

# **Disasters as a Chance to Implement Novel Solutions that Highlight Attention to Human Dignity**

Evelin G. Lindner

Contribution to the Panel “Disasters and Innovative Solutions,” on November 18, 2008, at the *International Conference on Rebuilding Sustainable Communities for Children and Their Families after Disasters*, convened by Adenrele Awotona, Founder and Director of the Center for Rebuilding Sustainable Communities after Disasters, College of Public and Community Service, University of Massachusetts, Boston, USA, November 16-19, 2008.

## **Abstract**

The sustainability of social cohesion and ecological survival for humankind requires a focus on human dignity, implemented with a mindset of cooperation and humility, rather than disrespect and humiliation. Evelin G. Lindner, a social scientist with an interdisciplinary orientation, is the Founding Director and President of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS), a global transdisciplinary fellowship of academics and practitioners who wish to promote dignity and transcend humiliation. The idea for this network emerged in 2001, and has since grown to ca. 1,000 personally invited members from all over the world, with the website being read by ca. 40,000 people from 183 countries per year.

HumanDHS researchers and practitioners attempt to create public awareness for the destructive effects of humiliation, and to promote alternative approaches that generate and embody human dignity and respect.

The central human rights message is expressed in Article 1 of the of the Human Rights Declaration, which states that every human being is born with equal dignity (and ought not be humiliated). This ideal requires concerted action to be implemented, not just in the field of legal regulations, but in every sphere of human life, including architecture and the way we create our built environments, and including disaster management.

After disasters, communities are prone to suffer violations of dignity in numerous ways. However, disasters can also open space for the implementation of novel solutions that highlight attention to human dignity. For example, victims of disasters can be encouraged to become co-creators of interventions, rather than merely recipients of help (research indicates that receiving help can have humiliating effects). Since disasters disrupt established life, they even entail the potential to open more space for empowerment than was present prior to the event.

Disasters unmask in stark ways the short-comings of human interventions in general, be it with regard to management philosophies (in case of disasters, for example, how aid is being delivered), or how housing is designed (in the case of disasters, for example, how emergency shelters are being built), or how short-term and long-term planning is interwoven (in the case of disasters, whether humanitarian emergency aid is being

integrated with longer-term development goals).

Many short-comings are related to a lack of attention to human rights, not just their legal aspects, but the spirit of human rights, namely equality in dignity for all. Human interventions in society in general, as well as approaches to disaster intervention, often stem from times when sensitivity to the notion of equality in dignity was still weak. Sometimes this lack of sensitivity is overtly visible, at other times notions such as “expertise,” “efficiency,” or “practicability,” cover up for, or “justify” violations of human rights and human dignity.

One brief example: Obsessive rectangularity and military uniformity, for example, when shelters are built or aid is offered, are often being justified with arguments of efficiency and practicability, or with the argument that recipients of help should be happy with what they get. However, these are obsolete arguments. A helpless person, struggling to heal and build a new life, cannot be expected to improve if his or her basic individuality is removed and humiliated into helpless uniformity. The loss of diversity is not a small loss. Human beings are living creatures, meaning that they are living beings who thrive on diverse environments. Individual human identity and health depend not least on diversity markers. Uniformity ignores this human need, relegating human beings to the humiliating status of machines.

International organizations, accustomed to responding to emergencies and developmental needs, must develop concepts of efficiency and practicability that nurture inclusive and dignifying diversity. Today the term *mainstreaming* permeates many discourses: The spirit of human rights, the emphasis on human dignity, needs to be mainstreamed also in disaster management.

## Introduction

Let me start with expressing my warmest congratulations to Adenrele Awotona for establishing the Center for Rebuilding Sustainable Communities after Disasters on July 6, 2008 at the College of Public and Community Service at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. This paper is written for the Center’s inauguration conference. I am deeply honored to be part of this extremely timely, much needed, and worthy initiative.

When we read reports about emergency aid after disasters, or any kind of humanitarian and development aid, we are often presented with the following success stories: Thousands of blankets have been distributed, millions of bags of food have been provided, and millions of dollars have been spent.

In the face of such “successes,” we wonder why the final results have so far not been more convincing. The list of criticisms is long. Let me first refer to *Living on the Edge of Emergency: Paying the Price of Inaction*, the most recent CARE International report by Amber Meikle and Vanessa Rubin (2008). Another provocative title is *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace - Or War* by Mary B. Anderson (1999).

What is the problem? Is it a complex problem with no clear answers? Or are there basic patterns? Are there succinct answers to that question that can capture the core of the problem?

This paper discusses such succinct answers. It is therefore a rather conceptual paper. It

attempts to embed the reconstruction after disaster into a larger historical context so as to expose core patterns (using a Weberian *ideal-type* approach<sup>1</sup>). The discussion of details and technicalities, though as important, is left to other levels of analysis and other occasions.

This paper builds on more than thirty years of the author's international experience, in many countries within Africa, Asia, Europe, and America, among others, for longer periods in Egypt, Somalia, the Great Lakes in Africa, the Middle East, China, Japan, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America, Norway, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, or France. I have treated clients in my practice as a clinical psychologist (1980-1984 in Hamburg, Germany, and 1984-1991 in Cairo, Egypt) before moving on macro levels as my main focus (social psychology, sociology, and political science, etc.).

I began my work on humiliation in 1996 with my doctoral research on the genocidal killings that occurred in Rwanda in 1994, and in Somalia in 1988, on the backdrop of Nazi-Germany. In the course of this research alone, I interviewed humanitarian helpers in Somalia, Kenya, Rwanda, and Burundi. In 2001, I defended my dissertation thesis entitled *The Psychology of Humiliation: Somalia, Rwanda / Burundi, and Hitler's Germany*.<sup>2</sup> Since then, I have expanded my studies, among others, in Europe, South East Asia, and the United States. I am currently building a *theory of humiliation* that is transcultural and transdisciplinary, entailing elements from anthropology, history, social philosophy, social psychology, sociology, and political science.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout this international life, I have encountered first hand the entire range of difficulties discussed by scholars and practitioners dealing with aid, from problems with emergency aid after disasters to the pitfalls of long-term development aid.

Earlier, I asked whether it is possible to describe, in a succinct way, the very core of the problems with aid that we observe around the world, at micro, meso and macro levels in various shades and variants.

One of the core problems seems to be that success cannot be gauged by measuring input. Output (or outcome) must be measured. And not just any output, but the right kind of output. From negotiation handbooks we can glean what the right kind of output may be. We learn that we need to focus on "interest" and not on "position" to attain optimal outcome.<sup>4</sup> If two people fight over an orange, for example, sharing it equally would solve the conflict, however, not optimally. The optimal solution would be to ask more detailed questions, and consider, for example, that one person wishes to use the skin of the orange for a cake, while the other wants to make juice from the fruit flesh. As a result, the outcome would be that both have 100% of their interest served, not just 50% of their position. Not that such a positive outfall can be guaranteed – sometimes a situation does simply not entail the potential for win-win solutions – but by not searching for such potential win-win solutions, those solutions are overlooked and untapped.

As we see, asking deeper questions may help. Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss developed the notion of the "depth of intention," the "depth of questioning," or "deepness of answers." Næss writes, "our depth of intention improves only slowly over years of study. There is an abyss of depth in everything fundamental."<sup>5</sup> Greater depth means continuing to ask questions at the point at which others stop asking.<sup>6</sup>

Let us heed Næss's call and combine the two above-presented slogans of 1) "measure

output and not input,” with 2) “focus on interest and not position,” and make a list of questions:

- Why do people focus on input and position, rather than on output and interest?
- Whose interest is served through focusing on input and position?
- Whose interest should define output?
- What is the true interest of people?
- What kind of output must be measured?

How could a list of worst-case answers look like? If we suppose that influential elites have an interest to define output in ways that maintain their privileges, then it should be in their interest to manipulate recipients of aid into buying into the elites’ definitions of interest and output rather than shaping their own perception of the situation. Focusing on input and position would then be a welcome strategy for these elites to achieve their goals because such focus would cover up for this manipulation: impressed by the seeming good-will entailed in large input from elites, recipients would perhaps be deterred from questioning whether this input is truly in their interest.

How could a list of best-case answers look like? If we suppose that influential elites have an interest to define output in ways that empower recipients, then it would be in their interest to facilitate a process through which recipients can conceptualize definitions of their interest that are truly suitable for them. Focusing on input and position would be avoided because such focus makes it difficult to forge appropriate definitions of interest.

When we consider these two sets of answers, we notice that we face two profoundly different scenarios. The second scenario is imbued with the human rights ideal that each human being deserves to be treated as equal in rights and dignity. It represents the spirit of the Center for Rebuilding Sustainable Communities after Disasters for which this paper is written. The first scenario expresses the belief that some people (i.e. privileged elites) deserve to have more and can neglect the interest of their underlings, calling to mind contemporary examples such as Burma, North Korea, Sudan, or Zimbabwe.

