natural disasters have no effect, and may even reduce conflict. While some say this is a result of practical considerations, such as damage to soldiers and equipment reducing capacity to fight, much has been made of more psycho-social causal factors. The "Disaster Diplomacy" theory describes positive impacts on conflict stemming from the good will and empathy that natural disasters can produce.

The problem with all this, and indeed one of the main reasons the research is inconclusive, is that it's asking the wrong question.

Both natural disasters and conflict are incredibly complex phenomena, our understanding of which has only developed after extensive thinking and research. To assume that a straightforward and consistent causal relationship exists between the two is to ignore the inherent complexities and uniqueness of each.

In reality it is far more likely that the relationship between the two is extremely complex and conditional upon the specific set of circumstances involved.

What's needed is a more exploratory approach, for example using the question posed by the tsunami example above - What is the impact of natural disasters on conflict? Vague perhaps, but it would allow for the necessary complexity.

The answer, of course, "It depends". It always is. So what use is that?

Nothing, on its own. The real value is in what comes next – It depends ….. *on what*? What factors make natural disasters more likely to have what impacts?

Before answering that, it's worth explaining why these questions haven't been asked before. Conflict resolution and disaster management have both emerged from necessity and experience over the last half century, but have done so more or less independently of each other. Disaster managers traditionally focused on natural disasters and left conflicts to those that deal with them. Unfortunately the world does not divide itself so neatly and the way forward requires input from both fields.

Disasters are not physical phenomena – such as earthquakes, tsunamis and cyclones – but rather the negative impacts they cause for humans. An earthquake that doesn't affect anyone is not a disaster. By this definition, the potential impact of a drought or hurricane on a conflict is not something external to the 'natural disaster' but part of the disaster itself.

As such, disaster management specialists need to improve their understanding of conflict dynamics and have a great deal to learn from the conflict-resolution field. They need to understand how conflicts work if they are going to understand the impacts of physical hazards. But then what can be done with this understanding?

This is where the conflict analysis specialists have something to learn from the disaster management field. Disaster management, or disaster risk reduction as it is often called, involves a continuous process of analysis and action aimed at reducing the potential negative effects of a given hazard. Despite never having perfect information, plans are made and preparations are put in place because they have been continually shown to be worthwhile investments, saving lives and property.

Even if we can never have perfect information on either a conflict or the onset of a particular disaster, we often have a good idea and can make semi-reliable predictions. A better understanding of the ways in which natural disasters can influence conflicts – positively and negatively – will enable humanitarians to take the best possible action before, during and after such events.

And the payoff may be substantial. Preparation may not only enable us to help prevent a country descending into civil war. It may also allow us to take full advantage of rare opportunities to transform intractable conflicts that can present themselves in the shape of a natural disaster. It may enable us to help turn two profoundly tragic negatives into a positive for those affected, and save a great many lives in the process ◆

"Disaster managers traditionally focused on natural disasters and left conflicts for those that deal with them. Unfortunately the world doesn't divide itself so neatly and the way forward requires input from both fields."

This article is based on an academic paper written by the author. A copy of the paper, including full references, is available on request.

by Caroline Roche & Hanna Peters

Darfur: One Year After Doha - A Chance for Peace?

Between hope & despondency

Since the civil war broke out in Darfur in 2003, the international community has increased its efforts to facilitate a political settlement. However, violence continues unabated. Since early 2011, the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) have reportedly bombed civilians regularly and with complete impunity. Recently, graves in South and West Darfur have been destroyed in order to mask the evidence of massive killings. Is there no end to the theatre of horror taking place before our eyes?

Hope arose in July 2011. The Government of Sudan (GoS) and a consortium of rebel movements, the duration and Justice Movement (LJM) signed the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. Five years earlier, a first landmark accord had been brokered, the Darfur Peace Agreement, but its implementation rapidly failed. The question is now: does the latest accord have the potential to finally bring sustainable peace to the region? Have lessons from the past been learnt?

Lessons learnt from Abuja

The Darfur Peace Agreement was signed in May 2006. It represented the first step towards putting an end to the civil war in Darfur. However, after two years of drawn-out negotiations, only two parties to the conflict signed the agreement, namely the GoS and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM). Rather than improving the security situation and disarming former combatants, the unstable ceasefire eventually resulted in the resurgence of violence. Why such a failure? Both the non-signatories and the victims of the conflict viewed the accord as an unfinished and unfair text. Unfinished – because it did not tackle the the root causes of the conflict. Unfair – because it distributed the power in an unbalanced way and disregarded the affected population, in particular refugees and IDPs. Not to mention that many smaller rebel groups were not represented and that civil society was not consulted. All in all, the climate of negotiation was characterized by mistrust. To add insult to injury, the mediators and other third parties pushed the agreement through in excessive haste, mainly because of the growing pressure of donors and public opinion worldwide.

On the road to Doha

After the signature of the Darfur Peace Agreement, the African Union agreed to launch an AU/UN hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID). Its mandate was mainly to re-energize the peace process, establish a ceasefire and strengthen peacekeeping. UNAMID has since become the largest peacekeeping operation in the world. The mission offered a new hope for peace by coordinating regional initiatives, uniting rebel movements and re-engaging an inclusive political dialogue.

The Doha peace talks started in February 2009. The nego-

-tiators, the GoS and the two rebel movements – the JEM and the LJM –, tried to rebuild confidence. Nevertheless, the talks nearly ended prematurely. As in Abuja, the facilitators were eager to reach an accord at all costs. Again, mistrust was predominant and the major rebel groups questioned the impartiality and independence of the mediators.

The signature of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur occurred in July 2011, five days after the independence of South Sudan, and was largely acclaimed by the international community. But what had actually changed since the accord of 2006? Positively, leaders of civil society and IDP communities were given the opportunity to share their concerns and recommendations with the negotiating parties albeit to a very little extent. But in the end, the accord remains a bilateral agreement between the GoS and one rebel group, the LJM. Also in substance, it resembles the previous accord. It does not address the root causes of the conflict, nor does it rebalance wealth and power-sharing guarantees. In other words, it appears more as a symbolic achievement endowed with a placebo effect than a concrete set of measures that will effectively alleviate those who are suffering.

