Disaster Prevention and Management

An International Journal

Viewing Humanitarian Project Closure through the Lens of an Ethics of the Temporary

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

Viewing Humanitarian Project Closure through the Lens of an Ethics of the Temporary

Introduction

Humanitarian projects are, by design, *temporary*. Initiated in response to a crisis situation, they may be ended when the emergency situation abates, project objectives are met, due to operational and budgetary constraints, or, in some cases, due to external factors such as acute insecurity or withdrawal of government permissions. Projects may be phased down (gradual decrease in activities but retaining a small presence), phased out (gradually decreasing services before closing), handed over to partners (possibly through a phase-over with a gradual process of shifting activities), transitioned to a development approach, or abruptly closed (Gardner *et al.,* 2005). While some projects prove very difficult to close, and may last for years or even decades, this can be in tension with the goals at their opening.

Since *project closure* is an essential component of time-limited humanitarian activities, how to do so effectively is a matter of concern for organizations, especially in light of contemporary critiques about humanitarianism's unduly narrow crisis orientation, its links to histories of imperialism and (neo)colonialism, paternalism, and the unintended harms that may result from interventions. Various guidance documents have been produced (Pal *et al.*, 2019) and concern for the continuity of services after project closure has been emphasized in the Sphere Handbook of Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (2018). Decisions to leave a community or hand over a project can be a sign of successful intervention when objectives have been met and emergency humanitarian aid is no longer required by the affected communities. However, the process of project closure may pose poignant ethical challenges. Even successful closures may be the source of ethical tensions for those involved. Where closure is poorly planned, or if

1

coordination or transparency about the process is lacking, the end of a humanitarian project may result in avoidable harm (Hunt *et al,* 2020). For example, where communication is fragmented or unclear, people served by a project that is being closed may experience feelings of abandonment that create ruptures between humanitarian organizations and communities, and the same may be true for staff who have been hired locally (Abu-Sa'da, 2012; Anderson, *et al.*, 2012).

Cognizant of the past histories of humanitarian aid - its logics of emergency and rescue - and the need for a future-oriented humanitarianism concerned for relationships, sustainability, and justice in the *long-term* for affected populations, several questions arise: How can international humanitarian organizations ensure that closures are carried out responsibly? How can they ensure that the temporary nature of their interventions does not result in avoidable harm for populations affected by crisis or render them complicit (with a caring face) in perpetuating longstanding injustices and health inequities? And how might they better work with local populations to create the conditions needed for advancing the capability to be healthy as part of their pre-closure mandate?

In this paper, we propose a new lens through which to examine international humanitarian organizations' responsibilities in the context of project closure, what we describe as "an ethics of the temporary". Our aim is to offer the ethics of the temporary as an orienting ethical concept to foster discussion about the scope of humanitarian responsibilities in relation to the intended temporariness of these interventions while considering how they relate to past histories and future consequences. Given a clear emphasis in discussions of the ethics of humanitarian closure that good endings require careful planning from the beginning (Pal et al, 2019) and that

successful closures should be considered in light of the quality and sustainability of what is "left behind" (Gerstenhaber, 2014), an ethics of the temporary can help situate responsibilities – in the form of actions, practices, and policies – in relation to humanitarian project closure within a broader cultural, historic, and global context. Such responses, crucially, recognize and engage with local sources of knowledge and are consonant with the aim of not only providing acute care and services but also aligning interventions, where possible, with efforts to support long-term empowerment and equity.

