



So you think you want  
to be a relief worker?

Berlin 15<sup>th</sup> October,  
2010

# Course aims

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- To help those thinking about becoming involved in relief work to decide whether or not it is a suitable field for them.
- To give an overview of the sector and consider motivations and methods for entering it professionally.

# Course objectives

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- Understand how the humanitarian sector works
- Examine motivations for entering the sector
- Question and learn from humanitarian workers
- Identify what to do next and how to go about it



# Course outline

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- Humanitarianism
- The relief sector and the key players
- Motivations for relief work
- What the agencies want
- Personal skills and qualities
- Q&A - Relief workers and agencies
- What next?



## **Some other RedR UK courses**

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- **Essentials of Humanitarian Practice**
- **Personal Security in Emergencies**
- Implementing Sphere
- Environmental Health: Principles & Practice
- Sanitation in Emergencies
- Field Logistics in Emergencies
- Needs Assessment Workshop
- Training of Trainers



# What is humanitarianism?

- Humanitarianism is about the considerations that govern our interventions – not what is done but how and why.
- Humanitarianism is constantly evolving. Legal
- SPHERE project
  - Humanitarian charter and principles
  - Minimum standards
- Code of conduct



## Introduction to the sector

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UNHCR

WHO

WASH

UNICEF

ICRC/IFRC

NFIs

(UN)OCHA

NGOs

Logframes

UNJLC

CBOs

MSF

UNDP

DFID

Save

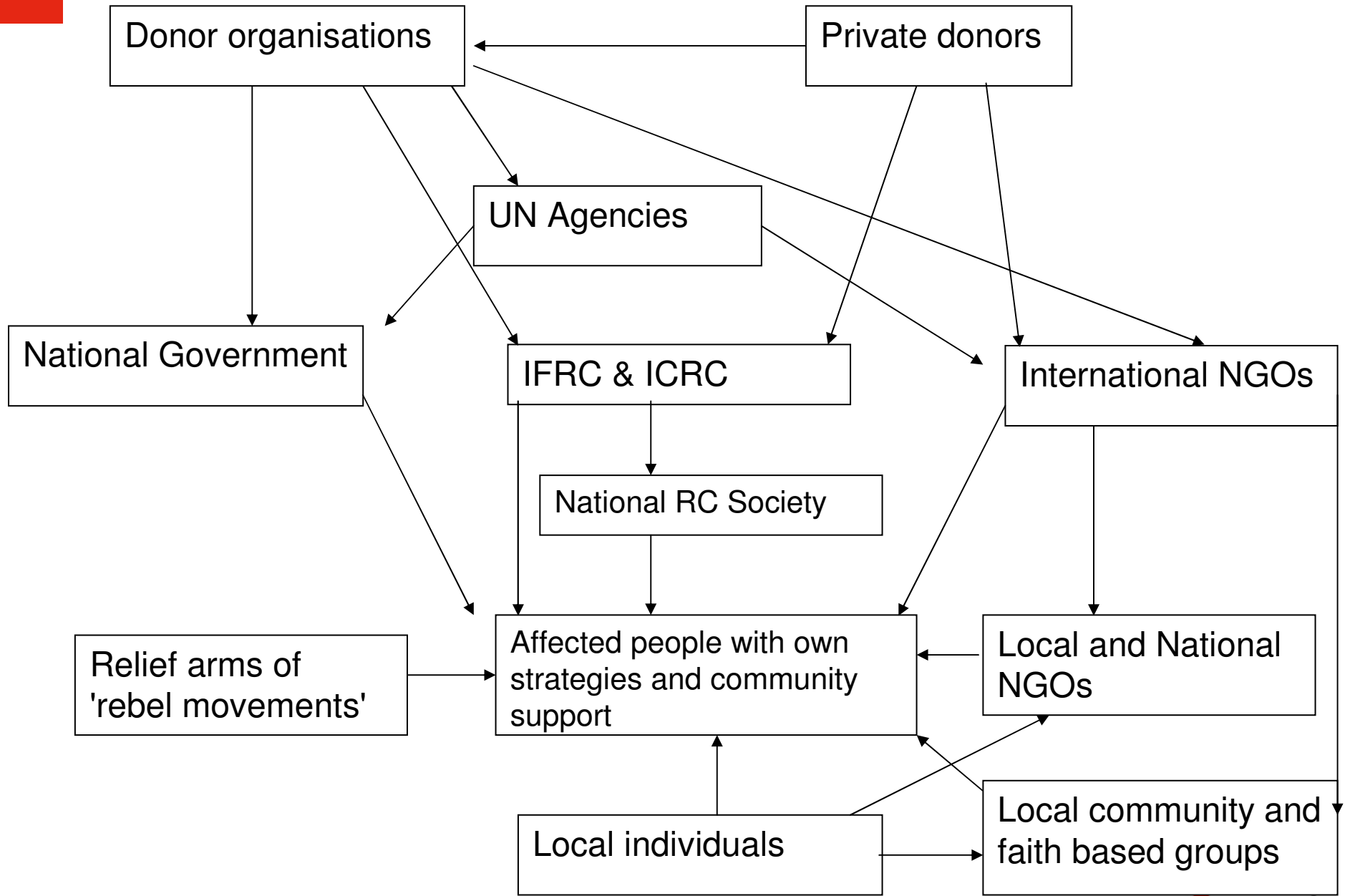
WFP

IDPs

ECHO

Clusters

WatSan





WHY?



# Humanitarian employers

- Many NGOs and International Organisations with different focus
  - Disaster response
  - Post-conflict/ Complex Emergencies
  - Rehabilitation/ Recovery
  - Development
- Difficult to categorise
- Blurring of boundaries



# Recruitment in the aid sector: context

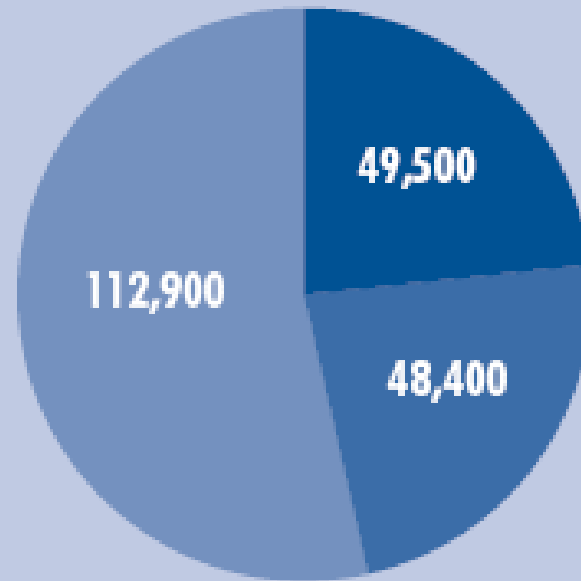
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- Complex situations on the ground
- Higher risk
- “do no harm”
- Professionalisation of NGOs
- Emphasis on local staff and local partners, increasing local capacity
- Expat staff required need to have higher and more specific skill levels



## Estimated number of field staff and distribution

Total field staff: 210,800



