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What Works To Eradicate Modern Slavery in Crisis Settings? Lessons From the Evidence

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Abstract

Our understanding of what works to eradicate modern slavery is limited, and particularly so in crisis settings. During 2020 and 2021, Delta 8.7 convened an expert working group to synthesise the evidence on combating modern slavery in crisis settings, including conflict, humanitarian crisis response, and forced migration. The resultant policy guide was released in March 2021 and includes eight hypotheses identifying the mix of multilateral and national policies necessary to accelerate progress towards UN Sustainable Development Goal Target 8.7. While these hypotheses point to some potential lessons learnt, the process revealed important gaps that should be the subject of future systematic reviews related to climate change, women and girls, and the role of technology. Since the policy guide was published, our understanding of the relationship between modern slavery and crisis has grown and become more nuanced, however there is a lag between an understanding of this intersectionality and what works to respond. In order to plug these gaps, more investment is needed to evaluate the impact of modern slavery interventions in crisis settings. This paper surveys the main findings from the Delta 8.7 Crisis Policy Guide process and posits important areas where resources can be better targeted to further develop our understanding of what works.

Keywords: Crisis, Conflict, Humanitarian, Migration, Target 8.7

Introduction

How do we eradicate modern slavery during crisis? Between April 2020 and March 2021, Delta 8.7 convened an expert working group to address the question of "what works" to achieve Target 8.7 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in crisis settings. The guide

¹ Delta 8.7, "Crisis Policy Guide," Delta 8.7 Policy Guides (2021). Available from: http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:8065/Delta87 CrisisPolicyGuide.pdf

was one of three produced, with the other two focusing on tackling modern slavery in the context of justice² and markets.³

Target 8.7 commits UN member states to:

"Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms."

The purpose of the guides was to articulate current understanding of what works to eradicate modern slavery for multilateral and national policymakers. Partnering with the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham, Delta 8.7 assembled a database of evidence on what works to achieve Target 8.7. Over the course of 11 months, a working group of 25 experts, including humanitarians, academics, policy experts, and those with lived experience reviewed this evidence base, and drew upon their own experience, to determine a series of hypotheses for tackling modern slavery in times of crisis. From a total of 24 hypotheses on "what works" in crisis settings extracted from existing evidence, eight hypotheses were chosen for inclusion in the final crisis policy guide. These ranged from providing support services to people on the move as a result of crisis settings, through to preventative measures such as access to economic and livelihood opportunities to reduce vulnerability to exploitation.

Perhaps more so than the justice and markets domains, there is limited data to understand "what works" to eradicate modern slavery in crisis settings. While our understanding of the links between crisis and modern slavery is growing, our overall understanding of effective responses in these contexts is still nascent. This can be partially explained by the difficulties in conducting research in crisis settings without impeding humanitarian assistance, however, given the risks that modern slavery presents in these settings, a failure to respond is a failure of protection.

Important gaps remain, highlighting areas for future systematic reviews and making the case for greater investment in assessing the impact of policy interventions during times of crisis. These areas for future research include: the specific vulnerabilities of women and girls in crisis settings; the intersection between climate change and modern slavery; and the role of technology. Repeated systematic reviews are essential to refine these gaps and further develop our understanding of "what works".

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² Delta 8.7, "Justice Policy Guide," Delta 8.7 Policy Guides (2021). Available from: http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:8067/Delta87_JusticePolicyGuide.pdf

³ Delta 8.7, "Markets Policy Guide," Delta 8.7 Policy Guides (2021). Available from: http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:8066/Delta87_MarketsPolicyGuide.pdf

⁴ Sustainable Development Solutions Network, "Indicators and a Monitoring Framework," (2015). Available from: https://indicators.report/targets/8-7/

Modern slavery in crisis settings

The number of people affected by crisis continues to increase. In 2021, the year the policy guide was published, an estimated 235 million people needed humanitarian assistance and protection at a cost of USD35.1 billion.⁵ That the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects compounded multiple crises is well documented,⁶ while economic downturn and conflict in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, Somalia, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen, among other countries has led to food insecurity, and setbacks to education, health, and gender equality. The climate crisis also continues to create, and exacerbate existing, vulnerabilities across the globe.

Crisis increases the prevalence of, and vulnerability of individuals to, modern slavery. The erosion of the rule of law, breakdown in protections, and normalisation of violence makes it easier to exercise coercion. Armed groups take advantage of this situation to exploit children as child soldiers, or force individuals into forced labour as fighters, cooks, porters, or runners. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable due to increased incidences of gender-based violence and sexual violence, including forced, child, and early marriage and forced sexual exploitation. The disruption that crisis causes leads to risky coping behaviours, including migrating through unsafe routes and increasing the use of migrant smugglers. This disruption can also reduce access to education and disrupt family networks, making children more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labour and forced marriage.

⁵ "Global Humanitarian Overview 2021", United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OHCA), accessed February 16, 2021, https://gho.unocha.org.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See for instance Anne T Gallagher, "Trafficking in Persons and Armed Conflict," Selected Works (2015); IOM, "Addressing human trafficking and exploitation in times of crises," (Geneva: IOM, 2015); Lucia Bird and Tuesday Reitano, "Trafficking in persons in conflict contexts: What is a realistic response from Africa?," (The Global Initiative of Transnational Organized Crime, 2019); Mónica Hurtago, Ángela Iranzo Dosdad, and Sergio Gómez Hernández, "The relationship between human trafficking and child recruitment in the Colombian Armed Conflict," *Third World Quarterly* 39, 5 (2018): 941-958; Olivier Peyroux, "Trafficking in human in beings in conflict and post-conflict situations," (Caritas, 2016).

⁸ See for instance NRC and IDMC, "Girl, disrupted," Norwegian Refugee Council/Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (NRC/IDMC) (2014); Sarah Warpinski, "Protecting Women and Girls from Human Trafficking in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Toward Justice for Victims of Gender-Based Violence," Michigan State University College of Law International Law Review 21, 1 (2013): 155-194.