Ethics of the Temporary

As we noted above, international humanitarian action has been criticized at multiple levels. First, critics have highlighted historic links between humanitarian action and colonization, and pointed to a paternalistic posture on the part of humanitarians that leads to control and possibly domination, and in turn, a failure to appreciate crisis-affected populations' histories and knowledge, or even perceptions of humanitarians and aid (Abu-Sada 2012; Aloudat & Khan, 2022; Barnett, 2003; Moore, 2013; Oliver 2017). This raises concerns about the adequacy of knowledge and understanding of problems and potentially thwarts effective responses for local communities. Moreover, it has the potential to generate harms and undermine trust. This then is a second line of criticism, namely that international humanitarian action often pays insufficient attention to the possibility of harmful social, economic, and health consequences in the wake of their interventions, and may lack capacity and methods to assess these long-term implications (Abramowitz, 2015; Singh, *et al.,* 2018). Again, inattention to local sources of knowledge can be a major culprit here. Third, critics raise questions about the proper scope of humanitarian obligations, especially in contexts where crises are chronic (Brun, 2016; Eckenwiler and Wild,

2021; Rubenstein, 2015). They argue that an unduly narrow and finite sense of responsibility for justice is problematic, as is a too sharp divide between development and humanitarian approaches. From this perspective, it is critical within humanitarian interventions to assess social and structural determinants of health crises, and to question how the frame of crisis and logic of rescue can obscure historic and even current injustices, and preserve or worsen inequities going forward (Chung and Hunt, 2012).

These critiques point to ethical tensions with the acute crisis-response orientation and temporary nature of humanitarian intervention in a broader context of longstanding global injustice. Certainly, it is not the intention of those involved in contemporary humanitarian response to reinforce these tensions. Quite the contrary, it would seem that they aim to address harms and even rectify injustices at times. Yet this is often undermined by what is possible in the constrained contexts of humanitarian emergencies where resources are not abundant and needs are acute – and in complex emergencies, conflict threatens aid efforts. And without intending harm, humanitarians may see themselves as the "experts", failing to appreciate their position of power in relation to members of local communities who have a privileged perspective, as locals. In such conditions, humanitarians can come to find themselves implicated in the larger milieu of global, historic injustice. Recognizing this generates a call for humanitarians to reflect critically on ways they might, even inadvertently, perpetrate and perpetuate injustice.

Thinking about these concerns as they relate to project closure, we found inspiration in the work of Serena Parekh (2017). Parekh asks what responsibilities the international community holds to people fleeing crisis and seeking asylum who, now, in the face of the failure of governments to

uphold the International Refugee Convention, wait for prolonged periods confined, in limbo, with desperately scant resources. If governments persist in excluding them from citizenship and repatriation is not possible, what is owed to them in the meantime? What are the *remedial responsibilities* of justice owed to refugees? Framing this question about responsibilities in terms of transitional justice, in other words, Parekh calls for an investigation of "an ethics of the temporary" in the particular context of the refugee crisis, where governments flout their obligations under international law (and key ethical concepts), reform of the international apparatus for responding to displacement seems stagnant, and humanitarians' scope of practice grows ever larger (Parekh, 2017, p.137).

Inspired by Parekh, we draw on this idea of an "ethics of the temporary" to consider approaches to humanitarian action which also grapple with the implications of responsibilities for justice in the context of would-be temporary interventions. In this paper, we focus specifically on how the ethics of the temporary relates to project closure. This framing can support humanitarian organizations and their partners to transcend the logic of present emergency and temporary response (Brun, 2015). The ethics of the temporary draws critical attention to the temporariness of humanitarian action and the myopia it may encourage, and invites a wider temporal scope of attention that includes the past and attends to how present actions will reverberate in the future. It aims to reckon with the ways humanitarian work is shaped by and responds to historical injustice, and the lingering effects, or not, of how it is enacted. It can also open up discussion about how project closures can be undertaken in ways that are responsive to communities' knowledge and moral experiences, adopting inclusive approaches in deciding on needs and priorities, and more attuned to responsibilities for advancing justice over time.

