



SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK

**POSITION
PAPER**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE NEED FOR QUALITY ACTION

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE's vocation is to provide aid, at an appropriate time, to people affected by humanitarian crises. The quality of the humanitarian action which SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE (SI) endeavours to implement is characterised by responses appropriate to the needs of the population, which are developed and carried out with them as part of a relationship based on mutual trust. The assistance given is adapted to the local context, respects and enhances the dignity of the men, women and children in the areas where SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE operates.

OBJECTIVE

The Operational Framework defines the global scheme of SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE's activity. It determines the principles, operational methodologies and specific approaches which govern responses designed and implemented by SI. This document operationalises SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE's values and vision found in its Charter and Mandate. All of the position papers, internal notes and technical documents produced by SI fit into the framework laid out within this document.

WHO IS THE OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK AIMED AT?

This document is designed for SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE's teams and their financial, technical or implementing partners. All of SI's operations are affected by it, whatever the context or type of crisis.

HOW IS THIS OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK USED?

This document is one of SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE's key texts. The principles and operational methodologies described by it shape SI's quality objective and are, as a consequence, strongly recommended. Everyone working for SI, at the headquarters or in the field, pledges to have read and understood it before the start of their mission. The practical implementation details not being treated in this document, SI's teams shall refer to the relevant associated documents (position papers, internal notes and technical documents). In case of conflict between two documents, the Operational Framework shall prevail, unless a more recent position paper exists.

THIS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (PAGES 2 TO 7) IS A COMPLETE SYNTHESIS OF THE DOCUMENT THAT FOLLOWS IN WHICH EACH POINT IS DEVELOPED IN DETAILS.


¹ <http://www.solidarites.org/en/who-are-we/our-charter>

INTRODUCTION: THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL'S ACTION

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL responds to the humanitarian principles of **humanity, impartiality, neutrality and operational independence**. SI's charter recalls these principles and good practices. SI has also signed "The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief". Where appropriate, SI uses **Sphere** standards to guide its activities.

Furthermore, in the framework of its humanitarian operations, SI respects the following principles:

- **Do no harm:** the implementation of humanitarian operations can involve risks for the affected populations. The situation must be assessed to find the most suitable response in order to prevent and reduce any potential negative impact.
- **Be accountable:** be accountable for our activities to the affected populations and their representatives, as well as to the financial donors (institutional and private). This is achieved through transparent and responsive communication, the implementation of alert mechanisms and monitoring and evaluation activities.
- **Ensure transparent and ethical financial resources:** controlling the origin of resources, their good use and transparent communication regarding their use are *sine qua non* conditions in order to achieve the quality sought by SI. The origin of resources is pinpointed and is consistent with our humanitarian principles and the safety of our teams.
- **Coordinate:** as mentioned in Article 7 of the Charter, SI's principles of intervention require close coordination with all civilian actors (humanitarians, authorities, civil society and populations) who operate within the same zones or same sectors of operation. SI is particularly involved in sectorial coordination mechanisms such as the Global WaSH cluster, the Global Food Security cluster and the Global Logistics cluster. On the ground, SI's teams are called on to participate in national and local coordination mechanisms.
- **Do not substitute :** SI only intervenes if the local authorities are not responding to the crisis. SI assesses the legitimate authorities' capacity and willingness to overcome the crisis and, when appropriate, acts in the spirit of cooperation and to strengthen said capacities.
- **Be professional:** recruitment at SI is based on commitment and abilities without any discrimination. SI's teams are trained and they cooperate with and complement local expertise. SI has adopted a behavioral and ethical code as well as a whistleblowing policy.
- **Be inclusive:** by listening to people's needs, SI includes local stakeholders and beneficiaries in the achievement of its programmes in order to increase their effectiveness and local populations' ownership of the programmes.