From the point of view of human rights, the first set of answers humiliates the recipients of aid, more even, it humiliates the humanity of all involved players, and that of humankind as a whole. Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, reads: “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.” In this context, “humiliation” is the enforced lowering of any person or group by a process of subjugation that damages their dignity; “to be humiliated” is to be placed in a situation that is against one’s interest (although, sadly, not always against one’s will) in a demeaning and damaging way; and “to humiliate” is to transgress the rightful expectations of every human being and of all humanity that basic human rights will be respected.

As we gather from the above-presented reflections, words such as *aid* (from disaster management to humanitarian and development aid) are not only unclear, they even entail definitions that are irreconcilably opposed to each other: Aid can empower recipients, or it can disempower them.<sup>7</sup>

The two core definitions of aid, either empowering or disempowering, are markers of a large-scale transition that humankind is currently part of, a transition that is characterized by what anthropologists call the *ingathering* of humankind (this is part of what we label *globalization*), and the human rights movement. These transitions will be explained in more detail further down in this paper.

*Direct violence* is often being differentiated from *structural violence*.<sup>8</sup> In this paper I use the word *structural disaster* for destructive outcomes that are not sudden and unpreventable, but caused in a long-term fashion by the lack of human intervention, or by inappropriate intervention, and thus are also reversible and preventable by human intervention.

The terminology of structural disaster reflects the subjective experience of disaster victims. It is difficult to conceptually separate “natural” from “human-made” disaster. However, my field work shows that victims perceive a clear experiential difference with respect to *avoidable* and *not avoidable* human intervention. This is because one of the most relevant dimensions for triggering anger the so-called *controllability* dimension. We react with anger – rather than sympathy – when we believe that a person who hurts us has sufficient control over the situation to avoid harming us. Of course, the situation is even more severe when we infer that the other in fact *wants* to hurt us. Indeed, research shows that we want to harm others, either overtly or covertly, when we believe they could have avoided hurting us. It is one thing to be pushed accidentally by a drunk man, another to be harmed deliberately by an apparently clearheaded man. As Keith G. Allred explains, it is crucial how we *attribute* – in the case of the pushing man, whether we attribute his behavior to drunkenness or to fully conscious malevolence.<sup>9</sup>

In short, the notion of *avoidability* is a crucial differentiator. A disaster caused by a meteorite or volcanic eruption cannot be avoided by human interference, at least not for the time being. Human error is not always avoidable either. Disaster caused by human error (unintended, and not caused by undue neglect), although “human-made,” could be categorized as “natural” disaster. Even human malice is not always avoidable – there will always be a few people in every society, who, out of whatever reason, find satisfaction in causing disaster. However, what is avoidable is systemic neglect of due preparation. Such neglect represents structural disaster.

Mark Sloan, Director of the Harris County Citizen Corps, most convincingly illustrated the overwhelmingly positive effect of appropriate preparedness in his keynote on November 17, 2008, in this conference. Unlike other regions, Harris County is able to withstand natural disasters that come their way with impressive efficiency, more even, Harris County was also able to help those who fled New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina in an impressively comprehensive way. Sloan’s advice: Plan, Prepare, Practice, and Repeat! In other words, his advice is to avoid structural disaster.

This paper is arranged along three distinctions of kinds of disasters. First, the world experiences natural disasters, such as, for example, meteorite impacts, in other words, disasters that can by no means be prevented by human intervention. Such disasters can be short-term and direct, or have long-term structural effects. Second, there are structural disasters that are part and parcel of traditional cultures of collectivist ranking. Third, there are structural disasters that stem from misguided contemporary reactions against past collectivist ranking, as there are, for example, cultures of ruthless individualism. The latter two disasters are both part of the above-described scenario of recipients of aid

suffering humiliation. These disasters typically compound natural disasters; their destructive effects may even surpass the destruction caused by natural forces. Since the latter are undoable and preventable by human intervention they are the focus of this paper (rather than the unavoidable elements in disaster).

The solution, the realization of the scenario that protects recipients from humiliation, is proposed in the concluding remarks. It is large-scale systemic change towards what I call *egalization*.

### **The traditional structural disaster**

Anthropologists such as William Ury (1999) teach us that most of human history passed relatively peacefully, with small bands of hunter-gatherers cooperating in noticeably egalitarian societal structures, amidst abundant resources.<sup>10</sup>

Roughly ten thousand years ago, *Homo sapiens* had populated almost the entire globe – at least its more easily accessible regions – and uninhabited land became scarce. No longer could people just wander off to the next virgin valley; it was likely to be populated already (the anthropological term is *circumscription*). Increasingly, people had to stay in place, become more sedentary, and make do with the resources immediately available, primarily through a process of agriculture (*intensification* is the anthropological term).

Agriculture introduced a profoundly new way of life: much more malign than previously, because land belongs either to oneself or to another. This win-lose logic, in turn, fuels war. International relations theory uses concepts like the *security dilemma* to describe how arms races and war were all but inevitable in this atmosphere of fear of attack from outside one's community – see, among others, the work done by Barry Posen (1993), and Russell Hardin (1995).

Under conditions of the security dilemma, fear reigns. Hobbesian fear of a surprise attack from outside one's borders is all-pervasive. Continuous preparations for war drain societal resources. Everybody has to be continually on the alert and willing to be led by their leaders and governmental institutions. Stereotyped fear of out-groups (for example, of other nations) permeates in-groups. For millennia, this fear became manifest in societal, social and cultural institutions, from manifest expressions such as “Ministries of War” or “Defense” to less tangible identity constructs such as masculinity or honor norms.

In response to these novel circumstances, hierarchical societies evolved, with masters at the top and lesser beings at the bottom. Human worthiness became ranked, with different degrees of honor attached to each stratum.

It seems evident that most individuals feel intense pain when something they value is debased, especially when it defines their inner-most being, for example their honor or dignity. However, during the past millennia, this was not the case for subaltern underlings. Humiliation was a privilege for “honorable” elites. Usually honor is a male concept in a collectivist setting. Particularly, elite males possess honor, and are actors, while most women, children, and to a certain degree lowly men, represent the substratum to be acted upon by their superiors. Vendetta, blood feud, and duel - women and lowly men are no “honorable” actors, not worth killing. Women, for example, can move freely

when blood feuds are rife, precisely because they do not merit such “honorable” treatment.

In my book *Emotion and Conflict*,<sup>11</sup> I attempt to show how the concept of ranked honor can be taken to represent the single biggest “master manipulation” ever perpetrated by humankind (and how it is still virulent). Ranked honor could be regarded as the core structural disaster that humans ever perpetrated on themselves, not intentionally, but unwittingly, as a “side-effect” of an otherwise functional adaptation to new circumstances. Ranked honor entails the hideous suggestion that it is unavoidable, either divinely ordained or nature’s order, that dignity is not equal, but that “higher” beings are meant to preside over “lower” beings who are expected to subject themselves to their masters’ belief systems and decisions. In this way ranked honor underlies and facilitates all other manipulations – it gives the power to define “what is” and “what ought to be” to a small master elite.

The old custom of foot binding is perhaps the most evocative example of the impact of ranked honor, showing how the pain of subjugation could become institutionalized into “what is appropriate” both for elites and subalterns. The tradition of painfully twisted deformed feet began late in the Tang Dynasty (618-906) and flourished until it was finally outlawed in the 1911 Revolution of Sun Yat-Sen. It began as a luxury among the rich but soon spread throughout society. For an entire millennium, millions of young Chinese women paid with a painful life to serve the honor of their husbands. The women were reduced to the status of dependent and helpless toys through this practice, while their husbands gained honorable status by imitating their elite. Howard Levy describes the torturous details of feet bones being repeatedly broken, their growth stunted, to fit into the desired “lotus” shape.<sup>12</sup> It became a prerequisite for marriage and was especially hard on the poor who could not afford servants.

The basic philosophy that produced Chinese foot binding reigned wherever hierarchical societies prevailed throughout the past ten thousand years. Underlings in coercive hierarchies were routinely forced into artificial incapacitation. Mutilation and handicap, physically and psychologically, were seen as normal for underlings. Health, well-being, quality of life, as understood in human-rights based contexts, was beside the point.

Foot binding is now outlawed. The practice of so-called honor killing is slowly following suit, as is the practice of female genital cutting, indicating increasing resistance against the traditional concept of ranked honor. The Indian caste system has only recently been renamed “Indian Apartheid.”<sup>13</sup>

However, the world is still permeated with “honorable” foot-binding practices. Among those practices is the above-discussed focus on position and input. A recent, very stark example, namely, the way the ruling elite tackled the 2008 cyclone Nargis in Burma, can illustrate this approach. The position of the ruling elite was that the victims’ interest was adequately addressed by the kind of input the elite defined and provided. The interest of the victims, as defined by them themselves, was not considered. Access to their voices was curtailed by arguments of national sovereignty. From the ruling elite’s standpoint the victims enjoyed the elite’s benevolent patronage, however, from a human rights standpoint, the victims’ core humanity was disrespected.