Elements of an Ethics of the Temporary

An ethics of the temporary captures the reality that the set of problems humanitarians respond to are complex and often protracted, resisting quick resolution even though they demand immediate attention. By describing it as an "orienting" ethical framework, what we mean to suggest is that it provides a conceptual tool to support a practice of moral imagination that humanitarians can utilise as they assess responsibilities in a particular humanitarian project, an acute intervention situated at once in the long span of history and in the present, profoundly inequitable world. It includes four key elements which are represented in figure 1. We also identify questions linked to each of these elements (see table 1) that can prompt reflection for project closure.
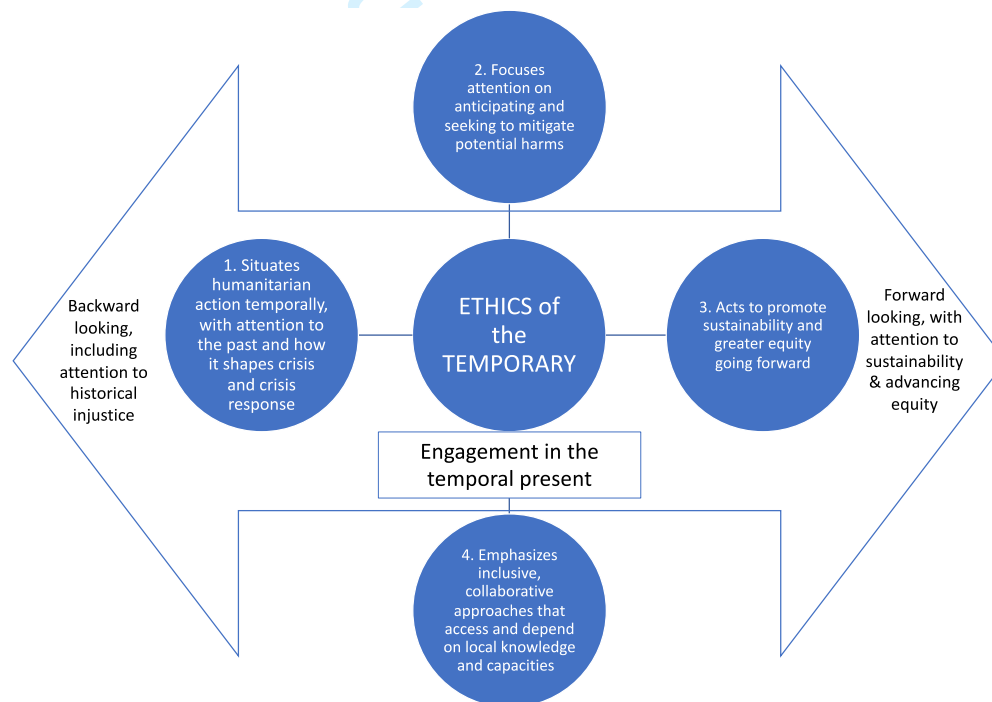
Figure 1: Four key elements of the Ethics of the Temporary with attention across a wide

temporal horizon

As they engage in planning and initiating interventions *with an eye toward their closure*, an ethic

of the temporary encourages humanitarian organizations to: (1) situate themselves and their work

in the temporal present while also considering a historical perspective, especially in relation to

past experiences of injustice and how this has shaped local perceptions over time and

undermined trust. At the same time, an "ethics of the temporary" for humanitarians implies a

need for a focus on the future in the sense of having a 2) responsibility to seek to anticipate and

mitigate potential harms (including those that flow from how projects are closed) – both at the

time of closure and in the future. An additional forward-looking feature of the ethics of the

temporary is 3) taking into consideration not harming, inhibiting, or aggravating situations that

can prevent a community from achieving sustainability and, if injustice is at issue, greater equity

from a local and global perspective. An ethics of the temporary for project closure, finally, given

the time-limited duration of projects and the partial perspectives of international humanitarians,

entails 4) humility - intellectual and moral - and *significantly* more reliance on local knowledge.

Next, we elaborate on each of the four elements, which should be understood as interdependent

conceptually and operationally.

> *(1) Situates humanitarian action temporally, with attention to the past and how they shape*
>
>> *crisis and crisis response in the present*

7

With its crisis orientation, there is a tendency for humanitarian action to be conceived of as operating in one sense in a 'perpetual now' (Brun, 2016), and in another, on a trajectory toward closure. The ethics of the temporary tempers this emergency-oriented approach to time by calling for a deliberate effort on the part of humanitarians to situate themselves, their organizations, and their interventions temporally, in both the present and the past, particularly in settings where injustice has occurred. In other words, interventions, even though temporary and demanding what some of our authors have called "engaged presence" (Hunt et al, 2014), take place in a history and will have longer-term effects. Even though their mandate is a temporary one and requires immersion in the now, humanitarian organizations and the individuals working for them in many instances should understand themselves as having deeper connections to the people they seek to assist, connections that go far beyond the immediate present to encompass histories, histories that are likely perceived differently amid particular contexts and communities (Abu-Sada, 2012).

