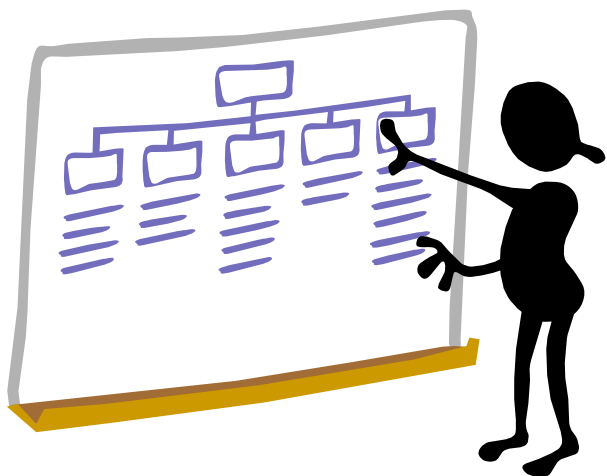


Session 11: From Humanitarian Aid to Human Rights Based Community Development



What is the difference?

Humanitarian aid is a rapid intervention designed to save lives, alleviate hardship, and get disaster victims back on their feet.

Development aid is designed to help people to access human rights for individuals, families and communities, to transit out of poverty and build sustainable futures. It is underpinned by community development principles of empowerment, inclusivity and participation.



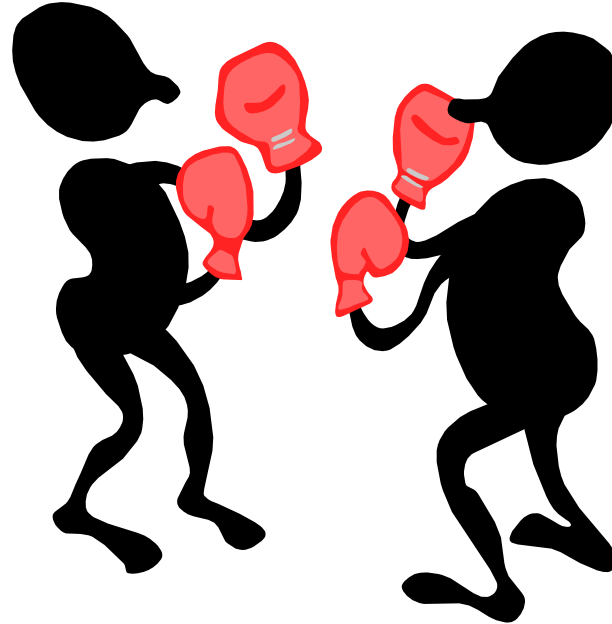
The Double Nexus

The humanitarian–development nexus has been increasingly been cast as the solution to humanitarian concerns, new and protracted crises, and to manage complex war-to-peace transitions.



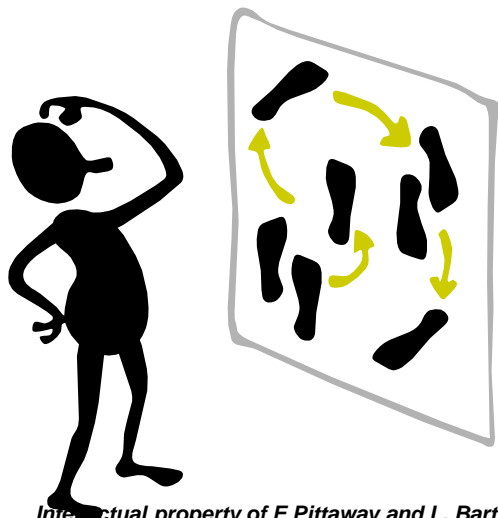
However!

Humanitarian action and development assistance represent two distinct discursive and institutional segments of the international system that are hard to juxtapose (Lie 2020).



Naming the Tensions

“Humanitarianism’s apolitical and imminent needs-based approaches building on established humanitarian principles are fundamentally different from the more long-term, political, rights-based approaches of development. As they rub shoulders, as intentionally instigated by the nexus, they affect and challenge each other” (Lie 2020:1)



Our challenge is how do we change these ideological positions?

Some of the key debates

- **The aim of humanitarian action should only be to meet needs.**
- **Rights-based approaches would lead to the abandonment of core humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality (Fox 2001)**
- **Others argued that an HRBA would in fact enhance the legitimacy of Humanitarian work moving it *'beyond a dysfunctional philanthropic mindset'* (Slim 2002)**

Background reading: Borgrevink and Sandvik 2021



What does this mean for practice??