Challenges ahead

In any peace agreement, the implementation phase is decisive. At this stage, Darfur is benefitting from the emergence of a more cohesive civil society which tries to disseminate the accord widely through workshops in order to develop a culture of peace. Despite these efforts, observers fear that the implementation of the agreement will be biased. And this not least since President al-Bashir appointed himself as the chairman of the High Follow-Up Committee for Peace in Darfur, in May this year.

In addition, the implementation phase of the Doha Document for Peace is already symptomatic of a wider upcoming crisis. The US press sees the recent escalation of violence in the states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile as an echo of the civil war in Darfur. The security situation and the political illegitimacy of state authorities – given for instance the warrant arrests against President Al-Bashir and his former Defense Minister Hussein – show us that political negotiations alone cannot bring sustainable peace.

"The implementation phase of the Doha Document for Peace is already symptomatic of a wider upcoming crisis."

Yet, the UN Security Council has repeatedly recognized, including recently in its resolution 2035 (2012), that "a durable solution can only be obtained through an inclusive political process". Paradoxically, when the same Security Council calls for the resumption of negotiations between Sudan and South Sudan in its Resolution 2046 (2012), it does not make a single reference to Darfur, as if there was no link between the situation in Darfur and the North-South conflict. Today, given the involvement of Darfuri rebels in both conflicts, peace in Darfur seems to be a prerequisite for peace in the broader region rather than the other way around. Darfur should no longer be isolated or overshadowed by the North-South conflict. Darfur stands as a *janus bifrons* in the "mother of all divorces"

by Martin Winkler

Research in the Field: The Basics

Notes from a workshop with Kristine Eck

You have found a topic of interest and a gap in research? You are considering collecting first hand data? Doing research in the field is an ambitious and challenging enterprise. The following checklist gives you an idea where to start:

- **Find a Research Question!** Know in advance what you want to find out by asking yourself questions related to your topic. For example, if you want to do research on the involvement of women in rebel groups, then this would be: Why do some rebel groups recruit women and some do not? Why are women participating? What are their role in the rebel group?
- **Build contacts before you leave!** Get your foot in the door, make contacts before you go. In some cultures people expect you to contact them through some kind of network (e.g. you have to be a friend of a colleague or someone else they know), otherwise they will not correspond with you.
- **Get a research assistant!** They will set up meetings, help you to get to meetings, perhaps also act as translators (ask before: can someone recommend a research assistant).
- **Find a gatekeeper:** While research assistants are usually students whose assistance you paid for, a gatekeeper is usually an influential person who can help you access a network.
- **Check what is already available!** When you are in a certain country – also for an internship – find data! Go to bookshops, see what is already compiled. Usually every country has a National Bureau or Agency of Statistics, ask for the Government Census.

In contacting people for help or interviews, you are asking for a favour and their time, which most people consider quite valuable! Make it a good impression. Be prepared and professional! And be thankful after.

- **Keep your eyes and ears open!** Do not be shy. Be friendly and chatty with people.

You never know how networks overlap. This is why you should not speak critically about others. Further on, find the places where the people you are interested in hang out, e.g. the hotel where UN people stay and the bars which they go to. Spend time there!

- **Keep a research record every day!** Write quickly down who you have met, what happened, your mood… Spend five minutes every day. Keep a notebook with side notes about what people have said. (Yes, fieldwork is exhausting!)
- **Know whom to target!** Often, the middle management has a great deal of information and is willing to discuss it! For example, in a civil war context, foot soldiers have many stories to tell, but cannot give you the bigger picture. Rebel leaders on the other hand might be used to the media and interviews, so they know exactly what to say and what not. You might get many useless interviews, until you get to the one which is really helpful (maybe one out of ten).
- **Know how to prepare an interview!** What kind of information do you want to get? How can I ask? Can I ask around? How personal might this information be for the interviewee? What do I do if I feel the interviewee does not want to answer my question? How should I continue then? Can I record the interview? Consider also allowing for pauses after having asked questions. Say yes to uncomfortable silence! Pauses give the person time to think about what he/she just has said and perhaps elaborate or adjust their response.
- **Helpful books about interviewing:** "Understanding Peace Research – Methods and Challenges" by Höglund, Öberg, especially chapter 8: "In-depth Interviewing: The process, skill and ethics of interviews in peace research"; another good book is "Qualitative Interviewing" by Rubin and Rubin.
- **Overall: Don't worry!** On a Master-thesis level, you do not need to prove your thesis is right. So, any kind of result is helpful. All the best!

Kristine Eck, Ph.D., is an assistant professor at the Department of Peace and Conflict Research (DPCR) at Uppsala University. Her focus is on dynamics of conflicts, rebel recruitment and state repression. She did field research in Burma, Thailand and Nepal.

TEDxDeusto

x = independently organized TED event

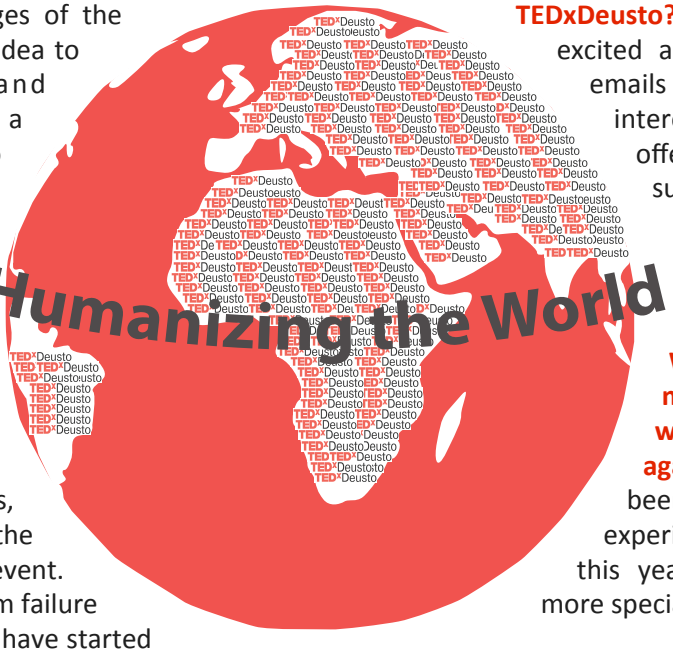
Interview with Roger Gutiérrez Salgado and David Salvador

by Hanna Peters

How did the idea to organize a TED event in Deusto arise? Some of us in Deusto were (and are now even more so!) big fans of TED. It was during a coffee break at the very beginning of the first semester that Mar, one of us, had the idea to adapt the TED format to Humanitarian Action.