Box 1: One implication of this orientation is that humanitarian organizations would, if they have occurred, closely consider the history of previous humanitarian projects that have taken place in the locale where they are working. Perceptions of how the projects were implemented and how they were closed and with what effects, are likely to influence future project closures and should be given attention in project and closure planning in a current project. This possibility is illustrated by a qualitative study conducted by Sitali and colleagues about perceptions of effective project closure within a Médecins Sans Frontières project in Sierra Leone (2022). During interviews, Ministry of Health staff and community members expressed concern that there would be a repeat of past closure experiences when medical equipment disappeared from the clinic during the project closure.

More broadly, the first element of an ethics of the temporary is oriented by an understanding that

people should be understood as interdependent, even across time and distance, and that the past

is also always present (as is the promise of the future). This means that we are connected to and

have relationships with many people that help to shape who we are individually and culturally,

not only

intimate others and compatriots, but also others who are geographically distant and historically

antecedent, such as through colonization or patterns of exploitative industries. This

interdependence is significant for how we understand identities and also critically important for

purposes of understanding power imbalances. As humanitarian organizations accept, design,

embark upon, and commence humanitarian projects in relationships with local communities,

Rubinstein emphasizes the central importance of power, arguing that we should conceptualize

intervention as the "*exercise of power,* and normatively evaluate INGO advocates on the basis of

how well they *avoid misusing their power.*" (Rubenstein, 2015).

Appreciation for our interdependence with others across time and distances *even as*

humanitarian encounters are ostensibly excerpts or as some say "slices" of time, then, is a first

element of "an ethic of the temporary". It requires explicit recognition of shared histories and/or

current intersecting interests, power relations, and in some cases, connections to injustice. This is

important ethically for several reasons; but here we focus on the value of this imaginative

temporal positioning for helping make humanitarians aware of how historical experience and

memory may have shaped perceptions over time, potentially undermined trust, and can, without

moral caution, serve to sustain interdependence that is not equal. These effects run in multiple

directions, also influencing how humanitarian actors perceive local communities and their own

sense of trust. In particular, colonial histories and legacies of domination are critically important

to appreciate.

Some ways that humanitarian organizations can support this might include providing more

comprehensive briefing materials, and advance consultation with local leaders and community

members. Workshops and training activities will also be valuable, especially if developed and

revised over time based on consultation with local and other knowledge-holders and encouraging

participants to practice imaginative temporal positioning, as discussed above. Training activities

should include work aimed at cultivating and/or nurturing practices of moral imagination. It also

points to the importance of documenting and sharing experiences within and across humanitarian

organizations, including post-closure evaluations. Finally, to further these goals, it will be

important for leaders in humanitarian organizations consistently to demonstrate appreciation for

local histories and global inequities.

2) Focuses attention on anticipating and seeking to mitigate potential harms

While the first feature of an ethics of the temporary calls for attention primarily to the

relationship between past and present, this second element primarily involves imaginative

projection toward the future. The process of planning for project closure should include efforts to

anticipate, identify, and in turn, avoid or mitigate possible harms that could result at the time of

closure and in the future. Already, there is a well-established duty to refrain from causing harm,

or primum non nocere (Anderson, 1999). As well as working to avoid or minimize harm in the

present,

the ethics of the temporary suggests an expanded timeframe of concern that extends both

backward and beyond the duration of the project.

> Box 2: One way this commitment could be enacted is by taking stock of and working to mitigate
> any ecological effects of a project that might remain after the project is closed. For example, a
> medical humanitarian project might generate hazardous wastes that require careful management
> to avoid lingering harms. Clear and actionable steps for mitigating these risks should be included
> in closure plans and enacted.