In emergency situations human rights can become 'secondary' as the focus is on immediate assistance, protection and basic needs.

Program and service delivery needs can trump human rights concerns

Concern about a trade-off between rights advocacy and humanitarian access in strong authoritarian states opposed to human rights



Three HRBA Strategies in Humanitarian Practice

Neutrality Strategy – NGOs focus on traditional humanitarian principles – HRBA = the right of vulnerable people to have their basic needs met

Pragmatic Strategy –HRBA = the right for local people to be consulted, and for local organisations to be actively engaged as partners, and may involve working with national governments with questionable human rights records

Idealist strategy- HRBA = advocating for human rights, supporting local human rights organisations and holding powerful actors to account.



The Human Rights-based Approach

**We argue that a Human Rights based Approach
can and should be applied to both**

Humanitarian Aid,

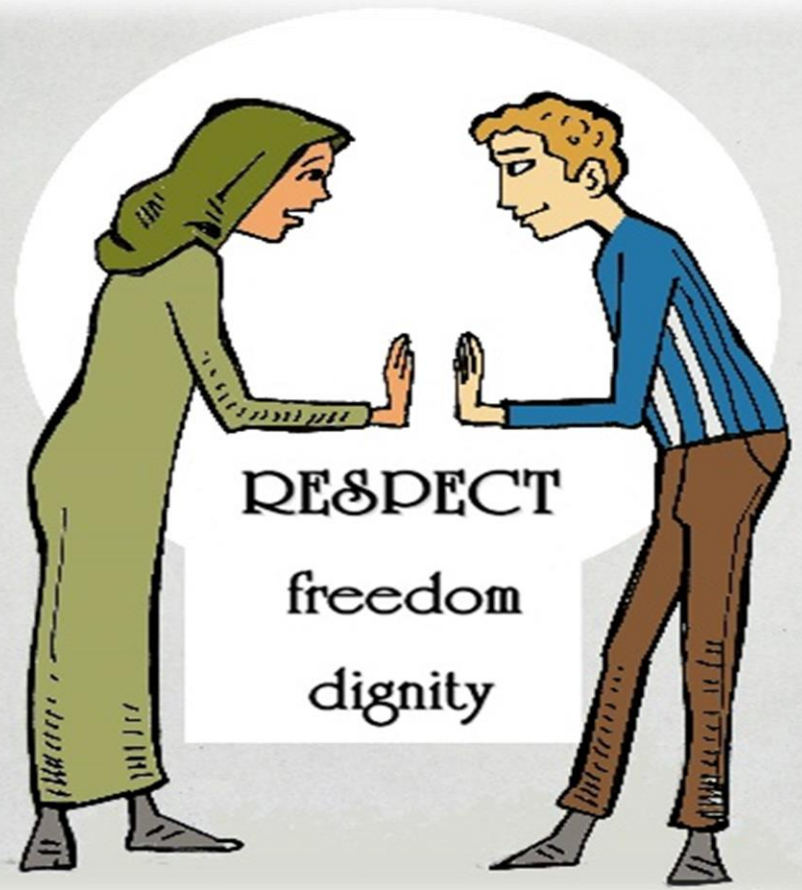
and

Development Aid.

**Without the Meaningful Participation of ALL
refugee groups, a Human Rights Based
approach is not possible**



- RESPECT
- DIGNITY
- AUTONOMY
- SELF DETERMINATION



Universal Declaration of Human Rights

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights



The HRBA is based on the legal framework of universal human rights.

But it is more than this. Rather than needs, interests or services, in Human Rights Based Approaches, (HRBA), human rights become the goals, objectives and outcomes of development projects or service delivery, and services.



How is HRBA different?

How (the means by which) people achieve their rights is as important as the end result (the outcome). This means that how a project or service is designed, implemented and evaluated, is as important as what happens at the end.