THE HUMANITARIAN AID PROVIDED BY SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE

OBJECTIVE/MANDATE OF SI'S HUMANITARIAN ACTION

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE is a **resilience**. Our operations focus mostly on humanitarian organisation whose purpose is to address the **vital needs** of populations confronted by major man-made or natural disasters and to strengthen their

STRUCTURE AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

SI's operations respond **mainly to the effects of the crisis** but strive to include responses **to the causes of the crisis** by integrating activities designed to help the teams and populations **prepare** for disasters, **increasing resilience** and mitigating risks, and, if there are proven added-value, inclusive and long-lasting **reconstruction activities** (see table below).

An appropriate response to an emergency		
Training and preparing teams and communities	Strengthening the resilience of the populations and mitigating risks	Inclusive and long-lasting reconstruction

OPERATIONAL CRITERIA BASED ON NEEDS AND VULNERABILITIES TO SHOCKS

SI's actions are dictated by the necessary response to the unmet needs of a population which will be measured by the **level of the population's exposure, the intensity of the crises, the vulnerability of the populations and their capacity for resilience**. An operation is initiated or extended, if the vulnerability of the populations is such that it represents a vital or sanitary risk or is linked to livelihood; if the crisis overcomes the resilience capacity of the population and the public authorities; and/or if needs are not being met by other stakeholders.

TESTIMONY AND ADVOCACY

SI speaks out to the public and, if needs be, develops an **operational advocacy campaign** in order to promote the implementation of its activities by alerting relevant entities to the humanitarian situation of certain intervention contexts. This is done within the limits of the non-interference of these messages with a continued presence in the areas concerned.

On the other hand, unclean water being a major factor in social conflicts due to its impact on the sanitary, nutritional, economic and environmental situation of populations; SI, thanks to its experience in the field, has legitimate expertise in this domain and is **fighting for access to water**.

THE OPERATIONAL METHODOLOGIES OF SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE

1. THE PRINCIPLE OF “DO NO HARM”

- PROTECTION

SI does not implement specialised (standalone) programmes of protection. Protecting populations is, de facto, integrated into SI's activities, in a crosscutting and mandatory way. This integration is built on the 4 Sphere² protection principles, directly integrating principles 1) and 2) and giving special attention (mainly using referrals to the relevant parties) to principles 3) and 4).

- TAKING INTO ACCOUNT GENDER, AGE AND OTHER SPECIFIC NEEDS

SI respects the minimum standards for child protection in a systematic way and is committed not to increase the existing risks. SI is also sensitive to questions linked to gender and age and takes these into consideration during its operations. Likewise, the services proposed by SI are inclusive and accessible to all, no matter their physical, mental, intellectual or sensory disability, or if they are living with HIV. During the design and implementation of programmes, special attention will be paid to protect these people against discrimination, negligence and all forms of violence.

- THE ENVIRONMENT

SI analyses the impact of crises and operations on the environment during the assessment phase. This allows SI to limit the negative impact of its actions on the environment; mainly by committing to manage its equipment and waste in a responsible manner. It also allows them to

integrate, when determining the scale of its responses, durable practices which will further strengthen the populations' capacity for resilience.

- OPERATIONAL AND EXIT STRATEGIES

SI intervenes if priority **needs** are not being met and if its operation will bring real added value compared with the current stakeholders. The **withdrawal modalities** will be put into practice if the initial objectives of the operation have been reached, if a return to the previous situation is confirmed or if responsibility is transferred to another actor.

The **exit strategy** takes into account, from the **assessment** phase and on, that the sudden withdrawal of a programme could impact negatively on the population and on the success of the programme. On the other hand, the unjustified prolongation of humanitarian aid risks creating dependency and being an obstacle to the sought-after autonomy. Therefore, a **transition** towards a local and autonomous management of infrastructures and services must be laid out.