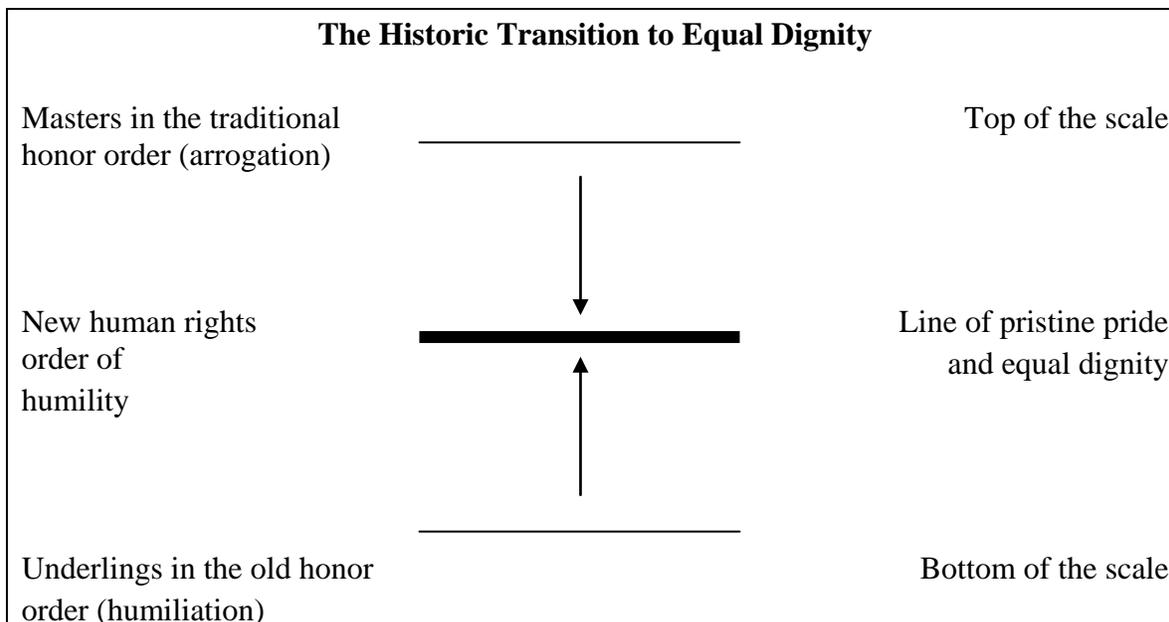
**The counter-reactive structural disaster**

Since very recently – beginning just a few hundred years ago – humankind faces a second deep transition, as profound as the one that occurred ten millennia ago. Technological innovations allow humans to relate to their home, the planet Earth, and to their fellow humans, in new ways. Increasingly, knowledge and not land is the essential resource for sustainable livelihoods. Ury suggests that humankind is on the verge of creating a global knowledge society,<sup>14</sup> thus returning to the more benign win-win frame of the hunter-gatherers (since knowledge, unlike land, is an expandable resource). Human beings may thereby regain the potential for relatively peaceful and egalitarian societal structures.

Some of the predicted changes may already be seen in the growing acceptance of human- rights ideals, which have brought a profound shift in hierarchical orders around the world. In the course of this process, the notion of humiliation has changed its point of attachment. The change is marked by the emergence of the modern meaning of the word “humiliation,” in 1757. William I. Miller (1993) informs us that “the earliest recorded use of *to humiliate*, meaning to mortify or to lower or to depress the dignity or self-respect of someone, does not occur until 1757” (p. 175, italics in original).

The human rights revolution could be described as an attempt to collapse the master-slave dynamic of the past ten thousand years to a midpoint of equal dignity and humility (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: The Historic Transition to Equal Dignity**



With the advent of human rights ideals, the notion of humiliation changes. Human rights “democratize” humiliation. Human rights endow every single human being with an inner core of equal dignity that ought not to be debased. The notion of humiliation changes its attachment point. It moves from the top to the bottom of the pyramid of power, from the

privileged to the disadvantaged. Feelings of humiliation among the downtrodden are no less than the very “fuel” of the human rights revolution. In a human rights framework the downtrodden secure the right to feel humiliated. The human rights revolution turns the formerly legitimate humbling of underlings into illegitimate humiliation. The beaten wife and the girl who demands the right to make her own life decisions are informed by human rights defenders that “domestic chastisement” as it was enshrined in law (until 1868, for example, in Norway) is no longer legitimate, but has turned into illegitimate “domestic violence.” The beaten wife and the subjugated girl are encouraged to invoke humiliation. The masters, the elites, the husband, the father, on the other hand, are called upon to humble themselves. They are no longer given permission to resist this call by claiming superiority and designating their underlings’ protests as humiliation.

Humiliation is at the core of the current human rights revolution and the related transition from ranked honor to equal dignity. Today, in the aftermath of the 1757 shift in meaning of the verb “to humiliate,” the practice of humiliating people can no longer serve prosocial purposes. The overall normative frame no longer allows for that. Only shaming and humbling can still be applied in such ways; and indeed, human rights activists around the world busily confront companies and countries in the attempt to shame them into keeping their promises as protectors of the environment and human rights. While humbling and shaming still work prosocially, humiliation does no longer. We do not wish to have shameless people as neighbors; indeed, we wish to be surrounded by humble people who respect the law, yet, we do not endorse societies filled with humiliated underlings. Applying humiliation has turned obscene. The worldwide reaction to practices of humiliation at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq represents a case in point. Bringing down dictators and their followers, if done with humiliation, does not lead to the intended peace. On the contrary, Mandela did not humiliate the white elite in South Africa; he humbled them (in my work I treat Mandela in the spirit of a Weberian ideal-type approach and focus on his constructive strategies, which are not diminished by criticisms that people may direct at his movement or him as a person). This new illegitimacy of the practice of humiliation as part of the human rights revolution, which renders the ranking of human worthiness illicit, marks a profoundly significant shift.

Clearly, however, humankind is far from having arrived in a world where everybody enjoys equal dignity. The human rights revolution has not yet been “won.” Traditional honor norms – what I call the traditional structural disaster – are still alive and thriving. Ranked honor is still subscribed to many segments of world society, not least in certain segments of Western societies – see, for example, Bertram Wyatt-Brown (1982) and his study of the history of American *Southern Honor*. Many elites still feel entitled to superiority and do not enter into the cooperation that is necessary to make the world a more even playing field. They still invoke humiliation when asked to humble themselves.

Humanitarian aid workers who wish to promote human rights are caught in this conundrum. Julia A. Demichelis illustrated these cases most impressively in her presentation *Lessons to Learn: Roles of Government, Private Sector and NGOs in Disaster Reconstruction in Fragile States and Impoverished Communities* (as part of the Panel “Disasters and Innovative Solutions,” on Tuesday, November 18, 4:15pm-6:15pm). Humanitarian helpers are obliged to help victims, however, cannot condone solutions that violate human rights. How are human rights defenders to react if asked to support victims who proceed to become new oppressive masters? How are they to respond to allegations

that they humiliate victims by not helping them with violent uprisings? Enraged people, invoking victimhood and feeling entitled to violate human rights as a remedy, may emerge as powerful humiliators of human rights defenders.

The situation is being complicated when people resort to the traditional strategies of defending honor in one context, as honorable elites, while decrying the debasement of dignity in another context, as the victims of dignity humiliation. For example, a man might demand from the elites of the world that they fulfill the human-rights promise and treat him as an equal, while overlooking that he is not treating his own wife and daughters as equals. In other words, we live in a confused world where traditional honor norms linger on, even though they stand in stark contradiction to future-oriented equal dignity norms. While the two moral universes are diametrically opposed – one condones ranked worthiness, the other equal worthiness for all – they are sometimes intertwined without people being aware that they are incompatible.

In all cases, fertile soil is provided for violent conflict, and this complicates not least the work of helpers in disasters. When I worked as a counselor in Egypt (1984-1991), it was me who created conflict, for example, when I claimed that wife-beating is a violation of human rights, an illegitimate domestic violence, rather than legitimate domestic chastisement. Eighty six per cent of Egyptian women surveyed in 1995 thought that husbands were justified in hitting their wives on certain occasions – see Fatma El-Zanaty et al. (1996). From the couple's perspective, there was no destructive conflict, no suffering victim, and no violent perpetrator. It was me, the counsellor, the human rights defender, an uninvited third party, who introduced conflict. I was called upon to accept the notion of domestic chastisement as cultural practise worthy of equal respect, even though it entails inequality at its core. Humanitarian aid workers often face similar problems. Undermining traditional rankings requires tact and care for aid to be truly helpful.