Careful planning of project closure and ongoing risk analysis are essential for purposes of

identifying, avoiding, minimizing, or mitigating potential harms such as loss of services, feelings

of abandonment, heightening of tensions, misuse of project data, economic disruption, insecurity,

reputational harm to humanitarian organizations, and even global implications (Hunt et al, 2020).

Minimizing harm above all entails practicing foresight: "an active engagement to identify

possible outcomes, forecast contingencies, and be diligent in planning" during each phase of a

project (Pal et al, 2019, p 7). For example, if a non-governmental organization offers free

healthcare services as part of a humanitarian project, they should consider the impact of this

practice on local other healthcare providers, including after project closure. In some settings,

local clinics and health centers have closed due to the availability of free NGO clinics and so

populations are left with less healthcare access once the humanitarian project ends.

Organizations might develop processes whereby experienced teams can share what has been

learned in previous closures, again developing a kind of knowledge bank. These assessments

should consider a range of factors (for example, not just clinical outcomes of a health project, but

also wider social determinants of health). Below we discuss the necessity of relying more on

partnerships between humanitarian organizations and local agencies and communities in these

processes, another way to operationalize the ideas here.

3) Acts to promote sustainability and greater equity going forward

This third element builds on the previous two, calling for better understanding of the past along

with attention aimed toward the future, again invoking an expanded temporal horizon for

humanitarians. Increased emphasis has been placed on the need for humanitarians to move

beyond thinking only in terms of crisis management toward an appreciation of the need for

capacity building and sustainability (Sphere Handbook, 2018). We agree and, indeed this is part

of what motivates the development of an ethics of the temporary, which calls for a longer time

horizon for humanitarian attention. A 2014 toolkit on project handover for Médecins Sans

Frontières is entitled "success is also measured by what you leave behind" and emphasizes that a

successful closure is one that addresses continuity of services. This is an important notion and

should be understood more broadly.

Box 3: An understanding of sustainability as a concern that extends beyond the availability of

services to the community after project closure is reflected in interviews with humanitarian

workers about what it means to close humanitarian projects well (Hunt et al, 2020). One reported

that success should ultimately be based on an assessment of whether local partner organizations were strengthened following the project closure, and another by whether the closure was done in a way that preserved relations of trust and respect such that their organization or another humanitarian organization would be well received by the community in the future. These understandings correspond with the third element of the ethics of the temporary.

A second facet relates to situations of injustice and humanitarian organizations' response to these injustices. The ethics of the temporary draws attention to the history and continuity of injustice, and the scope and limits of humanitarian responsibility for responding to *injustice* in the course of a humanitarian project, including its closure. Working to avoid the creation of injustice, for example, inadvertently creating a hierarchy that stigmatized and eroded the civil rights of some group, is an obvious place to begin. Humanitarian organizations are also responsible for not worsening or perpetuating existing injustice as a result of their presence and provision of assistance, including resisting tendencies toward paternalism and disrespect for local knowledge resources.

Perhaps the most difficult question relates to humanitarian organizations' responsibilities for remedying injustices *other than those they may have created*, and if so, which ones and why. Some of the critics cited earlier might ask whether the very presence of international humanitarian organizations reflects and, in some sense, perpetuates a legacy of global inequities and dominating outside intervention. In response, others would maintain that humanitarian organizations are not responsible for historic injustice and its current manifestation in health and other inequities; on the contrary, humanitarians see themselves as trying to remedy them. Yet the

1

acute crisis, *event-oriented* mindset accompanying humanitarian intervention can undermine the

work of advancing justice over time. The ethics of the temporary situates humanitarian action in

relation to transitional justice. We are not arguing that humanitarians are responsible for ensuring

health equity for a given community over time. Instead, we propose that humanitarians are

responsible for working with members of local communities to identify and help implement – or

at least catalyze – reforms to particular structural and social determinants of health crises in order

to make some progress toward addressing equity concerns *after* exit (Chung and Hunt, 2012). An

ethic of the temporary can support humanitarians in being mindful that even as their intervention

is time-limited, sustainability and health justice are likely to be the long-term goal for people

living in the locales where the projects take place. In many cases, both ultimately depend on

more just and equitable global relations.