2 1) Avoid exposing populations affected by a crisis to further harm as a result of your actions

2) Ensure people's access to impartial assistance – in proportion to need and without discrimination

3) Protect people from physical and psychological harm arising from violence and coercion

4) Assist people to claim their rights, access available remedies and recover from the effects of abuse

2. FACTORS RELATED TO THE QUALITY OF OPERATIONS

- THE ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFICATION OF VULNERABILITY

All operations presuppose the systematic completion of an assessment, including in emergency situations. This assessment consists of an **analysis of the context and the needs**, a diagnosis of the **issues**, of the **vulnerabilities** to the shock and also of the **capacities** in order to be able to design a **tailored response**. It analyses the effects of an event (shock or stress) on a population, their ability to deal with it, their strategies for adaptation and the limits of these strategies. This, combined with social, capital and status criteria, enables SI to determine the vulnerability of the different parts of the population facing the event.

- A PARTICIPATIVE APPROACH

SI seeks to work in **partnership** and compliance with the population and establishes a transparent dialogue. Participation not only helps humanitarian activities to be carried out for and with the populations, but also helps to reinforce and extend the impact of the aid, to increase the activities' relevance, to make the project more responsive to the evolution of needs and to limit the negative impact. Starting at the assessment phase and **throughout the whole of the decision process**, SI involves the populations explaining who SI is, its mandate, its methods, who it works with and who funds it.

SI provides the populations with **accessible, secure, up-to-date, engaging, transparent and reciprocal communication** throughout the duration of the programme, with particular attention paid to **marginalised people** and **excluded groups**. The populations are informed about the programme objectives, developments and the difficulties encountered and, in conjunction with SI, choose their preferred communication mechanism.

- THE COMPLAINTS RESPONSE MECHANISM (CRM)

This mechanism allows populations **to raise any issue related to ethics, behaviour or targeting**. It is proof of our commitment to the populations as it allows them to participate and have their own views on the development of the programme and to continuously improve the humanitarian activities for the benefit of the communities. Complaints handling systems shall be adapted to the context, and to the existing and accessible communication codes and mechanisms. The minimum rules SI follows are the **safety, accessibility, inclusivity** and **confidentiality** of the chosen method. SI commits to respond to each complaint as soon as possible.

- **MONITORING, QUALITY OF THE PROGRAMMES AND INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE BUILDING (IKB)**

SI commits not to collect unnecessary data so that only data necessary for monitoring and taking operational decisions is collected. SI has comprehensive monitoring and planning tools, the responsibility for which falls to each Programme Manager.

SI analyses, through intermediary and final evaluations, the quality of the actions carried out. The quality criteria are borrowed from DAC/OECD (1999): **Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Connectedness/Sustainability, Coverage, Coherence, Impact and Coordination.**

Programme quality is also ensured through systematic institutional knowledge building. It is about formalising the lessons

learned from the experiences gained (activities and programmes which have been carried out, crosscutting themes, etc.) with the goal of **disseminating** them to our missions but also to our peers when relevant.

- **VALUE FOR MONEY**

The use of funds is based upon **effectiveness** and **efficiency**, however, as a humanitarian NGO, SI will favor effectiveness over efficiency. SI is accountable to its donors and commits to optimise resources (mainly through transparent competition for suppliers) in order to ensure the high quality of programmes and better coverage of humanitarian needs.

3. SAFE ACCESS FOR SI TEAMS

SI often operates in unpredictable contexts in order to carry out its humanitarian aid programmes. The protection of its teams and operational partners is thus one of the

association's inherent and permanent duties. Safety regulations are strict and adapted to each situation.

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL'S SPECIFIC APPROACHES

THE LIVELIHOOD APPROACH AT THE CORE OF SI'S ACTIVITIES

SI aims to restore and strengthen populations' livelihoods to increase their sustainability and so their resilience. Strengthening resilience capacities allows populations to better prepare and adapt to stressful or shocking situations and to overcome them, whilst also guaranteeing the long-term coverage of vital needs.

During the assessment phase, the framework for livelihood analysis helps identify: which **geographic zones** and

livelihood groups are most vulnerable, the **vulnerabilities** in question and the **response capacities deployed**, the **coping strategies** (both sustainable and unsustainable) of the populations for each situation, and the potential **negative impact** of the programme and any external **constraints** which could jeopardise the project.