Once you had the idea... it was so exciting that some of us couldn't wait to have a meeting, we came up with a first team structure and started putting ideas together on how to achieve such a challenging goal!

What were the biggest challenges in organizing this event? At the very first stages of the project, it was difficult to sell the idea to institutions, organizations and sponsors. Some of them saw us as a bunch of students with no experience and an impossible idea, some didn't even reply our e-mails. But we were very lucky to have the support from our university from the beginning, engaging them was the first success.



What would you do differently today? We made many mistakes, but we learned so much from the process of organizing such an event. That was the idea too: learning from failure and then trying harder. We should have started looking for sponsors earlier and put more effort into this issue. It took too long to engage some of them. At some point in January we really thought we wouldn't manage to have enough resources and that the project was in danger... but after a few weeks it all worked out.

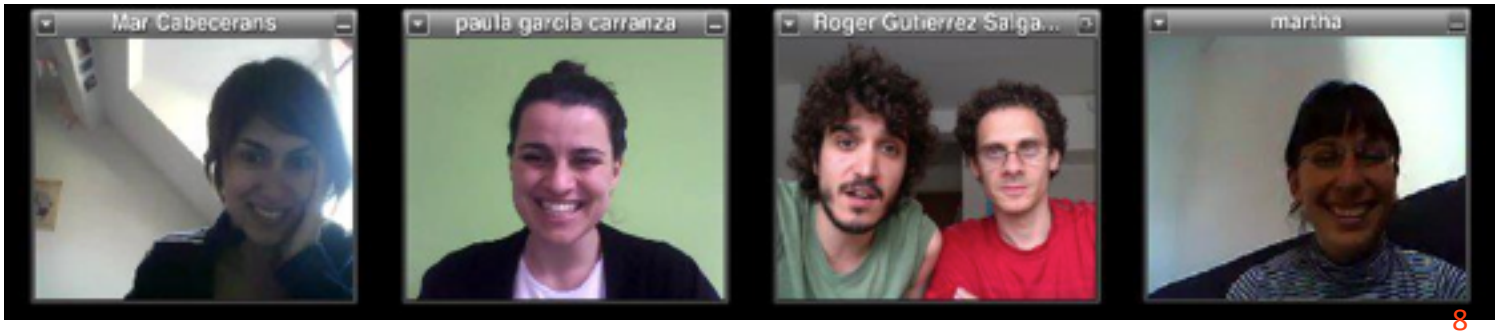
What would you do in the same way? Count on the same people. We were very lucky to find each other and to be able to work together with the same clear ideas from the beginning. That has been the key of TEDxDeusto's success.

You once said that organizing the TEDx event made you learn more than a Master program could teach you; what exactly did you learn? TEDxDeusto has been a project in itself, thus we were able to apply most of what we learnt from the Masters. Designing it, managing to find donors, coordinating ourselves, controlling the budget, publicizing it, having tens of internal meetings, etc. Studying the NOHA Masters and organizing TEDxDeusto at the same time has been a perfect combination of both theoretical and practical learning.

What is the most rewarding part of organizing TEDxDeusto? Seeing how some people got excited about the project. We received emails from all over the world showing interest in what we were doing, offering us all kinds of support and suggestions, or congratulating us on the initiative. You really feel you are doing something meaningful.

When you look back on the past months, if you could choose, would you organize a TEDx event again? Definitely. TEDxDeusto has been a very intense but rewarding experience. Something that has made this year in the NOHA Masters even more special.

What advice would you give to people who have the idea to organize a TEDx event? We would say "Jump up and give it a try!" and be convinced that everything can be done by putting in the necessary effort, gathering the right people, having a bit of luck and putting trust in your own qualities and capacities. Never let anyone tell you that you can't do something. Think Big! People will feel your energy and join you ◆



by Martin Winkler & Hanna Peters

INTERVIEW WITH:
BRIAN PALMER

To Make a Difference
How Civic Courage Can Change the World

As a college student, you put up in your room the names of fallen champions of justice and peace, whereas other students put posters of their favourite bands or sports teams on their walls. What made you interested in these people?

I grew up in New York, a city known for competition and self promotion. Therefore I was struck by people who were going to risk everything to help a stranger. I remember in high school hearing a teacher talking of people trying to organize labour unions in the previous century and being shot down by safety guards hired by the factory owners. That made me think: Wow – these people were very brave. The psychologist William James writes that it is almost a natural feeling in us to revere such people, to see them as our born superiors in some way – no matter what else they have done in their life. I think a courageous and generous act can consecrate a life backwards and forwards. I had that sort of feelings towards these individuals and I began to collect their stories to write down their names to remember them.

Was it then a logical consequence for you to become a social anthropologist?

I think so. I appreciated the field of social anthropology – partly because it has such a global reach, that it asks questions about peoples' lives all over the world, but also partly because so many anthropologists are also people struggling for a more humane world. In some way all of my courses have dealt with living ethically and humanely in a world of brutality, existing in the face of what Susan Sontag called "the simultaneity of wildly contrasting human fates". How it is that we are well and comfortable living in the rich part of the world, whereas there are people in extreme poverty and misery? How can this happen at the same minute? This has been the central question of almost all my university courses during the past twelve years.

So you think our world needs more personal compassion and humanity?