⁹ Julie Opperman, "Conflict and Humanitarian Settings," Delta 8.7, accessed February 2021, https://delta87.org/resources/thematic-overviews/conflict-humanitarian-settings/#c&hs-why-do-conflict-and-disaster-increase-the-forms-of-exploitation-addressed-by-target-8-7. See also: Fiona David, Katharine Bryant and Jacqueline Joudo Larsen, "Migrants and their vulnerability to human trafficking, modern slavery and forced labour," (Geneva: International Organization for Migration, 2019), https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/migrants and their vulnerability.pdf.

¹⁰ Bhalla, Nita, "First cyclone, then slavery: risks abound for Mozambique children", Reuters, March 17, 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mozambique-floods-trafficking/first-cyclone-then-slavery-risks-abound-for-mozambique-children-idUSKCN1R81EF. See also: UNICEF, "Action to end child sexual abuse and exploitation: A review of the evidence", UNICEF, 2020.

Crisis can lead to migration and displacement, which exacerbates vulnerability to modern slavery. There are currently 89.3 million people forcibly displaced globally, of which 53.2 million are Internally Displaced People (IDPs), 27.1 million are refugees, and 4.6 million are asylum seekers. During times of crisis, it is highly likely that migration is unplanned and higher risk. Mass movement makes it difficult for protection actors to identify and respond to this risk, and creates circumstances where criminal networks may take advantage. Migrants can be vulnerable in transit, while destination countries can be destabilised by an influx of migrants.

Drafting the Crisis Policy Guide

Partnering with the Rights Lab at the University of Nottingham, Delta 8.7 assembled a database of evidence on what works to achieve Target 8.7, both through a public submission of evidence and drawing upon an evidence review conducted by the Rights Lab in 2020. ¹⁴ The evidence base was a mix of academic and grey literature, and included diverse methodologies, including quantitative and quasi-experimental methods as well as more qualitative interviews and case studies. It was of varying quality and covered different geographic locations. ¹⁵

The evidence base was scored by the Delta 8.7 Global Working Group using a quantitative assessment of the strength of the evidence associated with specific themes and hypotheses. These were then used by the working group throughout 2020 and early 2021 to identify gaps in the evidence, to discuss the strength of the evidence supporting each hypothesis, to provide alternative interventions or hypotheses, and to assign a confidence score¹⁶ and accompanying implementation notes to the final hypotheses.

From a total of 24 hypotheses identified in the evidence review, eight hypotheses were retained in the final policy guide, which was published in March 2021.

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¹¹ UNHCR," Figures at a Glance", UNHCR, accessed March 5, 2023, https://www.unhcr.org/uk/figures-at-aglance.html.

¹² See Fiona David, Katharine Bryant, and Jacqueline Larsen, "Migrants and their Vulnerability to Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery and Forced Labour" (Geneva: IOM, 2019), https://publications.iom.int/books/migrants-and-their-vulnerability-human-trafficking-modern-slavery-and-forced-labour

¹³ IOM, "Handbook on protection and assistance for migrants vulnerable to violence exploitation and abuse," (Geneva: IOM, 2019), https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/avm_handbook.pdf

¹⁴ Data collection was conducted from July-September 2020, with all reporting concluded by December 2020.

¹⁵ Full methodology for the review, and findings, are presented in Deanna Davy et al, "What Works to End Modern Slavery? A Review of Evidence on Policy and Interventions in the Context of Crisis" Delta 8.7, December 2020, http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:9069/Delta8.7 CrisisReport.pdf

¹⁶ Please refer to: http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:8065/Delta87_CrisisPolicyGuide.pdf for descriptions of the evidence and quantitative and qualitative scoring.

Findings from the Policy Guide

These hypotheses were included in the final policy guide to provide a snapshot of evidence that may work to achieve Target 8.7 in times of crisis.

Hypothesis	Confidence score	Justification for the confidence score
1. Providing support services to people on the move in crisis situations helps to reduce trafficking in persons.	Very high	The studies supporting this hypothesis, though few in number, were persuasive and of relatively high quality. The studies covered a diverse geographical area. The study findings were consistent with the practical experience of the reviewers.
2. Access to economic and livelihood opportunities can reduce vulnerabilities of individuals at risk of human trafficking and modern slavery in crisis situations.	High	The studies supporting this hypothesis, though few in number, were persuasive and of relatively high quality. The study findings were consistent with the practical experience of the reviewers.
3. Dismantling border controls and restrictive migration legislation improves migrant protection, particularly during times of crisis.	High	The evidence supporting this hypothesis was strong, with a significant quantity of relevant data, though no studies used quantitative data. The study findings were consistent with the practical experience of the reviewers.
4. Gender-based approaches to programming in crisis situations prevent gender-based violence and trafficking.	High	A moderate number of studies supported this hypothesis and were variable in quality. However, the practical experience of the reviewers was a strong factor in the confidence expressed in this hypothesis.
5. Addressing the root causes of vulnerability to human trafficking and modern slavery can reduce re-victimisation in crisis situations	High	A large number of studies supported this hypothesis. The studies were of high quality and in most cases used good sample sizes. The studies covered a diverse geographical area. The study findings were consistent with the practical experience of the reviewers.

6. Adopting a human rights- based approach strengthens the prevention of human trafficking during crisis situations and strengthens the protection of vulnerable persons	High	The studies were relatively diverse, and of moderately high quality. The practical experience of the reviewers was a strong factor in the confidence score expressed in this hypothesis.
7. Multi-agency coordination within States and in regional contexts strengthens the response to modern slavery during crisis situations.	High	The studies were diverse, and of moderately high quality. The practical experience of the reviewers was a strong factor in the confidence expressed in this hypothesis.
8. Long-term support for survivors of human trafficking and modern slavery can increase the likelihoods of their effective and sustained recovery.	High	The evidence supporting this hypothesis was relatively strong, with a significant quantity of relevant data and strong geographic reach. The study findings were consistent with the practical experience of the reviewers.