**Human
Rights turn
beggars
into
claimants**



Frankovits, 1996

Key elements of a Human Rights-Based Approach



Rights holders and duty bearers

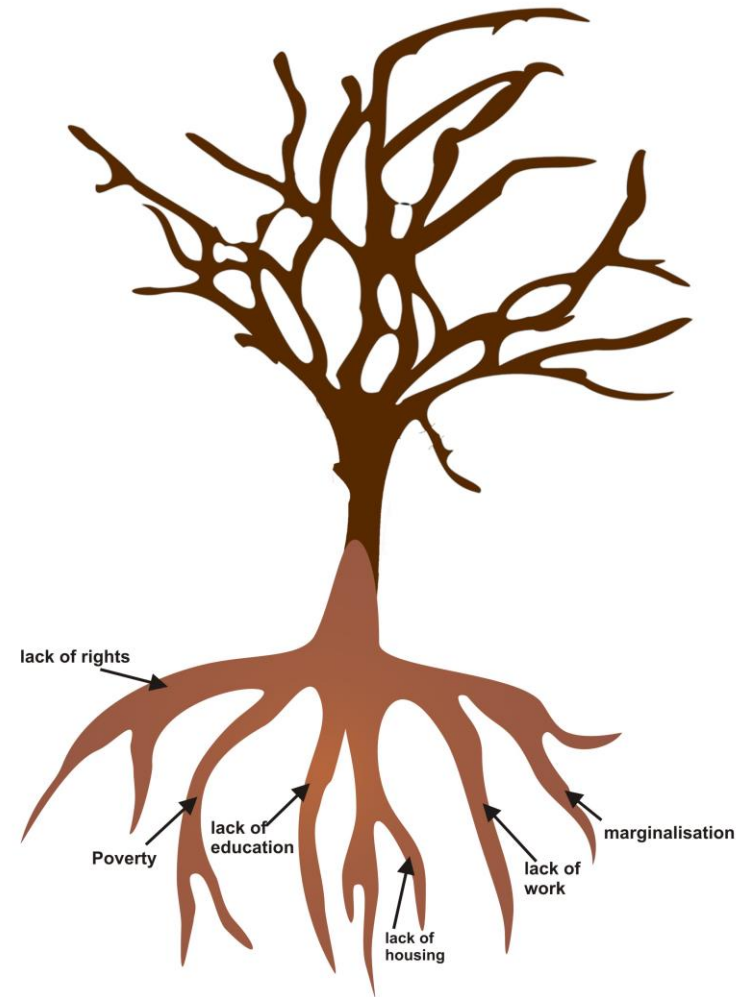
HRBA is about the relationship between those who have rights (rights holders) and those who have a responsibility to ensure that rights are realised (duty bearers).



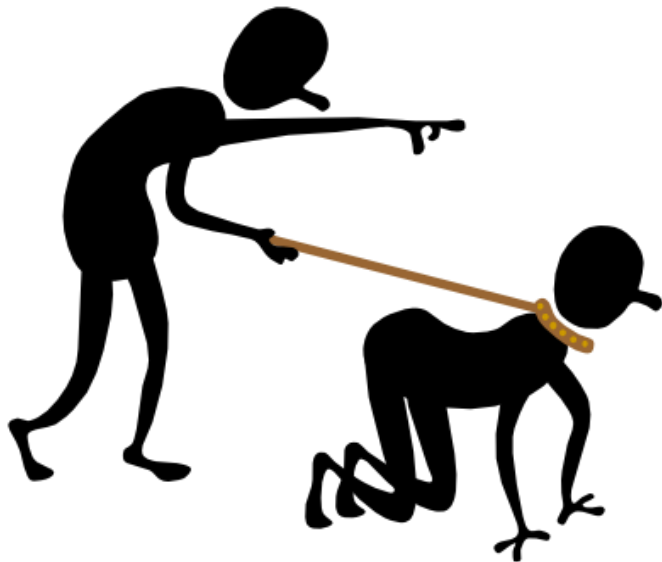
- Rights holders are human beings – individuals and communities
- Rights holders need to be informed about their rights and participate in decisions that affect them
- Duty bearers are mainly governments. But they can also be non-state actors such as NGOs, service providers, family members, community leaders, and transnational corporations.

Looking at the root cause of the problem

- Projects should not be only about what people need.
- Instead they should focus on helping people to work towards claiming the rights they are entitled to
- Remembering the struggle for human rights is progressive and aspirational



Thinking about power



Human rights are often unfulfilled because of unequal power between people, groups, or citizens, and duty bearers including NGOs, UN agencies and the state

People who have power can prevent others from accessing their rights.

How do people/groups exercise power?

- Authority and position, or roles in society
- Access to information
- Access to resources and wealth
- Networks
- Skills, education and expertise



Accountability

A right that is not respected leads to a violation. People can make legal claims when a violation happens.