Many humanitarian projects will integrate capacity-building initiatives for locally hired staff,

with partner organizations, or focused on communities more broadly. Considering equity

implications– both in terms of who is included and how activities are run – in such activities can

be a tangible means of addressing equity in ways that could endure after a project is closed. An

ethic of the temporary calls for humanitarians to work collaboratively with others to promote

equity, for the sake of greater sustainability in addition to health justice in the long term.

Box 4. Considerations of gender equity may be implemented in a humanitarian project in terms

of how services are organized, who is hired, and who has access to positions of leadership. In

developing handover and closure plans, the organization could seek opportunities to make

equity-promoting aspects of the project durable. For example, in a disaster risk reduction project

in the Visayas region of the Philippines, it was identified that only men had been participating in disaster risk reduction activities. The project's capacity-building activities were subsequently oriented towards increasing the participation of women with the goal of promoting greater gender equity for local disaster risk reduction both during the project and following its closure.

4) Emphasizes inclusive, collaborative approaches that access and depend on local knowledge and capacities

This final feature of an ethics of the temporary is linked to concerns associated with decolonizing humanitarianism (Aloudat & Khan, 2022), the concept of "localization" and what philosophers describe in terms of epistemic justice. In some of our earlier work (Hunt et al., 2021), we underscored the need for humanitarian organizations planning closures to develop partnerships and engage stakeholders. Here we press these ideas further, inspired by the argument of Boaventura de Sousa Santos and others that global injustice is linked inextricably to epistemological injustice (de Sousa Santos, 2014), that is, injustices relating to knowledge: what counts as knowledge and who is recognized as knowledgeable. An ethic of the temporary, with its view of persons as interdependent and conception of ethical humanitarianism as involving transitional justice, demands attention to ways that people receiving humanitarian assistance – as well as local civil society organizations - may be denied agency to contribute to decisions affecting their lives and communities. This situation undermines the effectiveness of humanitarian response and contributes to injustice, at the very least by cultivating and maintaining unequal power relations. Inadequate or distorted knowledge about a crisis or possible responses can contribute to unintended harms for local communities. Stated differently,

on an ethics of the temporary, humanitarians should consider whose knowledge is valued and given credence in planning for closure (Fricker, 2010), and in particular how experience and knowledge of local communities and organizations can be better taken into account. This is a form of epistemic justice because it recognizes the local knowledge and capacities, and follows their lead while enhancing them through resources both material and human. Cultivating partnerships and collaborations with local knowledge-holders and community organizations to advance their goals increases the likelihood of relevant and sustainable outcomes and can promote trust, even at or after project closure. An approach that embraces local knowledge and capacity will involve critically reflecting on the extent of inclusion and participation in closure processes, as well as a moral posture of humility on the part of humanitarian actors from outside the local setting.

Box 5. During an early wave of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines, several projects led by international humanitarian organizations were delayed. The situation eventually spurred a reimagining of these projects to be more localized in form through greater collaboration and a shifting of control from the international organizations to national and local ones. These changes led to projects that were more responsive to local community needs and how these were evolving during the pandemic.

It is interesting to note that multiple participants in interviews with people in Philippine communities with experience of project closure said that they were grateful for relief efforts and suggested, further, that it would be inappropriate to be critical of how projects were implemented

or eventually closed. This underscores the need to be attentive to cultural context and other

variables in particular settings that might shape efforts at egalitarian collaboration in closure.

In the following table, we present questions linked to each element of the ethics of the temporary

and aiming to prompt reflection and discussion about its application toward project closure.