What is often even more disturbing, particularly for dedicated humanitarian workers at grass root levels is when their own superiors order or push them to violate the dignity of the very people they are supposed to help. This can occur because ranked honor is still strong in two realms: in certain world regions (for example, those regions where women believe that being beaten is justified) and at certain macro levels, namely at the level of powerful international elites dealing with each other. Honor often plays a stronger role in foreign policy matters, in armed services and diplomatic staffs, than among the lower echelons of the average citizen. Thus, a passion to retain a state's "honorable" preeminence, as Donald Kagan<sup>15</sup> proposes, applies in today's world no less than it did earlier, even when "national honor" is partly concealed by human rights rhetoric and no longer invoked as openly as in the past. Higher echelons in humanitarian organizations, since they are embedded into national settings, are often caught – they are asked to protect national interest, even when it violates the dignity of the people on the ground they are meant to help.

Yet, not only honor codes may need to be overcome in exchange for more humanizing practices. In some Western cultures ideals of ruthless individualism (which ironically have been forced upon fellow citizens with astonishingly collectivist fervor), have yet to mature into ideals of true equal dignity for all. The myth of autonomy in Western culture misconceives the environment in which humans live as a societal vacuum, and stigmatizes and punishes those labeled "dependent." Linda Hartling of the Jean Baker

Miller Training Institute in Boston identifies this practice as one of the root source of destructive humiliation in such social contexts (personal communication, September, 9, 2005).

Ruthless individualism – in contrast to what could be called connected individuation – could be described as simply another way of preserving the old order of ranking human worthiness, only now with everybody trying to be a master in an everybody-against-everybody cut-throat competition. Ruthless individualism is underpinned by *might-is-right* and *just world* thinking that *blames the victim*. People who hold just world beliefs are indifferent to social injustice simply because they do not see injustice.<sup>16</sup> In other words, this toxic mix of beliefs makes people blind; it makes the more privileged, those who have achieved might, by whatever means, blind in various ways – blind to the fact that they free-ride on the nurturing that society needs to be a functioning society, a nurturing that also they received when they grew up, blind for the common good that needs protection for any individual self-interest to thrive, blind for the injustices that they committed to achieve might, and blind for the sufferings of the less privileged. “Everybody deserves what he gets” is a circular post-hoc justification that opens the door for ethical vacuum – when Hitler survived the July 20th plot of 1944 to kill him, for example, he thought that the *Vorsehung* (providence, fate) had saved his life because his historical mission was too important to cut short.<sup>17</sup> To Hitler, Germany, Europe, and the Jews “got what they deserved.”

The economic melt-down that unfolds while I write these sentences shows to what extent contemporary neo-liberal approaches to world economy and world politics fed on this culture. I therefore label a culture of ruthless individualism as *counter-reactive structural disaster*. It perpetrates what it wishes to undo – the disempowering domination of many by a few – only in new ways and with new justifications.<sup>18</sup>

Earlier, the work of Mary B. Anderson (1999) was mentioned. Another provocative title is *The Lords of Poverty. The Power, Prestige and Corruption of the International Aid Business* by Graham Hancock (1989), or *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good* by William Russell Easterly (2006).

John Stiglitz, former chief-economist of the World Bank, drew the world's attention to the problems of development aid<sup>19</sup>: Initially, it was thought that developing countries required nothing but financial infusions to attain large-scale development, however, this strategy largely failed. Subsequently, more assistance was added, from technical assistance to training in how to shape projects; “capacity building” and “good governance” emerged as buzzwords in this chain of lessons-learned. Many warn, however, that not only Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), but even present Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) worsen the situation rather than improving it.<sup>20</sup> It seems that the interest served is always the interest of local elites, rather than the interest of the common good of all citizens, including all world citizens. The recent failing of the so-called *Doha Development Round*, served as a reminder of the lack of political will at national levels to truly change the world at global levels – a lack that hopefully will be overcome, not least due to the shock of the global economic crisis in 2008.<sup>21</sup> A very good overview over the course of the World Bank over the years of its existence is given in the last chapter (15) “Social Democracy on a World Scale: The World Bank and the Logic of Love” in Howard Richards and Joanna Swanger (2006).

Human rights defenders, including helpers of reconstruction after disasters, have their motivation worn down in several ways by the contradictions between the structural disasters of traditional honor values and/or contemporary neo-liberal considerations on one side, and strategies informed by human rights on the other side. Helpers are caught not just vis-à-vis the recipients of help but also vis-à-vis their own organizations. The two structural disasters often inform what is called *Realpolitik* of national interest, making Realpolitik incompatible with human rights ideals. And, as already mentioned above, the higher up in ruling structures – and humanitarian aid organization are not exempt – the more Realpolitik reigns, pushing aside human rights values. This tendency introduces a stifling inherent contradiction into their very core of organizations that officially are set to work for human rights. Higher echelons in organizations that espouse human rights not seldom undermine the human rights advocacy of their own workers in lower echelons, thus leaving them discredited and unprotected. This causes great pain among the humanitarian workers, pain that is usually overlooked. When I carried out my field work in Africa, every humanitarian worker I met, particularly “old hands,” had read *The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity* by Michael Maren (1997) – this book describes the slow destruction of a humanitarian worker’s ideals and life.

Nowadays, we live with a new paradigm – the vision and emerging reality of a “global village.” The global village is currently acquiring a life of its own, beyond McLuhan’s initial connotations.<sup>22</sup> Citizens increasingly relate to each other across borders, states are losing their status as more-or-less isolated entities that constrain and define their citizens’ global relationships. A global “supranational We-feeling” is in the making and the “struggle for recognition” by individuals alongside that of states is emerging as a force at the system level.<sup>23</sup>

Traditional cultures of collectivist ranked honor, as well as contemporary cultures of individualistic might-is-right, do not serve humankind’s sustainable well-being. In an interdependent world, strategies that are devised in the spirit of “honorable” duels risk destroying the world as devastatingly as approaches that rely on unrestrained might-is-right competition. Cooperation outperforms competition – eminent social psychologist Morton Deutsch dedicated his life work to show this point.<sup>24</sup> Not only does cooperation outperform competition, today’s interdependence also represents the ultimate deterrent for traditional power-over strategies – nobody can win durable “victories” over others in an interdependent world, everybody is vulnerable. This is a historically unprecedented situation that humankind is unprepared for, and many have not yet grasped this novelty. No history lesson can help. For the first time in human history, self-interest converges with global common interest – nobody can survive alone on the globe, let alone in opposition against others. It becomes in the interest of everybody to join hands in cooperation among equals.

The creativity that can flow from the diversity of human cultures and human talent serves humankind in constructive ways only when it is embedded into dialogues that respect equal dignity for all – things should not be done *to* people but *with* people. And creativity is sorely needed if humankind is to address its global challenges intelligently. Human rights thus represent a normative framework that is optimal for an emerging globally interdependent knowledge society – the human rights ideal of equal dignity for all entails a promise that is higher than the promise of the traditional honor order, or

ruthless individualism, both for society and for the individual.

Human rights are not just a Western idea. *Ubuntu* represents a traditional African philosophy for living together and solving conflict in an atmosphere of shared humility.<sup>25</sup> Desmond Tutu (1999), in his work with the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* drew on Ubuntu. Also Nelson Mandela's approach could be placed within the same frame.

Linda Hartling confirms that Ubuntu is a way to togetherness and community in the atmosphere of shared humility<sup>26</sup>: "While collectivism can promote social interest at the expense of personal well-being, individualism promotes self-interest at the expense of social interest. Both of these tendencies are not sustainable... A third way may be the concept-philosophy-practice of ubuntu."

*Living well* is a suitable heading for a useful contemporary definition of what the outcome of human endeavor should be, including reconstruction after disaster: On June 5, 2008, more than one thousand representatives from indigenous communities across the Americas, gathering in Lima, Peru, agreed on a new social system that focuses on reciprocity between people and the Earth, and they called it "Living Well."<sup>27</sup> Not surprisingly, this new social system draws on indigenous wisdom – underpinning Ury's argument that humankind has the chance to reconnect to its more benign past prior to ten thousand years ago.

### Concluding remarks

Disasters can offer a chance. When old solutions fail, space opens for new solutions. Solutions that were "unthinkable" before, solutions for which there was no political will earlier, become "thinkable."

Disasters can open space for the implementation of novel solutions that highlight attention to human dignity. For example, victims of disasters can be encouraged to become co-creators of interventions, rather than merely recipients of help, thus counteracting the risk of help having humiliating effects. Since disasters disrupt established life, they even entail the potential to open more space for empowerment than was present prior to the event.