I do. In some ways I have a rather pessimistic view of the world. I see how much suffering there is, how war is going on every day, how torture continues, how radically unequal the distribution of the world's resources is. I am kind of obsessed with the pain of the world. This puts me in a good position to see whenever moral blossoms of civic courage appear and social policies that lead to a more egalitarian world.

So your advice would be to combine changes on a personal and on a societal level?

Yes, I think so. Social change requires almost always courageous individuals who are willing to pay a sometimes high price for intervening where power has been monopolized. I think that people who are ready to take risks for others contribute much more to the process of building a just world than those who are afraid to take such risks.

Do you think there is any limit to this?

I do not think that civic courage alone will bring us a better world. It has to be combined with reflection, analysis and with wisdom to do things in the best possible way. I also think that we need broad political movements,

Brian Palmer (www.brianpalmer.org) is a social anthropologist and currently a scholar of religion at Uppsala University. For several years he taught at Harvard University as many as 600 students per term in a course on civic courage and engagement. In 2002, he was voted Harvard University's best lecturer. His inspiring TED lecture can be found on youtube.

when millions of people reach some kind of understanding that they vote for those parties who are favourable to egalitarianism and to social change. There are also limits in terms of individual lives. Some of my students plan to become photographers in war zones or aid workers in high conflict situations. I encourage them to be very careful and ask if they are well prepared, if they had training in self defence and survival skills that they might need, what languages they speak. My students are usually surprised when I ask them to be more cautious than bold. I am glad to see them being brave and risk-taking but preferably after much reflection and careful preparation.

Our generation often has the impression that social change is not possible anymore, if it is not Obama who promises "yes we can". You said you are a pessimist, so how realistic is it to hope for social change today?

I am a pessimist in seeing that the world is full of unnecessary suffering and unnecessary brutality that could often be easily eliminated - easily meaning with relatively little additional money and political determination. The major causes of death for children could be eliminated within five years if only enough people would be willing to invest in doing that, for example. I think that all our engagement matters and contributes to something.

During the last two decades, relief work has been much criticized for being in line with political and military agendas. Do you think that humanitarianism has to become more humane again by focusing on its roots of wanting to help other people?

The humanitarian world has never been uncompromized.

"Social change almost always requires courageous individuals who are willing to pay a sometimes high price for intervening where power has been monopolized. I think that people who are ready to take risks for others contribute much more to the process of building a just world than those who are afraid to take such risks."

There will always be some process of negotiation between NGOs and friendly governments, potentially opposed governments, multinational corporations, wealthy or famous individuals, all those sometimes problematic players. And that is okay – negotiation is the nature of human life generally. But I think there are also relief efforts that clearly illustrate a generous impulse. Occasions where one's work symbolizes the most humane and generous capabilities of the human condition tend to generate a feeling that people taking risks are trustworthy, are worth listening to, are worth following. And so humanitarian workers who demonstrates civic courage in different ways can build more authority, not only for themselves as individuals but also for their organizations and for the whole humanitarian enterprise.

In your opinion what will the biggest challenge in humanitarian action in the future?

There are plenty of challenges rather than some big ones. Most of them have been with us for a long time: the persistence of violence, the development of new forms of violence, the gigantic economic gap in the world that is growing as we have more and more multibillionaires and billions of people in subsistence conditions.

Another challenge is greenwashing, meaning that companies pretend to make sacrifices for the environment and the climate, while in reality, they only improve their trade strategies. So we see many countries' foreign aid budgets being devoted into what is basically trade promotion. This is particularly true in the case of the United States, but also elsewhere.

If you would have a meeting with Obama, which topic would you talk about?

I would mainly encourage him to take risks for a more humane and just world that I still believe at some level he wants to foster. I think that in his better moments he understands the harshness of our global system and some of the possibilities to make it better. In some ways he has not dared to act on this understanding because he knows Wall Street would oppose him, the Democrats would oppose him and the Republicans would use his engagement against him. I would encourage him especially in a second term to risk becoming unpopular by taking up difficult questions of global justice and peacemaking and by creating a proficient decentralised system of power. I would want him to take all those risks and see if I could encourage him in that direction

NOHA in the Past and in the Future

Interview with Cristina Churruca

by Harry Bier,
Jocelyn Brambila
& Hanna Peters

The NOHA Master was created in 1993 and will celebrate its 20th anniversary next year; how has the Master program changed over the years? NOHA has gone through very big changes, quantitatively as well as qualitatively. In terms of quantity, the NOHA network has become bigger, with not seven but eleven member universities today. More students are willing to move within the network during the second semester. And we get much more applications for the Master program now than some years ago. I think that also the applicants for the Master have changed. During the first years we had more people coming directly from the field, people with a lot of experience that were looking for a Master program to professionalize their work. Today, we have younger students who maybe have already a Masters and have done some voluntary work, but they have less experience in the field. In terms of quality, we have moved from a program based on content to a program based on competences. We have also moved towards much more jointness in terms of common admission and selection criteria, we have a joint fee, and more importantly, we have a joint curriculum development and joint procedures of quality assessment. All in all, we are working together stronger as a joint faculty.

And how could NOHA look in ten years? I would like to see not only a European Master with outside partners, but NOHA regional Master programs all around the world with a jointly developed curriculum. On the European level, I would like to see a more flexible Master program, meaning that we would have, as now, seven entry universities, where the students would stay for the first first semester, so that they would assist comparable classes and obtain many of the same competences. Then, in the second semester, the students would be able to go to a larger number of partner universities. This would allow them to specialize in more varied fields. At the moment, we have 27 universities in Europe that are being part of the EUPRHA Project (European Universities on Professionalization of Humanitarian Action) and I think it would be wonderful to give the students the possibility to choose between all those universities.

NOHA works as a decentralized system and each university develops its program within its own context and reality. How do you ensure the coordination between the NOHA universities? Is a better coordination between the NOHA universities necessary? There is always room for improvement, but we have been working a lot on it in the last few years - in particular since we are part of the Erasmus Mundus Programs. We regularly hold board and coordinator meetings. The Intensive Program at the beginning of each academic year is a particular time of the year when we gather to discuss important topics such as curriculum development. We also have developed a handbook on quality, which I think will be, together with the blackboard, a very important tool to improve coordination.