Elements of the Ethics of the Temporary	Linked questions for project closure
1. Situates humanitarian action temporally, with attention to the past and how it shapes crisis and crisis response	‣ How can project closure be better tailored and more responsive to the local context, including histories, capacities, resources, and coping strategies of communities? ‣ How should past experiences be considered, including prior experiences of humanitarian projects? ‣ Are there experiences of colonization or domination that influence humanitarian relationships? ‣ How might these affect perceptions, trust, and readiness to partner - for local communities, humanitarian organizations, civil society actors, and government agencies?
2. Focuses attention on anticipating and seeking to mitigate potential harms	‣ How has project closure been integrated in project planning? ‣ Are closure plans reviewed regularly and updated as circumstances change? ‣ What potential harms are associated with how project closure is planned and implemented and who will experience them? ‣ How can these risks be avoided, minimized, or mitigated?
3. Acts to promote sustainability and greater equity going forward	‣ How can closure be organized in ways that optimize continued services for the community which are aligned with their priorities? ‣ How can disruptions and uncertainty be reduced?

	▹ How can relationships and trust be preserved and not undermined during the closure process? ▹ How has equity been addressed in relationships with community members, locally-hired staff, and partners? ▹ How can equity be promoted or sustained through the mechanisms of project closure?
4. Emphasizes inclusive, collaborative approaches accessing and depending on local knowledge and capacities	▹ Who has contributed to the decision-making process? Should others be included? ▹ Has stakeholder input, particularly from community members, been taken into account during planning for, deciding on and implementing closure? ▹ How do community members perceive of decision-making processes? Do they see them as inclusive and fair? ▹Do these processes potentially marginalize some people in the community? ▹ Can humanitarians create spaces for and/or help facilitate discussion amongst other partners (e.g., Ministry of Health, development actors) and communities?

Table 1: questions for project closure that are linked to the four elements of the ethics of the

temporary

Conclusion

Humanitarian action is undertaken in response to crisis situations – large and small.

Humanitarian organizations respond as soon as possible in a crisis, often remaining through a

recovery phase, and ideally hand over to government agencies, development organizations, or

civil society actors for longer-term (re)development. Assistance here is, by mandate, temporary.

Given these factors, a good or ethical project should open with the goal of closing, with closure

as a focus of planning, communication, and action from the outset. An ethics of the temporary

can support reflection on dimensions of this process. It need not and certainly should not involve

a 'one foot out the door' at all times demeanour, but rather, one of informed and engaged

presence (Hunt et al, 2014) guided by the concept and practice of epistemic justice. We have

suggested, with reference to project closure in particular, that temporariness should be explicitly

acknowledged from the start of the humanitarian aid response, as it sets the tone for intentions and actions throughout. Then what happens at each stage, every interaction, each pivotal or quotidian decision can be informed by this understanding of accountability and responsibility which takes account of past, present, and future. It becomes part of a posture of engagement from the outset ('we will do our best to leave the smallest footprint, and only where it is warranted/wanted'; 'we will respect existing capacity and build new capacities where it is helpful and sustainable'). All of this to be enacted with a consciousness of the historical context and harms of colonization, an aim of dismantling the unjust systems they have engendered – or at least not reinforcing or creating new injustices – and where possible, working to support the development of more just systems and structures.

References

Abramowitz, S. (2015), 'What Happens when MSF Leaves? Humanitarian departure and medical sovereignty in post-conflict Liberia', Abramowitz, S., Kawaki, I., and Piot, P. (Eds.) *Medical Humanitarianism: Ethnographies of Practice,* University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, p.137.

Abu-Sada, C. (2012), *In the Eyes of Others : How People in Crises Perceive Humanitarian Aid*, MSF-USA, New York Center on International Cooperation.

Aloudat, T. and Khan, T. (2022), 'Decolonising humanitarianism or humanitarian aid?', *PLOS Global Public Health*, Vol. 2 No. 4, p.e0000179. doi:10.1371/journal.pgph.0000179.

Anderson, M.B. (1999), *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace--or War*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO.

Anderson, M.B., Brown, D. and Jean, I. (2012), *Time to Listen: Hearing People on the Receiving End of International Aid,* Collaborative Learning Projects, Cambridge, MA.

Barnett, M. (2003), 'What Is the future of humanitarianism?' *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, Vol. 9 No. 3, pp.401–416. doi:10.1163/19426720-00903010.