CONTIGUUM: THE URGENCY FOR SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

As crises are very rarely linear, the *contiguum* approach incorporates the **coexistence of long and short-term activities** as well as geographical specificities into SI's projects.

SI, as stated in its mandate, responds to urgent needs and coordinates with other actors to ensure long-term operations.

In practice, on top on this coordination effort, SI concentrates on defining an exit strategy allowing for the optimal sustainability of the operation from the start of its emergency responses.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)

The Disaster Risk Reduction approach aims to minimise or avoid losses caused by natural or man-made disasters through the implementation of **preparatory, mitigation and preventative measures**, while strengthening the **resilience** of

communities. This approach is integrated into SI's areas of operation in order to optimise the impact of its programmes and increase their relevance and sustainability.

THE A.B.C.D. APPROACH

The **A.B.C.D.** (*Approach focused on Behaviour Change Determinants*) facilitates the understanding of hygiene behaviours and the management and use of water and food through the prism of the **socio-**

anthropological study of populations. Ultimately, this allows SI's reasoning to be adapted to a cultural rationality for the **sustainability** of the results of its activities.

OUR ACTIVITIES THROUGH THE NUTRITIONAL PRISM

SI does not work directly in the domain of nutrition. However, when malnutrition causes an increase in the risk of mortality in the short-term, SI integrates **activities for the prevention of malnutrition** (awareness of food diversity and hygiene practices, distribution of *Plumpy'Sup*, **WASH in Nut**) into its projects, in partnership with nutritional actors.

THE COMPLEXITY OF URBAN AREAS

With more than half of the world population living now in urban areas, intervention contexts become more complex, heterogeneous and often multicultural. SI has to understand the stakes and specificities of such areas and in particular the social and economic fabric involved. Therefore adapted assessment tools are used and a stakeholder mapping including their interactions with the environment is performed and updated.

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GLOSSARY

ABCD	Approach focused on Behaviour Change Determinants
AGIR	Audit and Integrated Risk Management
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in humanitarian action
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standards
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department For International Development
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian aid Office
FSL	Food Security and Livelihoods
GIEC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
HAP	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HCT	Humanitarian Coordination Team
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SI	SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
WASH	Water Sanitation & Hygiene
UN	United Nations

THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF THE ACTIVITIES OF SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL



1. THE HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

The implementation of the activities of SI is guided by four fundamental humanitarian principles:

Humanity: human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for human beings.

Impartiality: humanitarian action must only be carried out on the basis of needs, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinction on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinion.

Neutrality: humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Operational independence: humanitarian action must be autonomous from political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may have for an area where humanitarian action is being implemented.

The Charter of SI recalls these fundamental principles.

The charter of SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL

Article 1 : General Principle: SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL's vocation is to provide humanitarian aid and to carry out actions of solidarity, to assist populations threatened by war or by political, ethnic, economic or any other kind of oppression.

Article 2: SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL is unbiased and does not support any political, economic, ethnic or religious group.

Article 3: Aid is given without any discrimination, and is always adapted to the specific situation of the targeted population.

Article 4: SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL only intervenes when asked to do so by the populations under threat or when requested by their legitimate representatives, and implements emergency relief or longer term programmes.

Article 5: SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL's carries out its work in full respect of the cultural identity and dignity of each individual.

Article 6: Members of SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL are responsible for the implementation in the field of the programmes adopted by the organisation..

Article 7: In accordance with its principles of action and in order to achieve greater efficiency, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL collects information from other humanitarian organisations and institutions, so as to coordinate and possibly collaborate with them.

Article 8: As a witness of the difficult situations into which it gets involved, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL attempts to inform and, if necessary, alert the public opinion.

Article 9: As a witness of the difficult situations into which it gets involved, SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL attempts to inform and, if necessary, alert the public opinion.

SI has also signed the “Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and non-governmental organisations in disaster relief”³.