The current global economic melt-down, exposing one of the largest structural disasters so far – apart from the climate crisis – for example, also entails the chance for the emergence of a new world order. Completely new global institutions need to be crafted – it will not be sufficient to reform only the Bretton-Woods system of monetary management, or the G8 club, or the United Nations. And this new global institutional order will affect all levels of society, micro-, meso- and macro-levels.<sup>28</sup>

Not only economic crises, also ecological crises must be monitored and their damaging impact preventively mitigated or completely avoided. Institutions, rules, practices need to be put in place. Planners of nuclear power plants cannot afford to neglect foreseeing disaster, including disaster caused by human error or human malice. They have to put in place institutional structures, rules, and practices that continuously monitor the situation and prevent problems from arising. A nuclear power plant melt-down is too destructive to leave it to post-disaster management. Neglecting such preparation represents the severest of structural disaster, because it means nothing but

unmanageable disaster-in-waiting. Likewise, the international community cannot afford to hope that post-hoc disaster management will suffice for the global challenges the world faces – global warming (which intensifies hurricanes, typhoons, and tsunamis), systemically created poverty, unsustainable over-consumption, intractable conflicts, all in the face of impotent global institutions, are the global disasters of current times. Suitable institutions, rules, and practices must be put in place, pro-actively, not only locally, but globally. Typically, however, too often local intervention is favored which does not disturb established power structures. Global intervention is what is needed, intervention that reconstructs the way the global community organizes its life.

The session for which this paper was prepared is entitled “Disasters and Innovative Solutions.” “Focus on interest and output and define both globally, not just locally,” this is the main recommendation flowing from the reflections laid out in this paper. Even the best local solution is undermined in the face of adverse structures at higher institutional levels of organization. The weakest institutional structures, currently, are to be found at the global level. The global house has no sturdy roof so to speak. Building more appropriate global institutions is the urgent task at hand.

Since states are hesitant to lose sovereignty, this process meets strong resistance whenever institution building needs to get serious. The discourse on how to best build good world governance and institutions is always in danger of dying down, in need of revival. Yet, people do step up to the challenge. Joseph Preston Baratta (2004), for example, has recently taken up this crucial discussion. Or, Winston Langley, Provost of the University of Massachusetts, host of this conference, stands for a new party, a party of global citizenship.

The recommendation of this paper resonates with those given by other conference participants, among others on the Closing Day of the conference by Terry Keane (Director of the National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Department of Veterans Affairs, Boston, and vice-chair of the Department of Psychiatry, Boston University School of Medicine). He presented his model of an “Inverted Pyramid” and referred to studies that show that the bulk of resources needs to be invested into the highest societal level: Resources invested into interventions at the communal, family, and individual levels are less effective. Lack of appropriate public policy at the societal level may even undermine otherwise well-intentioned and successful interventions at the communal, family, and individual levels.

Keane’s “Inverted Pyramid” can be expanded from national affairs to global affairs. The lack of appropriate and well-resourced public policy at global levels undermines otherwise well-intentioned and successful interventions at national societal, communal, family, and individual levels. My main recommendation is therefore to define the *societal level* in Keane’s model as *global societal level*, or add a *global societal level* above the *national societal level*.

I recommend that the participants of this conference approach public policy makers around the world and advocate Keane’s “Inverted Pyramid” globally: We need to invest the majority of resources into building global institutions that represent the global citizen.

The conference underpinned this recommendation in a variety of ways. Since researchers need a salary, and sponsorship by global institutions are either absent or weak, the projects presented in the conference were largely framed by communal or, at maximum, national interest. Presenters began their presentations by saying, for example,

that a Federal Government Agency had approached them to do research on disaster-related issues. Or, the military had an interest to protect their soldiers and thus funded PTSD research on veterans. Even if the United Nations or international humanitarian organizations are the sponsors of research, since the United Nations are an association of nations, national interest is likely to ultimately curtail wider ambitions. In other words, at the current point in history, we observe a dire lack of institutions at the global level that represent the interest of the entire human family.

My recommendation would therefore be that the experts who came together in this conference take their results and expertise to the global level, even if there is nobody offering funding as of yet. Betty Blythe, in her talk “Teaching Social Justice in International Service-Learning Classes,” for example, talked about the need to create a *culture of safety*. This call could be extended to a global culture. She told the story of the Indonesian village in which everybody survived the 2004 tsunami, because a culture of safety had been learned from earlier events, a culture that indicated that one had to flee to higher ground, when the water receded – see Amanda Ripley (2008).

Or, Kai Erikson, (William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor Emeritus of Sociology and American Studies from Yale University), emphasized in his key note how *social forces drive communities*. This insight is equally salient for the global community that is currently emerging. This emergence, in itself, is a social force.

Or, Russell K. Schutt, in his talk “A Sociological Perspective on Disasters,” spoke of *neighborhood effects*. Also those effects could be envisaged to extend the entire planet’s populations, both for the prevention of disaster and intervention after disaster.

Let me be the voice of the global community, even if I cannot offer funding: Let us think through how we must shape global institutions so that they provide maximum safety from natural and structural disaster at local levels.

I have coined the word *egalization* to match the word globalization and at the same time differentiate it from words such as equality or sameness, because the main point is not equality or sameness. The point is equal dignity, even though there is a connection between equality and equal dignity (the connection is “hidden” in the human rights stipulation that equal chances and enabling environments for all are necessary to protect human dignity).

The term egalization is meant to avoid claiming that there should be no differences between people. On the contrary, egalization is the only way to truly reap the fruits of diversity. Egalization is the path toward realizing Unity in Diversity, or, more precisely, more unity and at the same time more diversity, thus avoiding the bygone fallacies of either uniformity or division.

Equality can coexist with a functional hierarchy that regards all participants as possessing equal dignity; equality can not co-exist, though, with a hierarchy that defines some people as lesser beings and others as more valuable.<sup>29</sup>

Egalization is a process that elicits intense humiliation when its promises fail. The lack of egalization is thus the very element that intensifies feelings among so-called “globalization-critics.” Their disquiet stems from lack of egalization and not from an overdose of globalization. What they call for is that globalization ought to marry egalization. What they call for is globalization without humiliation.

I have founded Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS), a global transdisciplinary fellowship of academics and practitioners who wish to promote dignity and transcend humiliation. The idea for this network emerged in 2001, and it has since grown to ca. 1,000 personally invited members from all over the world, with the website being read by ca. 40, 000 people from 183 countries per year.

HumanDHS researchers and practitioners attempt to create public awareness for the destructive effects of humiliation, and to promote alternative approaches that generate and embody human dignity and respect. The sustainability of social cohesion and ecological survival for humankind requires a focus on human dignity, implemented with a mindset of cooperation and humility, rather than disrespect and humiliation.

The central human rights message is expressed in Article 1 of the of the Human Rights Declaration, which states that every human being is born with equal dignity (and ought not be humiliated). This ideal requires concerted action to be implemented, not just in the field of legal regulations, but in every sphere of human life, including architecture and the way we create our built environments, and including disaster management.

Many short-comings of interventions after disasters are related to a lack of attention to human rights, not just their legal aspects, but the spirit of human rights, namely equality in dignity for all. Human interventions in society in general, as well as approaches to disaster intervention, often stem from times when sensitivity to the notion of equality in dignity was still weak.

After disasters, communities are prone to suffer violations of dignity in numerous ways. Disasters unmask in stark ways the short-comings of human interventions in general, be it with regard to management philosophies (in case of disasters, for example, how aid is being delivered), or how housing is designed (in the case of disasters, for example, how emergency shelters are being built), or how short-term and long-term planning is interwoven (in the case of disasters, whether humanitarian emergency aid is being integrated with longer-term development goals).

Let me give a brief example. In 1999, I participated in several fieldtrips in Rwanda with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and with international and national Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs).<sup>30</sup> These trips became a series of informal focus groups in which I discussed the topic of humiliation. I monitored not only other people’s feelings of humiliation, but mine as well. I shared my shock and humiliation at the way shelter programs were designed and built. To me, many design aspects of these “villages” represented the flagrant humiliation of humanity through an uninformed admiration of outdated concepts of “the state of the art.” The design of these artificial villages, corrugated iron sheets on huts set in a military layout, reminded me of the same antihuman philosophy that inspired the *Plattenbauten* (ugly tower blocks)

architecture in the socialist East, which today are regarded as a shame by almost everyone, West or East.