The number of full member and partner universities within the NOHA network is constantly rising. Would you say it is better to enlarge the network, rather than ensure the quality from within? I would not say one or the other. I think we need to do both: to enlarge the network, but at the same time to ensure the quality of the Master program. It may be hard to manage a Masters taught in more universities, each providing the full program. But we should think in more flexible terms. Some universities could for example only teach during the second semester. That, I think, would be a very rich program.

The participation costs have risen considerably this year, from 6,000 to 8,400 Euros for European students. What are these participation costs used for? There are many activities that are subsidized. We have DG ECHO supporting us for the Intensive Program and the NOHA coordinators at each university. But still, putting together a Master program is very costly. Seventy percent of the student fees go directly to the different universities that pay its lecturers and the NOHA coordinators with this money. The remaining thirty percent go to scholarships and the overall coordination of the Master. We know that students in Europe are not used to pay for a Masters, but if we want to invite external speakers and we want to have a person at each university taking care of the program, this is very costly.

What are the challenges for NOHA in the future? I think the biggest challenge is probably how to enlarge the network and to keep the level of coordination high and our core values together. We have always tried to be in the front run, on quality issues, on joint masters, being the first Masters in Humanitarian Action. We have been constantly updating our curriculum to respond to the professional world as well as academic requirements. In both fields it will always be a challenge to stay in the front run. ◆

Cristina Churruca is NOHA director at the University of Deusto in Bilbao and coordinator of the NOHA network.

BOCHUM Simulation Week

Get to Know the Field and Yourself

Osmania: a messy country after internally displaced people from the conflict affected area of Drukistan have flooded the region. In six provinces, the IDPs are in desperate need of clean water, food, health care and infrastructure. Lots to do for the students of Bochum. During one week, they were given the chance to plan a fictitious response and to re-adapt it to an ever changing local context. A report by Karin Moron.

On Monday morning, we were assigned to different organizations like OCHA, Care, MSF, UNICEF, WFP, ICRC, Osmania Red Crescent and ECHO. We were given basic training material with an introduction to the context in which we would have to work. The background information was about actors, objectives, costs, human resources, the economic context and contact details for logistics, management and of the other organizations.

First, we had to decide which role each person would have in our organization and plan how we would work over the next five days to meet the needs of our beneficiaries. In line with a project cycle management approach, each group started by doing a needs assessment. This was extremely important as in the beginning we did not know how many IDPs there were and where they had settled.

OCHA invited all the stakeholders to discuss the cluster analysis they had done in order to decide about one particular focus for each organization. Care, WFP and Osmania Red Crescent got situated in the cluster of food and nutrition, UNICEF in water and sanitation. The ICRC got the responsibility for the negotiations with the government, but also – in coordination with OCHA - for shelter, health and water. MSF got also involved in the health cluster. Finally, ECHO took the role of a donor.

We put a lot of emphasis on coordination with local organizations because they knew the beneficiaries best and had appropriate information for a reliable needs assessment. Good communication with the government was also very important to get the landing permits for aircrafts and to organize land transportation.

When nearly everything was planned and each group had developed a strategic plan to meet the needs of the displaced in Osmania, suddenly everything changed. Airports were closed because of limited capacity, roads were blocked, supplies did not arrive at their destinations and the displaced had migrated into a different area. We had to adapt our planning as constant changes arose, which was everything but easy. Nevertheless, by supporting one another, especially in the field of logistics, we succeeded in adapting our scenarios and defining even clearer every organization's role within the cluster system.

During the last day, we presented our programs and projects and obtained feedback from the team of lecturers who had managed the simulation week. Our personal conclusion was that dealing with a crisis in praxis is definitively not as simple as it seems in theory. We also put ourselves in question: will we be able to work in the field? Or would we prefer to work in an organization's headquarter? In this way, the simulation week did not only serve as an introduction to how to work in practice, but also to know ourselves◆

Challenge Haiti – LRRD two years after the earthquake

On 12 January 2010, the island state of Haiti was struck by an earthquake so devastating that it ranks among the worst disasters of all times. The destructive nature of the earthquake was not only due to its force – Chile had been hit by an earthquake much harder the same year with only 510 casualties compared to the 220,000 dead and one and a half million displaced in Haiti. However, the context of the two earthquakes was very different.

by Natalie Spiesser, former NOHA student and junior expert for Welthungerhilfe in Port-au-Prince

Already before the calamity, Haiti was (as it still is) not only the poorest country in the western hemisphere, but also the country with the weakest government and the worst infrastructure. The 2010 earthquake exacerbated the situation and it became clear that Haiti would suffer the consequences for a very long time.

Entering the rehabilitation phase

In July 2011, the Haitian government officially declared that the emergency phase was over. Although there are still (and will be for a long time) emergency activities going on, the country has since been officially in the rehabilitation phase, meaning in a temporary phase between emergency aid and development cooperation.

Yet, humanitarian needs continue. Residual aid requirements include the resettlement, return and relocation of more than 450,000 internally displaced peoples (IDPs). At the same time, in other post-earthquake parts of the country, rehabilitation work is required, including, among others, cash-for-work programs, reconstruction of houses and schools and also

counseling. Furthermore, in some regions such as the north of the country that had not been affected by the earthquake, more developmental work is taking place.

Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development

In order to ensure an adequate response, many organizations such as the German NGO Welthungerhilfe, have adopted a *Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development* (LRRD) approach. Consequently, Welthungerhilfe tries to connect all three intervention phases. For example, already during the emergency phase, projects are, wherever possible, executed in a way that they contribute to sustainable development and promote local ownership. Another focus of LRRD lies on disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness activities, as the Caribbean island is a hotspot for natural disasters such as cyclones and landslides, and every new calamity is likely to throw Haiti, at least partly, back in the emergency phase again.