The intersection between modern slavery and crisis settings plays out in the evidence review and subsequent recommended policy interventions. For example, the role of migration in the modern slavery-crisis nexus is reflected in hypotheses one and three, and was found to be the most dominant theme identified in the evidence review. 17 The evidence showed that people on the move face a range of challenges during their migration, including inability to access health care and decent accommodation. They may face arrest and detention and lack access to psychosocial care. Strengthening existing protection mechanisms, such child protection, during disaster relief efforts was also posited to reduce the vulnerability of those affected and particularly children. 18 The importance of addressing modern slavery in transit countries was also highlighted, as migrants might face heightened risk of exploitation while on the move.¹⁹

That is not to ignore increased vulnerabilities while attempting to reach countries of destination. Hypothesis three highlighted the importance of dismantling border controls and restrictive migration legislation to improve migrant protection. Restrictive border controls were shown to lead migrants and asylum seekers to use more risky and expensive routes, which then

¹⁷ Davy et al, above n 16, p 22.

¹⁸ Maria Gabriella Boria, "Human Trafficking and Natural Disasters: An Empirical Analysis," Boston College Electronic Thesis (2016).

¹⁹ Claire Healy, "The Strength to Carry On—Resilience and Vulnerability to Trafficking on Migrations Routes to Europe," ICMPD Policy Brief (2019); Benjamin Perrin, "Just Passing Through? International Legal Obligations and Policies of Transit Countries in Combating Trafficking in Persons," European Journal of Criminology 7, 1 (2010): 11-27 (2010).

pushed vulnerable populations into more dangerous and protracted situations²⁰ and increased trafficking risks for refugees.²¹ To address this, recommendations included facilitating legal migration, temporary migration status, increased sanctioning of employers, and improved access to information, as well as increasingly open borders for greater migration options.

The importance of longer-term support for survivors of exploitation was highlighted in hypothesis eight. Underpinning studies highlighted the importance of psycho-social support,²² listening to younger people, and the provision of market-driven vocational training at international quality standards. Humanitarian responses that are informed by those with lived experience,²³ that emphasise building trust²⁴ and the provision of safe spaces in refugee and IDP camps can act as a preventative measure to reduce risk of modern slavery.²⁵ Providing support over a longer period of time was also critical to support survivors to rebuild their lives and to reduce the risk of re-victimisation²⁶ and re-traumatisation.

Half of the included hypotheses focused on preventative measures (hypotheses two, four, five, and six). For example, developing economic and livelihood opportunities was suggested as a means by which to reduce vulnerability or to reduce the risk of re-trafficking. These opportunities included livelihood strategies such as cash-for-work skills development and

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²⁰ Daniel Murphy, "Hidden Chains: Rights Abuses and Forced Labor in Thailand's Fishing Industry," Human Rights Watch (2018); Gabriella Sanchez, "Critical Perspectives on Clandestine Migration Facilitation: An Overview of Migrant Smuggling Research," Journal of Migration and Human Security 5, 1: 9-27 (2017); Louise Gomez-Mera, "Regime Complexity and Global Governance: The case of trafficking in Persons," European Journal of International Relations 22, 3 (2015): 566-595; Nazli Avdan, "Human trafficking and migration control policy: vicious or virtuous cycle?," Journal of Public Policy 32, 3 (2012): 171-205; Tuesday Reitano, "A Perilous but Profitable Crossing: The Changing Nature of Migrant Smuggling through sub-Saharan Africa to Europe and EU Migration Policy (2012-2015)," The European Review of Organised Crime 2, 1 (2015): 1-23; Pooja Theresa Stanslas, "Transborder Human Trafficking in Malaysian Waters: Addressing the Root Causes," Journal of Maritime Law and Commerce 41, 4 (2010): 595-606; Peter Dwyer, Hannah Lewis, Lisa Scullion and Louise Waite, "Forced labour and UK immigration policy: status matters?," JRF programme paper, (2011); Lenore Lyons and Michele Ford, "Trafficking Versus Smuggling: Malaysia's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act," Human Trafficking in Asia: Forcing Issues, (2014): 35-48.

²¹ Annie Wilson, "Notes from the Field Trafficking Risks for Refugees," Societies Without Borders 7, 1 (2012): 100-118.

²² Joanne Van Selm, "Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Measures for the Integration of Trafficked Persons," International Organisation for Migration (2013).

²³ Susan Rosas, "Sex Trafficking in Cambodia As A Complex Humanitarian Emergency," Advocates Forum, (2011): 41-50.

²⁴ Margaret Chambeshi, Amanda Eckhardt, Xinyi Wang, and Chris Muller, "Heathcare Access for Foreign-National Survivors of Trafficking," Restore NYC (2019).

²⁵ Kay Standing, Sara Parker, and Sapana Bisba, "Grassroots responses to violence against women and girls in post-earthquake Nepal: lessons from the field," Gender and Develoment 24, 2 (2016): 187-204; Alexandra Seltzer, "Human trafficking: the case of Burmese refugees in Thailand," International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice 37, 4 (2013): 279-293.

²⁶ Evelyn Probst, "Victims' protection within the context of trafficking in human beings and European Union standards," Academy of European Law (2018); Iffat Idris, "Interventions to Support Victims of Modern Slavery," Institute of Development Studies (2017); Joanne Van Selm, "Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Measures for the Integration of Trafficked Persons," IOM, (2013).

enterprise development.²⁷ Underpinning some of the evidence under this hypothesis was the assumption that a lack of employment opportunities was a push factor for riskier cross-border migration or falling below subsistence levels, both of which increased vulnerability to modern slavery.²⁸ These livelihood opportunities were seen as a way to build crisis-resilient communities,²⁹ or to reduce vulnerability to modern slavery among communities already impacted by crisis.³⁰ Others identified that economic opportunities could also support longer-term protection for victims.³¹

The hypothesis with the most evidence, "Addressing the root causes of vulnerability to human trafficking and modern slavery can reduce re-victimisation in crisis situations" was also argued to prevent exploitation. The studies underpinning this hypothesis were varied, and included tackling domestic violence in order to prevent child trafficking,³² and strengthening rules, policies and legal frameworks that protect human rights and address root causes of irregular migration reduces the risk of human trafficking.³³ Another identified formal education, citizenship, maternal education, high caste status, and birth order were protective determinants to mitigate trafficking in Southeast Asia.³⁴ Common to many studies underpinning this hypothesis was the need to strengthen protective factors before disasters occurred to build resilience in the face of crisis.³⁵ Addressing ethnic and religious fragmentation,³⁶ implementing programs and

²⁷ ILO and IOM, "Impact of recovery initiatives on reducing vulnerability to human trafficking and illegal recruitment: Lessons from Typhoon Haiyan," (Geneva: ILO and IOM, 2015).