SI uses the Sphere standards to guide its activities and is committed to complying with the Humanitarian Charter, the Protection Principles and all core minimum standards. As the Sphere Handbook recommends, SI uses indicators for infor-

mation only and always contextualises its response⁴.

SI takes into account the standards and indicators defined by the relevant national Ministries and national clusters everywhere it intervenes.

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³ www.ifrc.org/en/publications-and-reports/code-of-conduct/signatories-of-the-code-of-conduct/

⁴ For more information, see the internal note: [“The Sphere Project, its development and SI”](#)

2. THE INTERVENTION PRINCIPLES

A. DO NO HARM

The principle of “do no harm” constitutes an imperative necessity for SI teams.

Justification:

- Providing humanitarian aid can involve risks for the affected populations. In the case of a potential negative impact, it is preferable to implement activities differently or even not at all, especially when the negative impact exceeds the expected benefit.
- Because several types of intervention are possible in a given context, each with its specific impact, it is necessary to conduct an assessment in order to find the most suitable intervention.
- During the assessment, response teams analyse the potential negative impact (short-term but also medium and long-term) of the different possible activities on the populations and the existing system.
- The principle of “do no harm” applies to the physical safety of the beneficiaries, the social cohesion of the community where the activities are implemented, the ongoing reconciliation process, the local market, the environment, etc. The potential negative impact is monitored according to context-specific risk factors identified by the response teams.

Commitments :

- During the assessment, response teams analyse the potential negative impact (short-term but also medium and long-term) of the different possible activities on the populations and the existing system.

B. BE ACCOUNTABLE

Accountability means being answerable for our actions and using our power in a responsible way as defined by the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP). SI teams are first of all accountable to the beneficiaries of SI interventions and to the affected populations. They are also accountable to the representatives of those populations and to the financial donors of SI.

Justification:

- In a context of humanitarian aid, humanitarian actors *de facto* have power over the affected populations; being accountable means balancing this power and sharing it with the populations in order to better meet their needs.

Commitments:

- Starting from the assessment and throughout the entire project cycle, SI ensures by all means transparent and responsive communication with the

populations so that they can express their views, their fears, their satisfactions or their disagreements. This promotes their participation in the activities, especially during the decision-making process.

- During the implementation of the activities, every effort is made to provide a confidential Complaints Response Mechanism accessible to all beneficiaries.
- All SI team members are informed of the existence and functioning of a Professional Whistleblowing Policy⁵.
- To better meet the needs of the populations throughout and following an intervention, SI provides for a process of monitoring, evaluation and continuing learning, identification of lessons learned and their dissemination to its teams.



FIGURE 1 SIX KEY ELEMENTS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY - INSPIRED BY THE HAP

⁵ For more details, see the Framework Paper "[SI Professional Whistleblowing Policy](#)"

C. ENSURE TRANSPARENT AND ETHICAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The SI head office has an Administration and Finance Division and an Audit and Integrated Risk Management department (AGIR in French), both directly attached to the General Director for greater independence from the missions. The AGIR department has developed a risk evaluation mechanism with a focus on corruption and fraud. This mechanism is integrated in the overall process for an efficient use of the financial resources the organisation receives.

Whenever SI welcomes receives private donations or skills-based sponsorships, these resources are allocated to humanitarian action. Every opportunity of partnership or funding is subject to close scrutiny in compliance with the ethical framework of SI. Collaboration with parties involved or suspected to be involved in thea conflict or having economic interest in supporting humanitarian action in a given area is to be avoided. This principle enhances the financial transparency within SI.

Justification:

- SI considers that controlling the origin of its financial resources, their good use and transparent communication regarding this use are a sine qua non in order to achieve quality and independence.

Commitments :

- SI ensures that it can demonstrate that the financial resources received for carrying out its humanitarian action are used for that very purpose.
- The AGIR department conducts regular internal audits in the missions and analyses the results of the annual self-assessment for each base, after which it presents recommendations for improving the management of the financial resources.
- The origin of all financial resources is pinpointed, in consistency with the humanitarian principles of the organisation.