Brun, C. (2016), 'There is no future in humanitarianism: Emergency, temporality and protracted displacement', *History and Anthropology*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp.393–410. doi:10.1080/02757206.2016.1207637.

Chung, R. and Hunt, M.R. (2012), 'Justice and health inequalities in humanitarian crises: Structured health vulnerabilities and natural disasters', Lenard, P. and Straehle, S. (Eds.) *Health Inequalities and Global Justice*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, pp.197–212. doi:10.3366/edinburgh/9780748646920.003.0012.

De Sousa Santos, B. (2014), *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against Epistemicide,* Paradigm Press, Boulder, CO.

Eckenwiler, L. and Wild, V. (2020), 'Refugees and others enduring displacement: Structural injustice, health, and ethical placemaking' *Journal of Social Philosophy*, Vol. 52 No. 2, pp.234–250. doi:10.1111/josp.12387.

Fricker, M. (2010), *Epistemic Injustice Power and the Ethics of Knowing*, Oxford University Press, New York, N.Y.

Gardnert, A., Greenblott, K. and Joubert, E. (2005), '*What we know about exit strategies. Practical guidance for developing exit strategies in the field*' [online] Available at: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A02C7B78FB2B408B852570AB006EC7 BA-What%20We%20Know%20About%20Exit%20Strategies%20-%20Sept%202005.pdf.

Gerstenhaber, R. (2014). *2014 Handover Toolkit 2.0 'Success is also measured by what you leave behind'*, Médecins sans Frontières, Geneva.

Hunt, M., Chung, R., Eckenwiler, L., Hyppolite, S.-R., Pal, N., Pringle, J. (2021). '*Ethics and humanitarian project closure: Guidance note*' Available at: https://humethnet.files.wordpress.com/2021/12/ethics-of-closing-humn-projects_dec-2021_condensed.pdf. (accessed October 10, 2022)

Hunt, M., Eckenwiler, L., Hyppolite, S.-R., Pringle, J., Pal, N. and Chung, R. (2020), 'Closing well: national and international humanitarian workers' perspectives on the ethics of closing humanitarian health projects', *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, Vol. 5 No. 1, doi:10.1186/s41018-020-00082-4.

Hunt, M.R., Schwartz, L., Sinding, C. and Elit, L. (2012), 'The ethics of engaged presence: A framework for health professionals in humanitarian assistance and development work', *Developing World Bioethics*, Vol. 14, No. 1, pp.47–55. doi:10.1111/dewb.12013.

Oliver, K. (2017), *Carceral Humanitarianism: Logics of Refugee Detention*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, MN.

Pal, N.E., Eckenwiler, L., Hyppolite, S.-R., Pringle, J., Chung, R. and Hunt, M. (2019), 'Ethical considerations for closing humanitarian projects: a scoping review', *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, Vol. 4, No. 1, doi:10.1186/s41018-019-0064-9.

Parekh, S. (2017), *Refugees and the Ethics of Forced Displacement*, Routledge, New York, NY.

Rubenstein, J.C. (2015), *Between Samaritans and States: The Political Ethics of Humanitarian INGOs,* Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

Singh, S.J., Fischer-Kowalski, M. and Haas, W. (2018), 'The sustainability of humanitarian aid: The Nicobar Islands as a case of 'complex disaster', *The Asian Tsunami and Post-Disaster Aid* Reddy, S. (Ed.), pp.143–165. doi:10.1007/978-981-13-0182-7_8.

Sitali, N., Briskin, E., Foday, J., Walker, C., Keus, K., Smart, F., Ali, E. and Whitehouse, K. (2022), 'What it takes to get it right: A qualitative study exploring optimal handover of health programmes in Tonkolili District, Sierra Leone', *Global Public Health*, pp.1–12. doi:10.1080/17441692.2022.2058047.

Sphere Project (2011). *Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response*. Available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/4ed8ae592.html.

Key words:

Ethics; humanitarian closure; humanitarian exit; global justice; responsibility; localization.