²⁸ Ibid; Olubukola Adesina, "Modern day slavery: poverty and child trafficking in Nigeria," African Identities 12, 2 (2014): 165-179; Neil Howard, "Protecting children from trafficking in Benin: in need of politics and participation," Development in Practice 22, 4 (2012): 460-472.

²⁹ Adesina, ibid.

³⁰ ILO and IOM, "Impact of recovery initiatives on reducing vulnerability to human trafficking and illegal recruitment: Lessons from Typhoon Haiyan" (Geneva: ILO and IOM, 2015).

³¹ Iffat Idris, "Interventions to Support Victims of Modern Slavery," Institute of Development Studies (2017); Joanne Van Selm, "Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Measures for the Integration of Trafficked Persons," International Organisation for Migration (2013).

³² Amber Peterman, Alina Potts, Megan O'Donnell, Kelly Thompson, Niyati Shah, Sabine Oertelt-Prigione and Nicole van Gelder, "Pandemics and Violence Against Women and Children," Centre for Global Development Working Paper 528 (2020).

³³ Christopher Horwood and Tuesday Reitano, "A Perfect Storm? Forces shaping modern migration and displacements," Danish Refugee Council (2016).

³⁴ Kelsey Perry and Lindsay McEwing, "How do social determinants affect human trafficking in southeast asia and what can we do about it: A-systematic-review," Health and Human Rights 15, 2 (2013): 138-159.

³⁵ Davy, above n 16, pp 28-30.

³⁶ Randall Akee, Arnab Basu, Nancy Chau, and Melanie Khamis, "Ethnic Fragmentation, Conflict, Displaced Persons and Human Trafficking: An Empirical Analysis," Institute for the Study of Labor 8, 5142 (2010).

policies that address poverty and economic vulnerabilities,³⁷ developing community-driven responses,³⁸ strengthening protections and labour rights for migrants,³⁹ and tackling pre-existing gender inequalities⁴⁰ were all identified as measures by which to build resilience to modern slavery. Learning from the experience of existing crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic,⁴¹ conflict in Colombia,⁴² and the human rights impacts of climate change⁴³ were also identified as ways to reduce vulnerabilities, particularly of women and children, and be better prepared for future crises. Few studies, however, drew the link explicitly between climate change and modern slavery, although one identified that a legal framework to ensure the protections of ecosystems is necessary to decrease displacement.⁴⁴

Hypothesis seven: "Multi-agency coordination within States and in regional contexts strengthens the response to modern slavery during crisis situations" highlights the importance of coordination. Most of the studies underpinning this hypothesis were quite broad and discussed

³⁷ Peter Olayiwola, "Killing the Tree by Cutting the Foliage Instead of Uprooting It?' Rethinking awareness campaigns as a response to trafficking in South-West Nigeria," Anti-Trafficking Review, 3 (2019): 50-65; Nlerum Okogbule, "Combating the 'New Slavery' in Nigeria—An Appraisal of Legal and Policy Responses to Human Trafficking," Journal of African Law 57, 1 (2013): 57-80; Neil Howard, "Protecting children from trafficking in Benin: in need of politics and participation," Development in Practice 22, 4 (2012): 460-472.

³⁸ Amber Peterman, Alina Potts, Megan O'Donnell, Kelly Thompson, Niyati Shah, Sabine Oertelt-Prigione and Nicole van Gelder, "Pandemics and Violence Against Women and Children," Centre for Global Development Working Paper 528 (2020); Lester Thompson, Linda Tupe, David Wadley, and Karen Flanagan, "Mobilizing cultural supports against the commercial sexual exploitation of (female) children (CSEC) in Solomon Islands community development," Community Development 50, 3 (2019): 315-331.

³⁹ Claire Healy, "How to prevent human trafficking among people travelling along migration routes to Europe, "ICMPD (2019); Thanos Maroukis, "Keeping Up Appearances: The British Public Policy Response to the Trafficking of Domestic Workers in a Changing Regime of Social Protection," Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies 15, 2 (2017): 155-170; Lucrecia Rubio Grundell, "EU Anti-Trafficking Policies and Crime Control to Prevention and Protection," (Migration Policy Centre, 2015); Lukas Olynk, "Meneshachin Scoping Study-A global synthesis and analysis of responsible recruitment initiatives targeting low-wage, migrant workers," The Freedom Fund (2020); Javier Trevino-Rangel, "Magical legalism: human rights practitioners and undocumented migrants in Mexico," The International Journal of Human Rights 23, 5 (2019): 843-861; ILO et al., "Employment Practices and Working Conditions in Thailand's Fishing Sector," International Labour Organization, Asian Research Center for Migration, Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University (2014).

⁴⁰ Huong Tu Nguyen, "Gender vulnerabilities in times of natural disasters-Male-to-Female Violence in the Philippines in the Aftermath of Super Typhoon Haiyan" Violence Against Women 25, 4 (2018): 421–440.

⁴¹ UNODC, "Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Trafficking in Persons," (UNODC, 2020).

⁴² Mónica Hurtago, Ángela Iranzo Dosdad, and Sergio Gómez Hernández, "The relationship between human trafficking and child recruitment in the Colombian Armed Conflict," Third World Quarterly 39, 5 (2018): 941-958.