Yet too little has been done so far and Haiti's vulnerability remains as high as ever. While the country is still recovering from the earthquake and humanitarian needs persist, a large number of humanitarian organizations have left the country. Others have significantly downsized their programs, some because of their relief mandate but others because of reduced finances. The funding gap of the rehabilitation phase continues to be a major challenge, and short-term humanitarian exit strategies are mostly not harmonized with long-term development funding. A harmonization would not only require a close coordination between humanitarian and development donors but also new funding mechanisms, which at the moment are mostly set in a way that they fund either humanitarian or development work.

Cholera and the funding gap

Another major challenge in the ongoing rehabilitation process in Haiti has been the regularly occurring cholera outbreaks, which have so far infected more than 500,000 people and killed at least 7,000 of them. Even though the peak of the epidemic has passed, it will remain endemic for years. With every rainy season, the numbers of infections go up again. So the need for health, water, sanitation and hygiene activities remains urgent. Only one out

of five IDP camps has access to clean water. There are mostly no latrines, and the frequent torrential rains wash the sewage into the people's homes and let it pond in the burning hot sun between the tents. Those undrained puddles are most likely to be used as a water source – a vicious circle. Yet, in the phase of rehabilitation, funding for cholera projects

"In the last few months, there have been numerous violent demonstrations and street blockades in and around the capital Port-au-Prince, leading some cynics to say that now, after two years of being in a political freeze, Haiti is apparently going back to *normality*."

has become much more difficult to obtain, even though the rural population and IDPs face significant challenges in accessing even the most basic services that include the life-saving response to cholera infection.

One should not forget that the disaster only worsened an already bad situation in Haiti. The country was ranked number five on the Failed State Index, right behind Somalia, Chad, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Despite the country's democratically elected president Martelly, its government structures remain weak and the political situation fragile. In the last few months, there have been numerous violent demonstrations and street blockades in and around the capital Port-au-Prince, leading some cynics to say that now, after two years of being in a political freeze, Haiti is apparently going back to *normality*.

"To build Haiti better!"

When the earthquake struck it made not only buildings and roads collapse but the whole state system. Many organizations and foreign governments alike subsequently ventured to see the horrific disaster as a chance for the country and proclaimed to "build Haiti back better!" In theory, this was a good thought but realities on the ground show a different picture. Due to a lack of governmental support and financial means, people have begun to rebuild their homes in exactly the same unsafe manner they had built them before. Many organizations and donors find themselves frustrated and feeling that all the high hopes and promises for Haiti, combined with the worldwide solidarity after the earthquake, are dwindling. Even worse, they feel that slowly but steadily Haiti is on the road back to where it was before ◆

The humanitarian dream

What is obvious in Haiti, and I venture to say it is true for every crisis: Even though NGOs are (for most part) trying to do a good job and are working with continuous commitment and empathy, they are unfortunately not going to turn things around. Organizations can help out and support. They can reduce suffering and poverty, but they will never change things profoundly. To turn things around in Haiti, what is needed is a strong and committed government, backed by its national elite. Moreover, the international community must unconditionally support a structurally strong and independent Haiti. Countries like the US have to put an end to pursuing only their own (economic) interests that keep destabilizing the country. But humanitarian organizations working in Haiti need to be still dreaming the humanitarian dream to be able to keep on going: that one day Haiti will be a prosperous, independent and confident nation where people no longer have to live their lives dreaming of fleeing to somewhere else... An Avan Ayiti Chérie!

FIELDTRIP TO GEORGIA

Groningen Students Visiting the Reality of Georgia

As part of the second semester, the students of the University of Groningen visited the East-European country Georgia, a country which has undergone rapid development and change after 20 years of conflict. Aisling Phelan and Iñigo Pagano Urrutia share their experiences.

Throughout the semester in Groningen, we discussed, studied and analysed the Georgian context from an economic, political, environmental, social and cultural perspective. Needless to say, once in the field, we all found it very interesting to see how these dynamics really played out.

We visited many local, international, governmental and donor organizations, like the Charity Humanitarian Centre Abkhazeti (CHCA), the Danish Refugee Council, UNICEF, the European Commission and the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation of the Georgian Government. The Charity Humanitarian Centre Abkhazeti brought us to the Tserovani IDP settlement outside Tbilisi, where we had the chance to meet with beneficiaries. The population in the settlement were forced to leave South Ossetia in August 2008 after Russian troops entered the province. We met IDPs who with the help of micro loans were able to start their own businesses. CHCA also enabled us to visit a collective centre in Tbilisi where the first wave of IDPs, from the 1992 conflict in Abkhazia, were relocated.

During a conference and a dinner with students from the Sukhumi State University, a university in exile since 1992, we had the opportunity to share thoughts about Georgia. Most of the students are IDPs from Abkhazia. We also enjoyed the delicious Georgian food such a khinkali (dumplings) and khachapuri (cheese bread).

For many of us, the field trip provided the first insight into the *life in the field*. We were able to see the differing mandates of each organization, the coordination or the lack of coordination between them and the government, and the various ways in which the organizations implemented their programmes.

Our visit to Georgia ended with a day-trip to Zugdidi, near the *de facto* border of Abkhazia. We were kindly hosted by a former NOHA student, Luis Andersen, who is currently working for the Danish Refugee Council. Luis and his colleagues took us to the *de facto* border where we met with a police officer who explained to us how the border is guarded. They also took us to an IDP settlement in the middle of the mountains where people were suffering from a lack of access to transport and limited economic opportunities.

During the field trip, we were also able to do a bit of tourism in the lovely city of Tbilisi; visiting the Russian market, sampling local food and drink and visiting an old fort overlooking the entire city. We hope that all the future students in Groningen are able to repeat this field trip. It was an amazing experience and we all thoroughly enjoyed it!


NOHA Group from Groningen


IDP Settlement near Tbilisi

To Give Child Soldiers a Future

Rehabilitation and reintegration of child combatants in the Democratic Republic of Congo

by Karin Moron

All children are entitled to live with dignity, though millions of them around the world, of all sexes, ages, religions, social stratus and culture suffer from violence, exploitation and abuse every day. Millions more are at risk.