Obsessive rectangularity and military uniformity is only one example for inappropriate help, however, it can illustrate the deeper problems. When shelters are built or aid is offered, rectangularity and uniformity are often being justified with arguments of “expertise,” “efficiency,” or “practicability,” or with the argument that recipients of help should be happy with what they get. However, these are obsolete arguments, smacking of the structural disasters explained above. How can a helpless person, struggling to heal and build a new life, be expected to improve if his or her basic individuality is removed and humiliated into helpless uniformity? The loss of diversity is not a small loss. Human beings are living creatures, meaning that they are living beings who thrive on diverse environments. Individual human identity and health depend not least on diversity markers. Uniformity ignores this human need, relegating human beings to the humiliating status of machines.

International organizations, accustomed to responding to emergencies and developmental needs, must develop concepts of efficiency and practicability that nurture inclusive and dignifying diversity. Today the term *mainstreaming* permeates many discourses: The spirit of human rights, the emphasis on human dignity, needs to be mainstreamed also in disaster management.

Current buzzwords such as *empowering* and *enabling* have a place here. Merely empowering is, however, not enough – empowering oppressors and willing subalterns to insist on their focus on position and input would merely perpetuate structural disasters. Everybody, victims and donors, must be enabled to define their needs and interventions by gauging the right kind of outcome, rather than by measuring an input that is defined by positions as suboptimal place-holders for true interest.

*Participatory action research* is one way out of this dilemma,<sup>31</sup> as is the concept of *ethno-mimesis* (the inter-connection of sensitive ethnographic work and visual representations<sup>32</sup>), a methodological tool as well as a process for exploring lived experience, displacement, exile, belonging and humiliation.

Wherever I went in Africa (1998 and 1999) the *War-torn Societies Project in Somalia*<sup>33</sup> received praise for being different from many projects sponsored by aid agencies. The *War-torn Societies Project* concentrated on *action research* and attempted to work with the communities concerned to develop an agenda for development, enabling and empowering people and transforming them from *recipients* into *co-actors*.

Dialogical enabling and empowerment heals humiliation – intellectual and psychological – between the incoming helpers’ perceptions or ideologies of what people need as aid and the support that local people truly need. Such tailor-made approaches seem to be successful primarily because they ask deeper questions, arrive at appropriate outcomes, and are thus non-humiliating.

Adenrele Awotona has modeled such approaches in his work, see the books he edited on bottom-up approaches in reconstruction after disaster – Adenrele Awotona (Ed.) 1999, Adenrele Awotona (Ed.) 1997, Adenrele Awotona (Ed.) 2007. His work has been well recognized, as, for example, in the IBC reference book *2000 Outstanding Intellectuals of the 21st Century*.

At the outset of this paper, I asked whether there are short succinct answers that can

capture the core of the contemporary problems with aid. A short answer could go as follows: We need to measure output, not input, and in order to do so, we must focus on the interest of all, and not the position of a few. Output must be measured according to the well-being of all citizens of this world, including their biosphere. And this outcome can only be achieved with sustainable solutions, both ecologically and socially. The old approach is to focus on local solutions, rather than global ones, not least because global approaches tend to undermine established national power structures. However, the interest of a few to protect their position of privilege is ultimately not even in their own interest: humankind has to leave behind the privileged positions of a few and privilege the interest of all. There is no alternative to daring to think bigger.

A “big” approach will diminish the need for aid, because structural disasters will be prevented by affording enabling sustainable living conditions to everybody within a global system of democratic governance. Natural disasters that cannot be prevented will be responded to with the interest of the recipients and the common good of all humankind at heart, rather than the position of donors.

To me, the current lack of “big” solutions humiliates not only the victims of disabling living conditions around the world, it also humiliates my very humanity. I do not wish to live in a world where a few who indulge in immense privileges coexist with masses who linger under abject circumstances and are exposed to what I in this paper call structural disasters. I therefore propose a *Moratorium on Humiliation*, similar to the *Moratorium on Trade in Small Arms* (see the Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies website for more ideas). Such a moratorium, to be applied, needs to permeate every detail of public policy planning at global and local levels, including strategies for emergency and development aid after disasters.

To end this paper, let us turn to Avishai Margalit (1996), who calls it a *decent society* when systemic change has succeeded to provide all citizens with institutions that do not humiliate them. What we need today, is to embark on global systemic change towards a *decent global village*, with institutions that create a dignified world.

For a decent global society, we need better psychological, social, and cultural social mindsets, and must foster systemic change that provides us with global decency. The task has three core aspects, and requires two core loops (using the ideal-type approach explained earlier): we must create a) new awareness in every single human being for our global responsibility, b) new personal skills of cooperation, and c) new global institutional frames that enable global and local cooperation. Institutions (c) have preeminence because decent institutions can drive feedback loops that foster (a) and (b) in a systemic rather than haphazard way. The first loop, the initial realization of new institutions, depends on a few Mandela-like individuals like Adenrele Awotona, who “nudge” the world’s systems into a more constructive frame (remember Nobel Peace Laureate Jody Williams’ campaign to ban personal landmines). The second and subsequent loops will have the advantage of enjoying the support from the system, no longer only depending on a few gifted individuals.

In “The Need for a New World,”<sup>34</sup> I advocate as suitable philosophical foundation for such a “new world,” the nondualistic principle of *Unity in Diversity*.<sup>35</sup> As to institutions, and the cultural and social practices we teach our children, I recommend giving priority to *communal sharing*.<sup>36</sup> And I put forward *subsidiarity* as suitable guideline for combining communal sharing with elements of market economy into new layers of local

and global institutions. The European Union uses the subsidiarity principle.<sup>37</sup> It was emphasized in chapter four by Bob Bachelder in his talk “Three Answers to Urban Poverty: Consistent Leadership, Organizational Partnerships, and Faith Community Involvement” in Panel C “Urban Poverty” on Day 3 of this conference, Tuesday, November 18.

As the reader understands at the end of this paper, this is a “Mandela-paper” about dignity and how realizing its promise can help improve the human condition at all levels – from micro to meso to macro levels. It speaks to today’s need for the spirit of Mandela to permeate our lives and our world, so that we find the way and the courage to empower and guide our experts to implement the appropriate solutions.

Adenrele Awotona heeds Margaret Mead’s saying, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Let us follow him.

### Short biographical paragraph

Evelin G. Lindner is a social scientist with an interdisciplinary orientation. She holds two PhDs, one in medicine and a second in psychology. She is the Founding Director and President of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS, <http://www.humiliationstudies.org>), a global transdisciplinary network of academics and practitioners who wish to promote dignity and transcend humiliation. Details of her personal background and work are to be found on <http://www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin.php>.

Lindner is the recipient of the 2006 SBAP Award. Her book *Making Enemies: Humiliation and International Conflict* was published by Praeger/Greenwood in 2006, and honored as Outstanding Academic Publication in the 2008 list of the journal *Choice*.

Lindner designs her life as a global citizen in order to be able to develop HumanDHS globally. She teaches as guest professor wherever her path leads her on all continents, among others, at universities in Norway (University of Oslo, and Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim), the Columbia University Conflict Resolution Network in New York, and the Maison des Sciences de l’Homme in Paris. She has taught, for example, in Japan (International Christian University, and Rikkyo University, Tokyo), Israel (Hebrew University, Jerusalem), Australia (Queensland University), or Costa Rica (United Nations-mandated University for Peace).

Lindner began with her work on humiliation in 1996/1997, with her doctoral research on the genocidal killings in Rwanda (1994), and Somalia (1988), on the backdrop of Nazi-Germany. She defended her dissertation entitled *The Psychology of Humiliation: Somalia, Rwanda / Burundi, and Hitler’s Germany* in 2001. Since then, she has expanded her studies, among others, in Europe, South East Asia, and the United States. She is currently building a *theory of humiliation* that is transcultural and transdisciplinary, entailing elements from anthropology, history, social philosophy, social psychology, sociology, and political science.

In 2001, Lindner set out to develop Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS, <http://www.humiliationstudies.org>). This network has since grown to ca.

1,000 invited members from all over the world, with the website enjoying more than 80,000 page views (of average two minutes) from 183 countries during the year of 2007.

The HumanDHS members believe that the sustainability of social cohesion and ecological survival requires a focus on human dignity, implemented with a mindset of cooperation and humility, rather than disrespect and humiliation. HumanDHS researchers and practitioners attempt to create public awareness for the destructive effects of humiliation, and to promote alternative approaches that generate and embody human dignity and respect.

The central human rights message is expressed in Article 1 of the of the Human Rights Declaration, which states that every human being is born with equal dignity (and ought not be humiliated). At the current point in human history, this ideal requires concerted action to be implemented, not just in the field of legal regulations, but in every sphere of human life, including architecture and the way we create our built environments. After disasters, communities are prone to suffer violations of dignity in numerous ways; however, disasters also offer a chance to implement novel solutions that highlight attention to human dignity as never before.