⁴³ Holly Atkinson and Judith Bruce, "Adolescent Girls, Human Rights and the Expanding Climate Emergency," Annals of Global Health 81, 3 (2015): 323–330.

⁴⁴ Michael Gerrard, "Climate Change and Human Trafficking After the Paris Agreement," University of Miami Law Review 72, (2018): 345-368.

collaboration as important to coordinating a national response to trafficking.⁴⁵ rather than specific to crisis settings. This was identified as an important evidence gap, largely because the group pointed out that much has been written about humanitarian collaboration and partnership, but little in the context of responding to modern slavery. Additional relevant literature was used to bolster the implementation note in the final policy guide, including research conducted by the Global Protection Cluster pointing to the importance of training and operational tools for humanitarian actors,46 a subsequent 'Introductory Guide to Anti-Trafficking Action in Internal Displacement Context' to support the identification of trafficking persons in displacement settings, 47 as well as a guide produced by UNICEF in 2020 providing recommendations for joined up action to tackle child sexual abuse and exploitation, including in crisis settings.⁴⁸

Despite anecdotal evidence, and the experience of the working group, only two studies included in the review highlighted the vulnerability of women and girls, and not necessarily specific to crisis settings. These studies considered gender-based approaches important to programming across a broad range of contexts, 49 and referred to the inclusion of women and frontline workers and the importance of gender-sensitive monitoring and referral systems.⁵⁰ Respect for human rights (hypothesis six) was also included in at least ten of the studies in the evidence base. This included restructured migration and labour policies under human rights principles,⁵¹ centering human rights approaches to providing protection for survivors of

⁴⁵ See, for example, Victoria Rietig, "Prevent, Protect, and Prosecute Human Trafficking in Mexico—Policy and Practical Recommendations," International Migration 53, 4 (2014); Palita Thapa, "Human trafficking in Nepal: Changing dimensions," Asian Journal of Women's Studies 21, 4 (2015): 450-459; Nur Subono and Meidi Kosandi, "The regionalism paradox in the fight against human trafficking: Indonesia, and the Limits of Regional Cooperation in ASEAN," Journal of Leadership, Accountability and Human Ethics 16, 2 (2019): 89-98; Deanna Davy, "Responding to Child Sex Trafficking: Transnational Advocacy Networks in the Greater Mekong Subregion," Women & Criminal Justice 23, 4 (2014): 304-325; Cristina Popescu, "Illegal Migration-Conceputal Delimitations," Challenges of the Knowledge Society 3 (2013): 605-612; Andreas Schloenhardt and Mark Loong, "Return and Reintegration of Human Trafficking Victims from Australia," International Journal of Refugee Law 23, 2 (2011): 143–173.

⁴⁶ Muse Mohammed, "Anti-Trafficking in Humanitarian Responses," (IOM:2018), https:// www.globalprotectioncluster.org/ assets/files/anti-trafficking-in-humanitarian-responses.pdf.

⁴⁷ Global Protection Cluster, "An Introductory Guide to Anti-Trafficking Action in Internal Displacement Contexts (Global Protection Cluster: 2020), https://www.refworld.org/docid/5fbe80b54.html

⁴⁸ UNICEF, "Action to end child sexual abuse and exploitation: A review of the evidence", 2020.

⁴⁹ Niklas Potrafke, "Policies against Human Trafficking—The Role of Religion and Political Institutions," CESifo Working Paper 4278 (2013).

⁵⁰ Kay Standing, Sara Parker, and Sapana Bisba, "Grassroots responses to violence against women and girls in postearthquake Nepal: lessons from the field," Gender and Development 24, 2 (2016): 187-204.

⁵¹ Beatriz Camargo Magalhães, "Mind the Protection (Policy) Gap: Trafficking and Labor Exploitation in Migrant Domestic Work in Belgium," Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies 15, 2 (2017): 122-139; Rebecca Miller and Sebastian Baumeister, "Managing Migration: Is border control fundamental to anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling interventions?," Anti-Trafficking Review, 2 (2013): 15-32; Tanya Basok and Nicola Piper, "Management Versus Rights: Women's Migration and Global Governance in Latin America and the Caribbean," Feminist Economics 18, 2 (2012): 35-61.

exploitation,⁵² and shifting the focus of anti-trafficking responses from criminal justice to human rights.⁵³ Victim-centred approaches were seen as critical.⁵⁴ Both these hypotheses were included in the final policy guide based on the experience of the working group, in particular, recognising the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women and girls,⁵⁵ that conflict can increase gender-based violence, sexual violence and forced marriage,⁵⁶ and the impact of natural disasters on forced sexual exploitation.⁵⁷

Limitations

Despite identifying these potential lessons learnt, there remain gaps in the evidence that can inform future systematic reviews. The limitations and scope of the evidence review—a rapid quasi-systematic review conducted according to pre-defined parameters—meant that not all relevant evidence was captured and assessed within the process. For instance, the inclusion of migration as a required theme at the outset significantly expanded the body of evidence to be considered in the review, including a body of material not considered directly relevant to crisis settings by the working group. Even within the body of literature more directly connected to crisis contexts, hypotheses not directly tied to these settings were common in the review. While relevant, many of the hypotheses and underpinning evidence were not specific to crisis settings. The importance of a human rights approach, addressing root causes, building economic and livelihood opportunities, and the importance of longer-term support for victims of modern slavery, for example, should apply to any modern slavery situation.

There were further gaps in the review, which were surprising to the working group. For example, there was limited evidence and no hypotheses specific to addressing the exploitation of children, and child soldiers in particular. This was connected to child soldiers not being included in review term harvesting, based on initial scope requirements, and indicated that earlier

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⁵² Evelyn Probst, "Victims' protection within the context of trafficking in human beings and European Union standards," *Academy of European Law* (2018); Letizia Palumbo, "Protection of trafficked people in Italy: policies, limits and challenges," *Journal of Money Laundering Control* 18, 1 (2015): 52-65.