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⁶ For more details, see the Framework Paper [“Ethical framework for partnership with private sectors”](#) (only available in French).

D. COORDINATE

As mentioned in Article 7 of the SI Charter, its principles of action require close coordination with all civilian actors involved in the same area or operational sector (humanitarians, authorities, civil society and populations). SI can share information with military actors and police in order to ensure access to certain areas (for example information on teams traveling). Note that coordination with military actors will not be addressed here since it is not part of operational coordination as such but of security management under responsibility of the Head of Mission and/or the Field Coordinator.

According to context, SI can facilitate or co-facilitate a cluster (typically the WASH cluster or the Food Security cluster) and be a member of Inter-Agency Standing Committees at national or provincial level. SI can also be part of the HCT (Humanitarian Coordination Team) or participate in joint needs assessments, Inter-Agency missions or initiatives for joint monitoring and evaluation missions.

Justifications:

- Coordination of humanitarian action is essential for the quality of the assistance provided because it allows harmonising needs assessment tools and methods, optimising geographical and sectoral coverage with limited resources, avoiding overlay of actors and wasted resources, ensuring coherence or complementarity of methodology of the different actors, and building harmonised exit strategies.

Commitments:

- At global level, SI contributes to the continual improvement of the sectoral coordination mechanisms through active participation in the Global WASH cluster, the Global Food Security cluster and the Global Logistics cluster.
- At mission level, SI teams participate in principle in national and local coordination mechanisms where they exchange operational information with other participants.
- SI teams emphasise the humanitarian principles underlying its activities regardless of the coordination mechanism and the actors involved.

E. DO NOT SUBSTITUTE

SI only intervenes when the legitimate authorities (or the authorities recognised as such by the populations) of an area affected by a crisis do not have the capacity and/or the willingness to cover the basic needs of the populations under their responsibility. SI does not intend to substitute for authorities for they are to bear primary responsibility to cover the basic needs.

SI assesses the capacity and the willingness of the authorities to overcome a crisis and only intervenes if that capacity is overwhelmed or the willingness insufficient. In case of an intervention, SI will coordinate with the authorities and will seek, to the extent possible, to improve its capacity for resilience in future crises.

Since SI is to interact with a wide range of local institutions (authorities, associations, national NGOs, etc.) for the implementation of its activities, it is important to work in a true spirit of cooperation and mutual respect.

Justifications:

- Collaborating closely with local actors for the implementation of activities strengthens their capacity.

Key principles of implementation:

- Each partnership is unique but can only work using a consistent and rigorous approach with precisely determined terms and limits. The principles governing this approach are respect, confidence and autonomy, transparency, responsibility, common goal and complementarity⁷.

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⁷ For more details, see the [SI thematic package on partnership](#).

F. BE PROFESSIONAL

All SI team members, both at mission level and at the head office, are competent and committed professionals. SI recruits people who have training or experience in a specific field and who can put this to the service of populations in need. Recruitment of local staff members at mission level is guided by the same standards of competence and understanding of humanitarian principles without any discrimination based on ethnic or religious membership or on differences of class or gender. International teams are deployed in a spirit of cooperation and complementary with the local expertise.

Justifications:

- To be effective and qualitative, the activities of SI have to be designed and implemented by team members respecting professional ethics.

Commitments:

- SI provides a Professional Whistle-blowing Policy⁸ to all its team members, regardless of hierarchical level or place of work, to enable anyone, witness or victim of abuse of power by another team member, to alert the General Director of SI.
- All employees, consultants and volunteers working for SI commit themselves to adhering to the Code of Ethics and Conduct of SI⁹.
- All SI team members, both at mission level and at the head office, benefit from tailored training plans to continuously improve knowledge and skills in their field of responsibility or to acquire new ones.