How are duty bearers held accountable when they fail to uphold rights?

- Legal remedies
- Administrative mechanisms
- Open dialogue and discussion
- Social power and protest



Participation

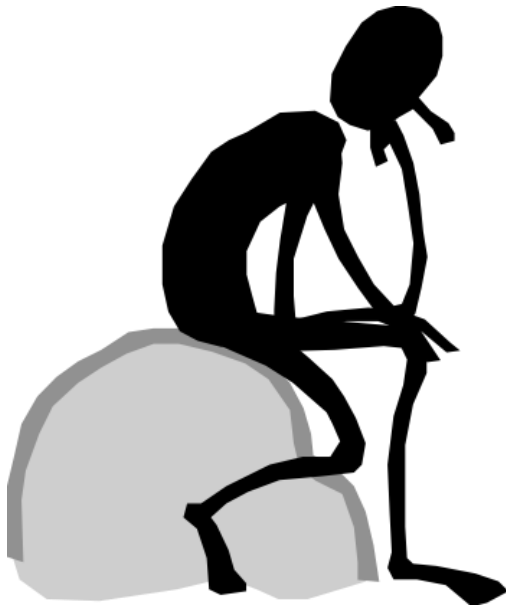
- Individuals, families and communities should participate in decisions that affect them.
- Participation must be free and meaningful. It must take into consideration factors that might prevent genuine and equal participation (particularly of those who are most marginalised) including gender, disability and other factors.



Non- discrimination and equality



Empowerment



- To be disempowered is to be denied choice (Kabeer, 1999)
- Empowerment happens when people who have been denied choice are able to think about possible alternatives and act on them; or, the ability to have chosen something else

Group Exercise 1:Case Study

A big international donor has decided that for 2024-2025, the focus of its work will be providing services for refugees currently in camps in South Sudan. They have recruited:

Volunteers from Australia to go and build a number of new houses and schools for the population.

A team of experts in the field of Humanitarian aid involved in food distribution to organise food and non- food items, with the help of a local NGO.

A number of counsellors from an Australian voluntary group to deliver counselling and training support to women-refugee led organisations.

An education focused NGO to establish co-educational schools for adolescents.

Set up a clinic with volunteer paramedics from the UK.



Exercise 1 - Questions to ask to test if a program addresses Key Principles of a Rights Based Community Development Approach

To what extent is the proposed model:

- Grounded in international human rights laws?
- Transformative – does it support more equal partnerships with communities?
- Participatory – does it involve affected communities in identifying their needs and priorities?
- Emancipatory- does it increase community power to in claim their rights and accountability from development agencies and other duty bearers?
- Self-aware – does it challenge agencies to recognise and address structural power inequalities not just focus on the individual or personal problems?

If not, What needs to change?

How will you achieve this?



A tool to assess projects at a practical level

Does it?

Support the agency and active participation of communities?

Provide people with knowledge about their rights and support them to claim their rights?

Support people to analyse the challenges they face and to be active participants in finding solutions?

Support people to advocate for action by duty bearers?

Recognise that women's rights are central?

Recognise the need to change practices, attitudes and behaviors as well as policies?

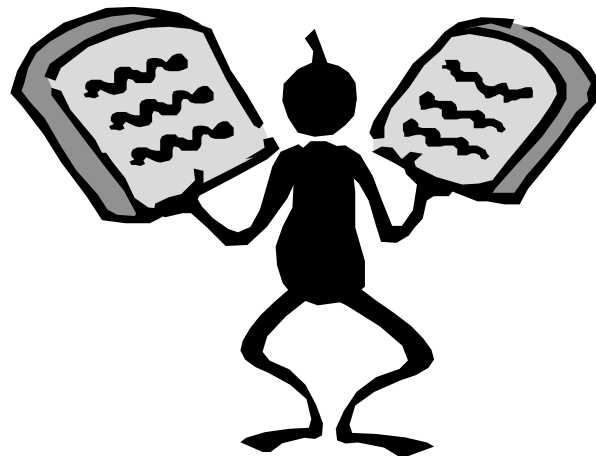
If not, What needs to change?

How will you achieve this?



To be considered.

How can these principles be applied to both Humanitarian and Development Aid and to Peace given the current focus of this new Triple Nexus?



The Triple Nexus

Links humanitarian, development and peace approaches

It is underpinned by the recognition that sustainable development cannot be achieved without peace.