⁵³ Louise Gomez-Mera, "Regime Complexity and Global Governance: The case of trafficking in Persons," *European Journal of International Relations* 22, 3 (2015): 566-595; Stephanie Nawyn, Nur Kavakli, Tuba Demirci-Yılmaz, and Vanja Oflazoğlu, "Human trafficking and Migration Management in the Global South," *International Journal of Sociology* 46, 3 (2016): 189-204. Stephanie Nawyn and Nur Banu Birdal, "Counter-Trafficking Policy and Immigrant Rights in Turkey," *Insight Turkey* 16, 4 (2014): 77-85.

⁵⁴ Sarah Warpinski, "Protecting Women and Girls from Human Trafficking in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Toward Justice for Victims of Gender-Based Violence," *Michigan State University College of Law International Law Review* 21, 1 (2013): 155-194.

⁵⁵ OSCE, "Addressing vulnerabilities of women and girls to trafficking in persons: Side event during the 66th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women", last modified March 16, 2022. https://www.osce.org/odihr/511777

⁵⁶ "Women's human rights and gender concerns in situations of conflict and instability," United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, accessed March 16, 2023, https://www.ohchr.org/en/women/womens-human-rights-and-gender-related-concerns-situations-conflict-and-instability.

⁵⁷ Mondira Dutta, "Natural Disaster and Vulnerability to Trafficking of Women and Girls in India," European Scientific Journal (2017), https://core.ac.uk/download/236411044.pdf

consultation with the working group over the scope of the review, key concepts, and search strategies could have increased synergies between the review and subsequent working group activities. In drafting the policy guide, the authors conducted additional searches of Walk Free's Promising Practices Database to identify additional studies that may make recommendations related to exploitation of child soldiers. The five studies identified revealed the importance of longer-term support, but also highlighted the importance of community-based interventions, nonformal education and apprenticeships, in addition to traditional disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration programs.⁵⁸

Similarly, important grey literature, such as UNICEF's 2020 evidence review of addressing child sexual abuse and exploitation and the work of the Global Protection Cluster were missing from the evidence review and call for evidence. This meant that important lessons from humanitarian responses were missing from the evidence base assessed. A systematic review of humanitarian literature and areas related to modern slavery, such as humanitarian responses that aim to prevent gender-based violence, or exploitation of vulnerable groups by non-state actors, would be fundamental to building out the evidence base.

In some ways, the gaps in the literature were baked into the evidence review process. Time and resource constraints meant that a full systematic review was not possible, particularly with the broad parameters of the inquiry. Further, search strings were constructed based on prescribed sub-themes defining the crisis theme: migration, humanitarian, displacement, and conflict. Because of the overlap between these terms, and because they were not necessarily focused on the working group's understanding of the theme—search terms related to migration, for example, provided literature which touched on labour migration unrelated to crisis settings—this led to a very broad literature base. Without a full systematic review, the evidence assessed was necessarily only a cross-section of literature across these broad sub-themes.

Crisis does not have a universally accepted definition.⁵⁹ Based on relevant humanitarian literature reviewed in drafting the policy guide and the post evidence review, the working group developed the following operational definition:

"Crisis represents a critical threat to basic human rights of a community or other large group of people, usually over a wide area. It requires a unified response from multiple actors, which may involve an international or cross-border response. It can include conflict and natural disasters (including pandemics)."

This definition was then applied retrospectively to the hypotheses. Without additional time, it was not possible to update review searches using this updated definition. Instead, a decision tree was used to screen out those hypotheses which were based on literature that was not

⁵⁸ Delta 8.7, "Crisis Policy Guide," Delta 8.7 Policy Guides (2021). Available from: http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:8065/Delta87 CrisisPolicyGuide.pdf

⁵⁹ See for example, "What is a Humanitarian Emergency?" Humanitarian Coalition, accessed January 17, 2021, https://www.humanitariancoalition.ca/info-portal/factsheets/what-is-a-humanitarian-crisis;

[&]quot;Institutional Responsibilities", UNICEF, accessed January 12, 2021, https://www.corecommitments.unicef.org/ccc-1-4; Interagency Group, "Definition of complex emergencies,' https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/legacy_files/WG16_4.pdf

relevant to crisis settings, or where the working group could not express sufficiently high confidence in the evidence or hypotheses presented to warrant their inclusion. This largely explains the reduction of hypotheses from 24 to eight. Finally, the nature of the expertise of the working group meant that many working group members were called away during the drafting of the document.

Potential subjects for future systematic reviews

The evidence gaps point to potential areas that could be subject to future systemic reviews and policy guides. The below list is by no means exhaustive, rather it points to some interesting areas that could be explored in future iterations:

- 1) The specific vulnerabilities of women and girls in crisis settings. That there were only two studies within the review focused on addressing exploitation of women and girls was surprising to the working group. This is despite the known increased vulnerability of females to exploitation, and in crisis settings in particular.
- 2) The intersection between climate change and modern slavery. This is a growing body of work, and the work of Rights Lab and Anti-Slavery International is important here. However, there is limited evidence assessing the impact of the various policy recommendations that exist; it will be essential to measure impact of modern slavery interventions in climate change settings.
- 3) The role of technology. One hypothesis considered for inclusion, was, "capitalising on the use of technology during disasters improves the coordination of crisis relief efforts and the protection of vulnerable persons". While it was not retained in the final Policy Guide because it had only one supporting source, the working group were interested in delving into the role of technology to coordinate responses and potentially improve support for victims.

Towards a more nuanced understanding: gaps in the evidence?

Beyond the limits of the evidence review, the crisis group was hindered by significant gaps in the "what works"? literature. The intersection between modern slavery and crisis settings is widely established. In 2016, the United Nations held its first thematic debate on human trafficking, including trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict.⁶⁰ The following year, Resolution 2388, highlighted the specific vulnerabilities of women and children to exploitation during conflict and post-conflict situations.⁶¹ Subsequently, the intersection between modern slavery and conflict has been subject of many Resolutions and UN and civil society

⁶⁰ "Security Council SC/12165, 7584th Meeting - Security Council Presidential Statement Says Human Trafficking Might Constitute War Crimes, as Members consider Issue for First Time," United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Release, last modified December 16, 2016, https://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12165.doc.html.