- UN humanitarian agencies and International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- International Movement of the Red Cross/Red Crescent
- INGOs

95% of staff working for INGOs and 89% of staff working for UN agencies are nationals of the host country.



# ~~Issues for agencies~~

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- Massive pool of keen people
- Shortage of experienced people
- Difficulties in retaining staff
- Cannot afford to take a risk
- Cost of sending expats overseas
- Huge number of applicants for each post, most are unsuitable



# Technical Skills - What the agencies want

- HIV/ AIDS Specialists
- Capacity Building expertise
- Nutritionists
- Engineers
- Security Specialists
- Business skills (e.g.. finance, HR)
- Logisticians
- Midwives
- Food Security Specialists
- Anaesthetists, Surgeons, GPs
- Psychologists
- Managers
- Public Health Engineers



# Personal Skills - What the agencies want

- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Commitment to humanitarian principles
- Ability to build relationships internally and externally
- Resilient - able to manage stress and heavy workload
- Professionalism
- Cultural sensitivity
- Plan, prioritise and organise own work
- Flexibility
- Willing to learn



# ~~Enhancing your employability~~

- Gain skills & experience – commit to the “long-haul”
- Build up knowledge and exposure to relief work and issues
- Consider qualification and training in appropriate technical/professional area
- Get appropriate experience overseas
- Consider volunteering in Head office of relief agency
- Keep up to date with political issues and consider impact on relief work
- Consider getting involved in fundraising activities/events for humanitarian agencies - gives greater exposure to the work of the organisation as well as shows commitment and interest.



## Six key areas for moving forward

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- Volunteering – awareness, language, style
- Researching – depth of understanding
- Networking – who you know
- Training – specialisation and performance
- German Domestic Work – transferable skills
- Cross-cultural experience – travelling & at home



# Further training

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- RedR
  - Essentials of Humanitarian Practice
  - Personal Security in emergencies
  - Needs assessment
- VENRO (development focus)
- CILT (logistics)
- Universities
- Reliefweb list courses