All children are entitled to live with dignity, though millions of them around the world, of all sexes, ages, religions, social stratus and cultures suffer from violence, exploitation and abuse every day. Millions more are at risk.

Armed conflicts and natural disasters increase the vulnerability of children, exposing them to additional risks. Currently, UNICEF estimates that over 1,000 million children are living in areas affected by armed conflict, and among them, 300 million are children under five.

Inside armed conflicts, hundreds of thousands of children are recruited into government armed forces and rebel groups. International organizations estimate that there are between 250 and 300 thousand child soldierss recruited around the world.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a country with a history of more than 50 years of instability, insecurity and serious human rights violations, began recruiting children in 1996 when Laurent Kabila came to power. Children from twelve to sixteen were integrated into the national army (FARDC) and later on into rebel forces. Today, the DRC employs around thirty thousand child soldier in the various armed groups.

In November 1999, the first peace agreement for the DRC, the Lusaka Treaty, laid the legal framework for the

demobilization of child soldiers, which was implemented by the UN Mission in DR Congo (MONUC) in collaboration with institutions such as UNICEF. However, Amnesty International qualified the following reintegration programs in February 2001 and April 2002 as failures, as many children returned to the armed groups. UNICEF estimates today that between seventy and eighty thousand child soldiers have been reintegrated into civilian life again. Nevertheless, many of them plan to return to the ranks when they are older.

The participation of children in armed groups can be voluntary due to poverty, lack of resources, insecurity and in some cases to revenge the death of their parents. But most of them have been abducted in their schools and villages. In the armed forces they take the roles of combatants and cooks, they carry the resources or stay ahead of their officers. Girls are often abducted for sexual purposes or forced marriage. Some are

forced to kill members of their own family or friends who become enemies because they are not in favor of the cause.

Former child soldiers bear a great psychological burden because what they saw or what they were forced to do. Further, they usually have to deal with feelings of shame and guilt, especially when they have to return to communities where they have committed atrocities. Often their families and the communities reject them, which makes the psychological healing even harder and longer. As rape is highly stigmatized, girls who have been abused prefer to hide it in order not to be rejected by their communities.

Today, sustainability remains a major challenge for rehabilitation and reintegration programs around the world. In DRC, armed groups continue to recruit children, whereas at the same time thousand of child soldiers are waiting for their demobilization. More research is needed to determine if the DRC as well as local and international organizations have the capacity to reintegrate such a large number of former child soldiers and how quality standards such as those of the United Nations can be implemented. ◆

To Ensure Sustainability - The United Nations DDR Standards

In order to prevent inadequate reintegration programs, the International Labour Organization (ILO) - in line with the United Nations DDR Standards - has adapted five elements that have to be taken into account during the implementation of these projects in order to create an integrated approach to rehabilitation:

The search and reunification: Helping the family through mediation to recognize and address the problems of alienation, addiction, aggression and resistance to civilian forms of authority, and involve them in decisions regarding the rehabilitation of the child, education, learning and training.

Psychosocial Support: Psychological support should help children to develop new patterns of behavior, build self-esteem, develop their ability to make decisions about the future and allow them to express their emotions if they want to.

Special Care: Injured and disabled children need care tailored to their needs and their environment, which should include assistance for community-based rehabilitation projects and long-term care.

Education: Providing the best education possible, taking into account that many child soldiers are not fit to return to school or have never been there before. There is a need for teachers trained to deal with these children, who know their needs and can support them.

Vocational training projects and income generation: Vocational training programs have to be sustainable, have to suit local conditions and comply with child labor laws.

For the United Nations' organizations a program is only comprehensive when it integrates these five elements in order to ensure the best development for each child.

The NOHA Second

The focus in **Dublin** was on development, post conflict societies and research methods. The courses were: *Issues and Strategies in Development*, *Sociology*, *Communication*, *Management* and *Applied Research Design*. All the modules took place during the whole semester, with lectures from 2pm to 5pm (sometimes 10am to 5pm). The courses were quite theoretical, with a few guest lecturers from the field. There were some individual papers and group assignments to do. At the end of the semester, exams were written in all the subjects. In terms of practical experience, a highlight was the field trip to Northern Ireland. Here the students had the opportunity to speak to ex-combatants, politicians and social workers from all sides of the conflict. Dublin is a good place to study because it is a vibrant city which offers all conveniences of a European metropole. However, life is quite expensive if you want to go out a lot and do not like going to ALDI. Dublin is surrounded by beautiful countryside and cute Irish villages. Making a trip to discover Ireland's countryside is a must!