### References

- Reason, Peter (Ed.) (1994). *Participation in Human Inquiry*. London: Sage.
- Deutsch, Morton, Coleman, Peter T., and Marcus, Eric C. (Eds.) (2006). *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. 2nd edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Allred, Keith G. (2000). Anger and Retaliation in Conflict: The Role of Attribution. In Deutsch, Morton and Coleman, Peter T. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, pp. 236-255. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Anderson, Mary B. (1999). *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace - or War*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienners.
- Atweh, Bill, Kemmis, Stephen, and Weeks, Patricia (1998). *Action Research in Practice: Partnership for Social Justice in Education*. London: Routledge.
- Awotona, Adenrele (Ed.) (1997). *Reconstruction After Disaster: Issues and Practices*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Awotona, Adenrele (Ed.) (1999). *Housing Provision and Bottom-Up Approaches: Family Case Studies From Africa, Asia and South America*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Awotona, Adenrele (Ed.) (2007). *Proceedings of the International Conference on 'Rebuilding Sustainable Communities in Iraq: Policies, Programs and Projects'*. Boston: College of Public and Community Service, University of Massachusetts Boston.

- Banks, James A., Cookson, Peter, Gay, Geneva, Hawley, Willis D., Irvine, Jacqueline Jordan, Nieto, Sonia, Schofield, Janet Ward, and Stephan, Walter G. (2001). *Diversity Within Unity: Essential Principles for Teaching and Learning in a Multicultural Society*. Seattle: Center for Multicultural Education, College of Education, University of Washington, Seattle;  
[www.educ.washington.edu/coetestwebsite/pdf/DiversityUnity.pdf](http://www.educ.washington.edu/coetestwebsite/pdf/DiversityUnity.pdf).
- Baratta, Joseph Preston (2004). *The Politics of World Federation: Vol. 1: The United Nations, U.N. Reform, Atomic Control. Vol. 2: From World Federalism to Global Governance*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Battle, Michael Jesse (1997). *Reconciliation. The Ubuntu Theology of Desmond Tutu*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press.
- Bond, Michael Harris (1998). Unity in Diversity: Orientations and Strategies for Building a Harmonious, Multicultural Society. In *Trames, A Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3 (2), pp. 234-263.
- Boyarsky, Nicholas and Murphy, Nicola (1998). *Action Research*. London: Black Dog.
- Carson, Terrance R. and Sumara, Dennis J. (1997). *Action Research As a Living Practice*. New York: Lang.
- Castells, Manuel (1996). *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture. Vol. 1: The Rise of the Network Society, Vol. 2: The Power of Identity, Vol. 3: End of Millennium*. Cambridge, MA, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Coser, Lewis A. (1977). *Masters of Sociological Thought: Ideas in Historical and Social Context*. 2nd edition. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Deutsch, Morton (1999). A Personal Perspective on the Development of Social Psychology in the Twentieth Century. In Rodriguez, A. and Levine, R. V. (Eds.), *Reflections on 100 Years of Experimental Social Psychology*, pp. 1-34. New York: Basic Books.
- Deutsch, Morton (2000). Cooperation and Competition. In Deutsch, Morton and Coleman, Peter T. (Eds.), *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*, pp. 21-40. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Easterly, William Russell (2006). *The White Man's Burden: Why the West's Efforts to Aid the Rest Have Done So Much Ill and So Little Good*. New York: Penguin Press.
- El-Zanaty, Fatma, Hussein, Enas M., Shawky, Gihan A., Way, Ann A., and Kishor, Sunita (1996). *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 1995*. Calverton: National Population Council and Macro International Inc.
- Fisher, Roger, Ury, William, and Patton, Bruce (1991). *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving in*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

- Fiske, Alan Page (1991). *Structures of Social Life: The Four Elementary Forms of Human Relations - Communal Sharing, Authority Ranking, Equality Matching, Market Pricing*. New York: Free Press.
- Fox, Warwick (1990). *Toward a Transpersonal Ecology: Developing New Foundations for Environmentalism*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Fox, Warwick (1992). Intellectual Origins of the "Depth" Theme in the Philosophy of Arne Naess. In *Trumpeter*, 9 (2), retrieved on December 15, 2000 from [trumpeter.athabasca.ca/archives/content/v9.2/fox2.html](http://trumpeter.athabasca.ca/archives/content/v9.2/fox2.html).
- Fuller, Robert W. (2003). *Somebodies and Nobodies: Overcoming the Abuse of Rank*. Gabriola Island, Canada: New Societies.
- Galtung, Johan (1969). Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. In *Journal of Peace Research*, 3, pp. 167-191.
- Gergen, Kenneth J. and Gergen, Mary M. (2000). *Toward a Cultural Constructionist Psychology*. Swarthmore College Pennsylvania State University: Retrieved January 6, 2000, from [www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/kgergen1/tccp.html](http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/kgergen1/tccp.html).
- Greenwood, Davydd J. and Levin, Morten (1998). *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Gustavsen, Björn (1998). From Experiments to Network Building: Trends in the Use of Research for Reconstructing Working Life. In *Human Relations*, 51 (3), pp. 431-448.
- Hancock, Graham (1989). *The Lords of Poverty: The Power, Prestige and Corruption of the International Aid Business*. New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press.
- Hardin, Russell (1995). *One for All: The Logic of Group Conflict*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kagan, Donald (1998). Honor, Interest, and Nation-State. In Abrams, Elliot (Ed.), *Honor Among Nations*, Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center.
- Kalleberg, Ragnvald (1989). *Action Research As Constructive Sociology*. Oslo: Institute for Social Research.
- Lerner, Melvin J. (1980). *The Belief in a Just World: A Fundamental Delusion*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Lerner, Melvin J. (2003). The Justice Motive: Where Social Psychologists Found It, How They Lost It and Why They May Not Find It Again. In *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 7, pp. 388-399.
- Levy, Howard S. (1992). *The Lotus Lovers: The Complete History of the Curious Erotic*

- Custom of Footbinding in China*. Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books.
- Lindner, Evelin Gerda (2000). *The Psychology of Humiliation: Somalia, Rwanda / Burundi, and Hitler's Germany*. Oslo: University of Oslo, Department of Psychology, doctoral dissertation in psychology.
- Lindner, Evelin Gerda (2006). *Making Enemies: Humiliation and International Conflict*. Westport, CT, London: Greenwood/Praeger Security International.
- Lindner, Evelin Gerda (2008a). *The Need for a New World*. New York: Paper prepared for the 2008 Workshop on Humiliation and Violent Conflict, representing the Twelfth Annual HumanDHS Conference and the Fifth Workshop on Humiliation and Violent Conflict, New York, Columbia University, December 11-12, 2008.
- Lindner, Evelin Gerda (2008b). *The Relevance of Humiliation Studies for the Prevention of Terrorism*. Budapest: Paper presented to the NATO Advanced Research Workshop 'Indigenous Terrorism: Understanding and Addressing the Root Causes of Radicalisation among Groups with an Immigrant Heritage in Europe', March 7-9, 2008.
- Lindner, Evelin Gerda (2008c). What the World's Cultures Can Contribute to Creating a Sustainable Future for Humankind. Oslo: Paper prepared for the 11th Annual Conference of Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies (HumanDHS, [www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/annualmeeting11.php](http://www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/annualmeeting11.php)), June 23--July 1, 2008, in Norway, Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies, [www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin02.php#oslo08](http://www.humiliationstudies.org/whoweare/evelin02.php#oslo08).
- Lindner, Evelin Gerda (2009). *Emotion and Conflict: How Human Rights Can Dignify Emotion and Help Us Wage Good Conflict*. Westport, CT, London: Greenwood/Praeger Security International.
- Maren, Michael (1997). *The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity*. New York: Free Press.
- Margalit, Avishai (1996). *The Decent Society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Marrow, Alfred J. (1964). Risks and Uncertainties in Action Research. In *Journal of Social Issues*, 20 (3), pp. 5-20.
- McLuhan, Herbert Marshall (1962). *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- McNiff, Jean (1992). *Action Research: Principles and Practice*. London: Routledge.
- Meikle, Amber and Rubin, Vanessa (2008). *Living on the Edge of Emergency: Paying the Price of Inaction*. London: CARE International UK.