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⁶¹ "Security Council Reiterates its Condemnation of Trafficking in Persons, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2388 (2017)," United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Release, last modified November 21, 2017, https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/sc13081.doc.html.

reports, 62 as well as academic attention. 63 Yet, evidence specifically evaluating "what works" remains both scarce and narrow in scope.

Since the guide was published in March 2021, the understanding of the intersection of modern slavery and crisis has become more nuanced, recognising the complex interaction between these factors. A Supplemental edition of the Journal of Modern Slavery released in the same year, "Slavery and Humanitarian Response," explores these themes. In some ways it reinforces the findings of the policy guide: Viktoria Curbelo, for example, only found five studies between November 2020 and December 2020 that were peer-reviewed, explored the connection between humanitarian disasters and human trafficking, were based on primary analysis of data, and were written in English.⁶⁴ The Supplemental edition further advanced understanding of the crisis-modern slavery nexus, with implications for programming and interventions. Curbelo's study found that natural disasters and outbreaks were predictive of increased human trafficking, with the exception of one study which identified an inverse relationship between conflict and human trafficking.65 Bales observes that natural disasters disrupt pre-existing modern slavery dynamics, bringing existing criminal patterns to an end, followed by an onset of extreme vulnerability, exploited by adaptive criminals to produce new perpetration dynamics. 66 Van Doore and Hoque both highlight how the shape of humanitarian responses can increase risks of trafficking (addressing orphanages in post-disaster contexts and Rohingya refugee communities in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh respectively).67

We can see these trends playing out in recent crises — COVID-19, climate change and the conflict in Ukraine —and potential policy responses. Pandemics, climate change and conflict are cited as drivers of modern slavery, however effective policy responses were limited in the

66 Ibid.

⁶² Although by no means exhaustive, see, for example: United Nations Security Council, "2016 Resolution 2331 Adopted by the Security Council on 20th December 2016, 7847th meeting", S/RES.2331, https://www.un.org/ sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/resolution/resolution-2331-2016/Resolution-2331-2016-en.pdf; United Nations Security Council, "2015 Resolution 2242 Adopted by the Security Council. 7533rd meeting," S/RES/ 2242, https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/ s res 2242.pdf; United Nations Security Council, "Report of the Secretary General on trafficking in persons in armed conflict pursuant to Security Council resolution 2388," https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1653945?ln=en; IOM. "Addressing human trafficking and exploitation in times of crisis," (Geneva: IOM, 2015), https:// publications.iom.int/books/addressing-human-trafficking-and-exploitation-times-crisis-evidence-andrecommendations-0; UNODC, "Trafficking in Persons in the context of armed conflict," (Vienna: UNODC, 2018), https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2018/GloTIP2018 BOOKLET 2 Conflict.pdf.

⁶³ See for instance the Special Issue of the Journal of Modern Slavery on Slavery and Humanitarian Response (Volume 6, Issue 3, 2021), https://slavefreetoday.org/slavery-and-humanitarian-response-supplemental-journal-ofmodern-slavery-volume-6-issue-3-2021-2/, published after the evidence review and Policy Guides considered in this paper were produced.

⁶⁴ Viktoria Curbelo, "Exploring the relationship between humanitarian emergencies and human trafficking: A narrative review". Journal of Modern Slavery, Slavery and Humanitarian Response Supplemental, 63 (2021).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Kathryn E. van Doore, "Providing protection or enabling exploitation? Orphanages and modern slavery in postconflict contexts." Journal of Modern Slavery, Slavery and Humanitarian Response Supplemental, 6 3 (2021); Mahmudul Hoque, "Forced labour and access to education of Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh: Beyond a humanitarian crisis." Journal of Modern Slavery, Slavery and Humanitarian Response Supplemental, 6 3 (2021).

evidence review. In terms of COVID-19, the evidence review was conducted early in the pandemic and therefore evidence that has emerged in recent months was not yet available. Recent research highlights potential effective responses including placing human rights at the centre of the response, continuing to resource and implement existing anti-slavery responses, ensuring businesses and employers respect and protect human rights, coordinating with civil society and trade unions, and coordinating at the international level to respond to similar emergencies.⁶⁸

Recognised interconnections between modern slavery, environmental degradation and climate change further emphasise the need for integrated approaches and strengthening existing anti-slavery responses to be resilient to external shocks. Sparks et al discuss three patterns to this nexus: labourers subjected to modern slavery are forced to participate in environmental criminal activities; environmental degradation and unsustainable extraction pulls vulnerable workers into conditions of modern slavery by creating a demand for cheap labour; while thirdly, environmental degradation and/or climate change drives modern slavery. ⁶⁹ A 2021 report by Anti-Slavery International also highlights how climate change and modern slavery are a "vicious cycle" where the climate crisis forces people into work that actively contributes to environmental harm. ⁷⁰ The report recommends an integrated social, economic and environmental response to build resilience, while a recent roundtable hosted by Rights Lab identified that strengthening due diligence, developing preventative-focused measures, targeting the development and finance community in policy changes, and centering worker voices, by implementing worker-driven approaches, and engaging local communities was critical for policy makers. ⁷¹

In Ukraine, an existing anti-slavery response may point to a strengthened response in times of crisis. There were concerns that the risk of trafficking would dramatically increase in the immediate aftermath of the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022.⁷² As the war has continued and more people are fleeing the conflict, with limited economic opportunities, an

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⁶⁸ Tomoya Obokata, Forough Ramezankhah, Rasha Al Saba, Samrawit Gougsa, "Good practice in protecting people from modern slavery during the Covid-19 pandemic: Research Summary", (Modern Slavery Evidence and Policy Centre., 2021), https://modernslaverypec.org/assets/downloads/Best-practice-summary.pdf

⁶⁹ Jessica L. Decker Sparks, Doreen S. Boyd, Bethany Jackson, Christopher D. Ives, Kevin Bales, "Growing evidence of the interconnections between modern slavery, environmental degradation, and climate change", *One Earth*, 4, 2 (2021): 181-191,https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2590332221000610? via%3Dihub.