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⁸ For more details, see the Framework Paper: [SI Professional Whistle-blowing Policy](#)

⁹ <http://www.solidarites.org/phoca-download/code%20dthique%20et%20de%20comportement%20-%20sept%202011.pdf>

HUMANITARIAN AID PROVIDED BY SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL



1. OBJECTIVE OF THE HUMANITARIAN ACTION OF SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL

The mandate of SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL is to address the vital needs of populations confronted by major man-made or natural disasters and to strengthen their resilience. SI operations focus on water, sanitation and hygiene, food security and shelter

SI is a French humanitarian organisation created in 1980. In 2016, SI is implementing emergency actions in 19 countries in Africa, Asia, Middle-East and the Carribean.

2. STRUCTURE OF AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

The interventions of SI respond mainly to the consequences of a crisis but the organisation also strives to include prevention by integrating activities designed to help the teams and populations prepare for disasters, to increase resilience and to mitigate risks. If there is proven added value, long-term reconstruction activities can also be implemented.

SI structures its humanitarian action around four objectives that are well distinct but intrinsically connected in the field.

1 In countries where SI already intervenes, its teams are prepared for emergency actions: they follow the evolution of the humanitarian context and are regularly trained on intervention techniques and methodologies in the key areas of SI expertise.

SI joins the existing early warning systems and its teams design and implement contingency plans as soon as possible.

2 When a crisis occurs, when the needs are confirmed, and when the relevance of an intervention is proven, SI deploys its teams to provide humanitarian aid that can last from a few weeks to a few months for an acute emergency phase. The type of humanitarian action is adapted to each context

to meet the needs, expectations and capacities of the affected populations. SI is committed to a participatory approach to include communities in the decision-making process as early as possible. Its teams coordinate with all the actors present in the field in order to optimise the humanitarian action

3 Once the acute emergency phase is passed, or sometimes even during this phase, SI evaluates the relevance of staying in the area by considering the persistent needs, the local capacities and the actors involved. If the choice is made to stay, the goal becomes then to get involved in reconstruction, rehabilitation and economic recovery programmes, through long-term activities with and for the populations.

4 In areas and contexts where the risks of natural disasters, waterborne epidemic diseases or conflicts are high and/or recurring, SI helps strengthen the resilience of the populations through activities focusing on preparedness and risk mitigation in order to reduce the impact of these shocks (strengthening the livelihood of populations, adapting infrastructure, etc.).



FIGURE 2 STRUCTURE OF AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

3. CRITERIA OF INTERVENTION BASED ON NEEDS AND VULNERABILITY TO A SHOCK

Because the humanitarian action of SI is dictated by the necessity to respond to needs of populations that are not covered, the decision to initiate or extend an intervention is based on the following criteria:

- **Vulnerability** to natural or man-made disasters (both sudden and slow onset) constituting a threat to the life, health or livelihood of a target population.
- **A crisis or a succession of crises exceeding the capacity for resilience** of the affected communities to the point that the sustainability of their livelihood is threatened.
- Needs not covered by **local authorities, civil society or other humanitarian organisations**.

Emergency activities constitute the first phase of humanitarian action, but the health of the populations exposed to a crisis is threatened by an entire set of social, environmental and economic factors. According to the level of **the population's exposure, the intensity of the crisis, the vulnerability of the populations and their capacity for resilience**, the consequences can be important if no humanitarian action is taken. SI intervenes to reduce the risks for those most exposed and vulnerable.

4. TESTIMONY AND ADVOCACY

In addition to its operational role, SI **speaks out to the public** about its humanitarian action⁸. Note that this topic will not be addressed here since it is not part of operational coordination as such.

Although SI is not an advocacy organisation in the strict sense, it can have recourse to **operational advocacy** when the humanitarian situation requires so, when access to the affected populations has become too complex (if not impossible), when the humanitarian principles are being violated, or when the quality of the humanitarian aid is insufficient to meet the needs of the populations. The advocacy may consist of individual actions, or may be brought by a group of humanitarian actors. The goal is to testify and to alert the public opinion and decision-makers.

Because of its experience and work in the field, SI is especially committed to **the fight for global access to water**.