- Mills, Geoffrey E. (2000). *Action Research: A Guide for the Teacher Researcher*. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Merrill.
- Moorhouse, Roger (2006). *Killing Hitler: The Plots, the Assassins, and the Dictator Who Cheated Death*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Nadler, Arie (2002). Inter-Group Helping Relations As Power Relations: Maintaining or Challenging Social Dominance Between Groups Through Helping. In *Journal of Social Issues*, 58 (3), pp. 487-502.
- Naess, Arne (1978). Through Spinoza to Mahayana Buddhism or Through Mahayana Buddhism to Spinoza? In Wetlesen, Jon (Ed.), *Spinoza's Philosophy of Man: Proceedings of the Scandinavian Spinoza Symposium 1977*, Oslo: University of Oslo Press.
- Neal, Peter M., Watts, Grady, and Calhoun, Emily (1995). *Action Research*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.
- O'Neill, Maggie (2006). Re-Imagining Diaspora Through Ethno-Mimesis: Humiliation, Human Dignity and Belonging. In Guedes-Bailey, Olga, Georgiou, Myria, and Harindranath, Ramaswami (Eds.), *Reimagining Diasporas: Transnational Lives and the Media*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Posen, Barry (1993). The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict. In *Survival*, 35 (1), pp. 27-47.
- Reason, Peter (1988). *Human Inquiry in Action: Developments in New Paradigm Research*. London: Sage.
- Reason, Peter and Rowan, John (1985). *Human Inquiry: A Sourcebook of New Paradigm Research*. Chichester: Wiley.
- Richards, Howard and Swanger, Joanna (2006). *The Dilemmas of Social Democracies*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Ripley, Amanda (2008). *The Unthinkable: Who Survives When Disaster Strikes - and Why*. New York: Random House.
- Rosen, Sidney (1983). Perceived Inadequacy and Help-Seeking (Vol. II). In De Paulo, B. M. and et al. (Eds.), *New Directions in Helping. Help-Seeking*, pp. 73-107. New York: Academic Press.
- SAPRIN (Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network) (2004). *Structural Adjustment: The SAPRI Report*. London: Zed Books.
- Srivastva, Suresh and Cooperrider, David L. (1990). *Appreciative Management and Leadership: The Power of Positive Thought and Action in Organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Stiglitz, Joseph E. (1998). *Global Economic Prospects and the Developing Countries 1998/99: Beyond Financial Crisis*. New York: World Bank, [www.worldbank.org/prospects/gep98-99/toc.htm](http://www.worldbank.org/prospects/gep98-99/toc.htm).
- Stiglitz, Joseph E. (2003). *Globalization and Its Discontents*. New York: Norton.
- Stringer, Ernest T. (1999). *Action Research: A Handbook for Practitioners*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Torbert, William R. (1991). *The Power of Balance: Transforming Self, Society, and Scientific Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Tutu, Desmond (1999). *Out of the Shadows. What the TRC Achieved in Search of the Truth*. London: Macmillan.
- Ury, William (1999). *Getting to Peace. Transforming Conflict at Home, at Work, and in the World*. New York, NY: Viking.
- Wendt, Alexander (2003). Why a World State Is Inevitable. In *European Journal of International Relations*, 9 (4), pp. 491-542.
- Whyte, William Foote (1991). *Participatory Action Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Wyatt-Brown, Bertram (1982). *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South*. New York : Oxford University Press:
- Zuber-Skerritt, Ortrun (1991). *Action Research for Change and Development*. Aldershot, Hants: Avebury.

---

<sup>1</sup> Please read about ideal types in Coser, “Weber’s three kinds of *ideal types* are distinguished by their levels of abstraction. First are the *ideal types* rooted in historical particularities, such as the ‘western city,’ ‘the Protestant Ethic,’ or ‘modern capitalism,’ which refer to phenomena that appear only in specific historical periods and in particular cultural areas. A second kind involves abstract elements of social reality – such concepts as ‘bureaucracy’ or ‘feudalism’ – that may be found in a variety of historical and cultural contexts. Finally, there is a third kind of *ideal type*, which Raymond Aron calls ‘rationalizing reconstructions of a particular kind of behavior.’ According to Weber, all propositions in economic theory, for example, fall into this category. They all refer to the ways in which men would behave were they actuated by purely economic motives, were they purely economic men” - Lewis A. Coser (1977), p. 224.

<sup>2</sup> Evelin Gerda Lindner (2000).

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.humiliationstudies.org/whoware/evelin02.php>.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton (1991).

<sup>5</sup> Arne Naess (1978), p. 143. Warwick Fox (1992), in his paper “Intellectual Origins of the “Depth” Theme in the Philosophy of Arne Naess,” explains: “The extent to which a person discriminates along a chain of precizations (and, therefore, in a particular direction of interpretation) is a measure of their depth of intention, that is, the depth to which that person can claim to have understood the intended meaning of the expression” (p. 5).

<sup>6</sup> Warwick Fox (1990), chapter 4, pp. 81-118, and chapter 5, pp. 119-145.

<sup>7</sup> Arie Nadler (2002). See also Sidney Rosen (1983). Kenneth Gergen and Mary Gergen write about the humiliating aspect of help-receiving in the mid-1970's, see their current work at <http://www.swarthmore.edu/SocSci/kgergen1/text7.html>. I owe this reference to Michael Harris Bond.

<sup>8</sup> These terms have been coined by Johan Galtung (1969).

<sup>9</sup> Keith G. Allred (2000).

<sup>10</sup> The description of the historical transition from hunting-gathering to agriculturalism, and finally to the contemporary vision of a global knowledge society, as presented in the following paragraphs, has been adapted from Evelin Gerda Lindner (2008b).

<sup>11</sup> Evelin Gerda Lindner (2009).

<sup>12</sup> Howard S. Levy (1992).

<sup>13</sup> "World Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance" in Durban, South Africa, August 31 - September 7, 2001.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Manuel Castells (1996).

<sup>15</sup> Donald Kagan (1998).

<sup>16</sup> See Melvin J. Lerner (1980), and for his later work Melvin J. Lerner (2003).

<sup>17</sup> "Hitler zog aus dem Putschversuch, der blutigen Niederlage und der Haft in Landsberg eigene Schlüsse und den unerschütterlichen Glauben, das Schicksal habe ihn gezielt verschont, um seine 'historische Bestimmung' zu erfüllen, Deutschland zu retten" Roger Moorhouse (2006), p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> I explain this point in more depth in Evelin Gerda Lindner (2008c).

<sup>19</sup> Joseph E. Stiglitz (1998), Joseph E. Stiglitz (2003).

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, SAPRIN (Structural Adjustment Participatory Review International Network) (2004).

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/dda\\_e/dda\\_e.htm](http://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/dda_e/dda_e.htm). In June 2007, negotiations within the Doha round broke down at a conference in Potsdam, as a major impasse occurred between the US, the EU, India and Brazil. The main disagreements rage over opening up agricultural and industrial markets in various countries, and how to cut rich nation farm subsidies.

<sup>22</sup> Marshall McLuhan is credited with having coined the phrase "global village" in 1959, after borrowing it from Wyndham Lewis; the term appeared in *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, Herbert Marshall McLuhan (1962).

<sup>23</sup> Alexander Wendt (2003), p. 519.

<sup>24</sup> See, among others, Morton Deutsch, Peter T. Coleman, and Eric C. Marcus (Eds.) (2006), Morton Deutsch (2000), Morton Deutsch (1999)..

<sup>25</sup> Michael Jesse Battle (1997).

<sup>26</sup> Linda Hartling, in a personal message, 27th April 2008.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example,

<http://www.latinamericapress.org/article.asp?IssCode=&lanCode=1&artCode=5630>.

<sup>28</sup> See also Evelin Gerda Lindner (2008a).

<sup>29</sup> See the work on *rankism* by Robert W. Fuller (2003).

<sup>30</sup> This paragraph has been adapted from Evelin Gerda Lindner (2006), p. 159.

<sup>31</sup> For *participatory action research*, see for example Peter Reason (Ed.) (1994), in Kenneth J. Gergen and Mary M. Gergen (2000). See literature about *action research* in the ejournal Action Research International, <http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/arihome.html>, and Bill Atweh, Stephen Kemmis, and Patricia Weeks (1998), Nicholas Boyarsky and Nicola Murphy (1998), Terrance R. Carson and Dennis J. Sumara (1997), Davydd J. Greenwood and Morten Levin (1998), Björn Gustavsen (1998), Ragnvald Kalleberg (1989), Alfred J. Marrow (1964), Jean McNiff (1992), Geoffrey E. Mills (2000), Neal, Watts, and Calhoun 1995, Peter Reason (Ed.) (1994), Peter Reason and John Rowan (1985), Peter Reason (1988), Suresh Srivastva and David

L. Cooperrider (1990), Ernest T. Stringer (1999), William R. Torbert (1991), William Foote Whyte (1991), Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt (1991).

<sup>32</sup> Maggie O'Neill (2006).

<sup>33</sup> See <http://www.unicc.org/unrisd/wsp/index.htm>.

<sup>34</sup> Evelin Gerda Lindner (2008a).

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, "Unity in Diversity" by Michael Harris Bond (1998), and "Diversity within Unity" by James A. Banks et al. (2001).

<sup>36</sup> Alan Page Fiske (1991). A useful introduction to the theory, overview of research, and a bibliography is found on [www.rtm.ucla.edu](http://www.rtm.ucla.edu).

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, [http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/subsidiarity\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/subsidiarity_en.htm).