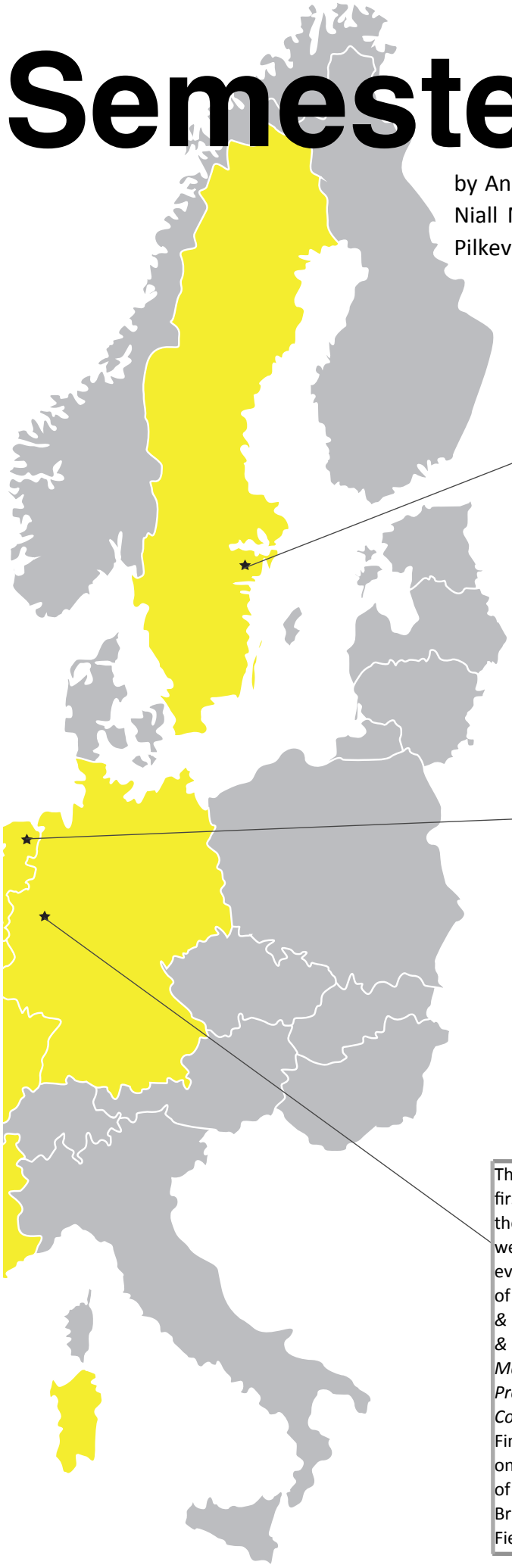
The following courses were taught during the second semester in **Louvain-la-Neuve**: *Aide humanitaire et developpement, Politique étrangere et action humanitaire, Santé dans les operations de secours, Séminaire interdisciplinaire en Action Humanitaire*. In addition, the class *Conflict Transformation* was taught in English. Most work had to be done individually. For all courses the final assessment was a paper, except for one exam in health. Most of the classes included a thorough recap of the first semester (geopolitics, public health) and teaching was rather teacher-centred. Unfortunately, in-class discussions rarely happened. In 2012, a field trip to Sarajevo was organized, where the students had the possibility to witness the post-conflict reconstruction process. Generally, some students rented a room in Louvain-la-Neuve, others in Brussels, because there is more choice to go out.

The second semester in **Aix-en-Provence** was divided into five modules; *Droit de la Protection*; *Techniques Humanitaires pour un Développement durable*; *Stratégies Humanitaires*; *Gestion Juridique de l'Humanitaire* et *Veille Géopolitique*. These were incorporated in two different Master Programs: Humanitaire et Développement Humain and Juristes Internationales du Terrain; and were mainly focused on the areas of Geopolitics and Law. Courses, exams and papers were in French. The time schedule included a great number of external speakers from NGOs and international organizations, which made the courses very practical. A simulation exercise further bolstered this practical side. Over the course of the semester, a group work in geopolitics had to be completed, where students could choose freely which current political and social coherences of a respective continent to present. Since the timetable was very busy, the focus in Aix laid rather on course attendance than on literature-based research work. However classes offered a space for discussion and the attendance implicated an intense being together with other students.

The main focus of the second semester in **Bilbao** was *Peace Building* and *Management in Humanitarian Action*. The structure of the semester was quite relaxed with classes from 10am until 2pm, with about 3 days a week. About ninety per cent of the classes were taught in Spanish, with most of the reading material in English. There was the opportunity to submit work both in Spanish and in English. There was no field trip organised this year, but there was plenty of conferences and lots of the students got involved with the TEDxDeusto event. The new library is a very good area to study. If the university library is full then there is the Alhondiga library which is an architectural wonder (it has a gym, cinema, art exhibition, swimming pool, restaurant, etc). Another advantage of studying in Deusto is that it is quite a picturesque place to be. The city has a very rich mix of Basque and Spanish culture, it has amazing food, music and vibe.

Semester Review

by Anne Ritter, Joshua Aspden, Laura Puts, Heiko Königstein, Niall Murphy, Sam van den Berg, Angelina Schulz & Deniss Pilkevics



The second semester in **Uppsala** had quite a theoretical approach. The two modules taught were *Peace, Conflict and Religion* and *Theory and Methods*. The course set up did not focus overly on contact classes, rather on class readings. Uppsala University has great libraries for individual study and the possibility to have extra fifteen academic credits spent for various courses available in English in different fields of interest. There are also plenty of opportunities to attend open lectures at the Peace and Conflict department. There was not much group work and course exams took the form of open book 'take home exams' of various lengths (24h-72h). On arrival, students in Uppsala usually get involved in student organizations called 'Nations', so that student life is quite vibrant.

Groningen: difficult to find on a map, even harder to pronounce. Instead of individual modules on different subjects, the entire course was amalgamated into one 30-ECTS subject: *Comprehensive Security.* This subject was based around the idea that relief targeted at the areas of food, economic, health, social, environmental, and physical insecurities contribute to a stable environment. The course approached the topics in three phases: *Needs Assessment*, *Problem Analysis* and *Intervention Design*, replicating the approach taken by many organizations in the field towards interventions. The classes were normally done in three three-hour blocks per week, with student presentations on average every second Friday. There were no exams at the end of the semester, but rather continuous assessment throughout, in the form of a group research surveys (and presentation of the findings), an individual paper, a group simulation game, and finally, a project proposal.

The second semester in **Bochum** was also divided into different modules. The first module was dedicated to *Humanitarian Standards*. After the first week, the students were able to choose classes within three modules. These modules were *Institution Building*, *Programming* and *Project Design*. This year almost everyone got onto their preferred courses. Classes took place in small groups of nine to ten. Optional courses were *Protecting Refugees & Minorities*, *Gender & Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa*, *Post-Conflict Reconstruction in Africa*, *Water & Human Rights*, *Preventing Corruption in Humanitarian Assistance*, *Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change*, *Conflict Sensitive Programming*, *Building Peace*, *Working with Media in Humanitarian Action*, *Containing Megacities* and *Supporting Refugees in Protracted Displacement*. Finally, the last module was on *Leadership*. The second semester ended with a one-week simulation exercise. In general the courses in Bochum involved lots of group work, but also two field trips, one to the European institutions in Brussels and one to a military base close to Berlin to attend a 'First Aid in the Field' Workshop by the Red Cross.

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...C²NECT

CONNECTING HUMANITARIAN IDEAS AND EXPERIENCES

SHAPING THE FUTURE

Photo: Madeleine Walder