⁷⁰ Anti-Slavery International, "Climate change and modern slavery: a vicious circle", (ASL,2021). Available from: https://www.antislavery.org/climate-change-modern-slavery/.

⁷¹ Rights Lab, "Modern slavery, environmental degradation and climate change: Pathways for addressing the nexus", (University of Nottingham, 2021). Available from: https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/beacons-of-excellence/rights-lab/resources/reports-and-briefings/2021/august/pathways-for-addressing-the-nexus-between-modern-slavery-environmental-degradation-and-climate-change.pdf

⁷² See for example, European Parliament, "Russia's war on Ukraine: The risk of trafficking of human beings", accessed March 5, 2023, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_ATA(2022)729410; Ella Cockbain and Aiden Sidebottom, "The war in Ukraine and associated risks of human trafficking and exploitation. Insights from an evidence gathering roundtable", (UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, 2022), https://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1801/ucl-iasc-2022-roundtable-report-the-war-in-ukraine-human-trafficking-and-exploitation.pdf

increase in human trafficking has been observed.⁷³ A rapid assessment post invasion of Ukraine, for example, found that as it was possible to track the increase of modern slavery because certain mechanisms — a hotline, national referral mechanisms, trained potential first responders — existed in neighbouring countries. Gaps in protections were identified for those who were already discriminated against and marginalised, who did not have existing documents, or where they were unable to access EU temporary protection schemes.⁷⁴

There is also a need for better coordination among humanitarian actors, those working in protection, and the anti-slavery sector. As the anti-slavery sector, we need to get better at talking to these different stakeholders and understanding that the intersection between these issues requires an intersectional response. Tackling modern slavery needs to be embedded in humanitarian responses, particularly in protracted or chronic settings, while disaster planning should include a modern slavery response.

These findings provide some direction for subsequent policy responses to modern slavery in times of crisis. In each case, the literature has implications for policy and programming. For instance, Mcquade suggests that consideration of modern slavery may not need to be an operational priority for humanitarian professionals in the acute phases of emergencies. However, as crises become more chronic, then modern slavery prevention and protection should be prioritised. Wieltschnig, Muraszkiewicz, and Fenton likewise suggest that security actors should work with humanitarian actors to deepen understanding of potential (preventative) antitrafficking responses within a broader human security framework. However, this emerging body of literature does not substantially tackle the key concern of this review and Policy Guide—namely what works to address modern slavery in these crisis settings. To understand how the recommendations made can be translated operationally, and the extent to which they "work" in practice (the intention of this review and Policy Guide), further research, monitoring, and evaluation aligned with developing programming will be required.

⁷³ See for example, United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Release, "Renewed Efforts Critical to Ending Humanitarian Catastrophe in Ukraine, Emergency Relief Coordinator Calls Tells Security Council," February 6, 2023, https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15192.doc.htm; Walk Free, "The Global Slavery Index 2023", (Minderoo Foundation, 2023), www.walkfree.org.

⁷⁴ Suzanne Hoff & Eefje de Volder, "Preventing human trafficking of refugees from Ukraine: A rapid assessment of risks and gaps in the anti-trafficking response", (Freedom Fund, 2022), https://freedomfund.org/wp-content/uploads/UkraineAntiTraffickingReport 2022 05 10.pdf

⁷⁵ Aidan McQuade, "Older than Troy: slavery as a consequence of human catastrophe." *Journal of Modern Slavery, Slavery and Humanitarian Response Supplemental* 6 3 (2021).

⁷⁶ Peter Wieltschnig, Julia Muraszkiewicz, Toby Fenton, "Without data we are fighting blind: the need for human security data in defence sector responses to human trafficking". *Journal of Modern Slavery, Slavery and Humanitarian Response Supplemental* 6 3 (2021).

Conclusion

Repeated systematic reviews are essential to further our understanding of "what works". The initial Policy Guides developed by Delta 8.7 are important steps in this process.

Collating and synthesising the evidence and providing actionable recommendations for national and multi-lateral policy makers is critical. Despite these, gaps in understanding what works to combat modern slavery are common to the sector. A systematic review of programmatic responses to modern slavery, the Promising Practices Database, highlights that while there is more evidence being produced by monitoring and evaluation reports in recent years, we are still a long way off understanding exactly "what works". 77 Sources assessed in the evidence review for the Crisis Policy Guide also demonstrated this gap, with few evaluation and impact assessment reports identified in an evidence base dominated by more general research reports. Working out "what works" in crisis settings is fraught with evidence gaps, ethical concerns, and limited data.⁷⁸ However, this is common across all three Policy Guide themes, rather than being limited to the crisis theme. Without a strong evidence base of evaluations and impact assessments, it is difficult to determine which interventions are working, where, and why.

It is important that as our understanding of the intersection between crisis and modern slavery improves, that we are also investing to better understand policy responses and solutions. Sharing information with the humanitarian sector, and advocating for the inclusion of modern slavery in disaster planning and providing training to humanitarian actors are critical to reducing the vulnerability of modern slavery in crisis settings. Drawing on good practice from related sectors and resourcing and conducting systematic reviews of known gaps are essential if we are to eradicate modern slavery and achieve SDG Target 8.7 by 2030.

⁷⁷ Walk Free, Promising Practices Database, (Minderoo Foundation, 2021). Available from: https:// www.walkfree.org/projects/promising-practices/

⁷⁸ JJyotsna Puri, Anastasia Aladysheva, Vegard Iversen, Yashodhan Ghorpade, Tilman Brück, "What Methods May Be Used in Impact Evaluations of Humanitarian Assistance?" (Institute for Study of Labour, 2015), https:// ftp.iza.org/dp8755.pdf; Charles-Antoinne Hofmann et al, "Measuring the impact of humanitarian aid. A review of current practice", HPG Research briefing15, (June 2004).