Access to a sustainable water resource (of sufficient quantity and quality) is essential:

- to improve the health of all (individually, collectively, or tribally) and minimise the risks for both man and his environment;
- to allow the creation and development of economic activities and thus improve food security;
- to prevent the risk of malnutrition among children;
- to facilitate the learning process on which the development of a society in the long term is based by improving the health conditions in school infrastructures;
- to reduce the risk of natural disasters and social conflicts.

A global advocacy strategy is to be formalised in 2017.

THE OPERATIONAL METHODOLOGIES OF SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL



1. THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF SI ACTIVITIES

A. INTEGRATING THE PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONALE does not directly implement “protection” activities. However, based on the SI Charter, the nature of affected populations and the operational context, **protection** is *de facto integrated* into the SI activities, in a **cross-cutting** way:

- By integrating protection in its interventions, SI applies one of the fundamental principles governing its humanitarian action: “do no harm”.
 - In some contexts, activities with protective objectives can be integrated directly in SI programmes.
- Remedial (restoring the dignity of people who have been affected by an act of violation);
 - Responsive (preventing the recurrence of an act of violation);
 - Environment-building (consolidating an enabling environment in which individual rights are fully respected).

Justification:

- Interventions in pacified but troubled contexts or in conflict situations always require an in-depth assessment with a focus on the protective conditions in order to guarantee truly impartial action, not to increase already existing risks (or create “secondary risks”), nor to be manipulated by stakeholders or to exclude specific groups.

Key principles of implementation¹¹ :

- Risk assessment focusing on the protective conditions of populations is an integrated part of the multisectoral assessment that SI conducts before deciding and designing its interventions.
- SI is committed to respecting the four Sphere Protection Principles (see the table on the following page).

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¹¹ - For more details, see SI's Position paper on protection (to be published soon)

Sphere protection principles			
Principle 1	Principle 2	Principle 3	Principle 4
Avoid exposing populations affected by a crisis to further harm as a result of your actions	Ensure people's access to impartial assistance - in proportion to need and without discrimination	Protect people from physical and psychological harm arising from violence and coercion	Assist people to claim their rights, access available remedies and recover from the effects of abuse

- **Principles 1 and 2 (protection as an approach – mainstreaming):**

Based on the assessment of the protective conditions of the situation, SI's approach in the design of the intervention is to limit the secondary risks and not to increase the primary risks ("do no harm"). The principles also guide the actual implementation of the programmes (nature of an activity, determination of its location, etc.).

- **Principles 3 et 4 (integrated protection):**

The types of activities integrating protective objectives may include:

- Information-sharing on threats and rights;
- Referring cases requiring protective action from a specialised agency;
- Supporting access to protective services.

Although SI reserves the right to provide testimony on situations observed in the field by its teams, careful thought is given to the gains and risks for the beneficiaries before witnessing. In some situations, publicly testifying can bar access to the beneficiaries.

SI participates in the Protection cluster in order to keep its practices up to date in compliance with the standards for protection in humanitarian action. This participation also facilitates sharing information on violations of rights observed by its teams in the field.

B. UNDERSTANDING AND TAKING INTO ACCOUNT GENDER, AGE AND OTHER SPECIFIC NEEDS

Because SI is sensitive to issues related to gender, age and other specific needs, special attention is paid during an assessment to the needs of each in order to design humanitarian aid accessible to all.

The concept of **gender** represents the “*social differences between women and men inherent in any culture and directly influencing roles, relationships, vulnerabilities and needs*”¹². SI therefore designs and implements its humanitarian aid in such a way it benefits equally women and men, each with their specific abilities¹³.

Moreover, the concept of **age** is integrated from the outset of an assessment. SI recognises that humanitarian aid in response to a crisis should always include equality and respect to the rights of each regardless of their age, and especially of children.

Finally, SI interventions are always designed to be accessible to all, no matter their physical, mental, intellectual or sensory disability, or if they are living with HIV.

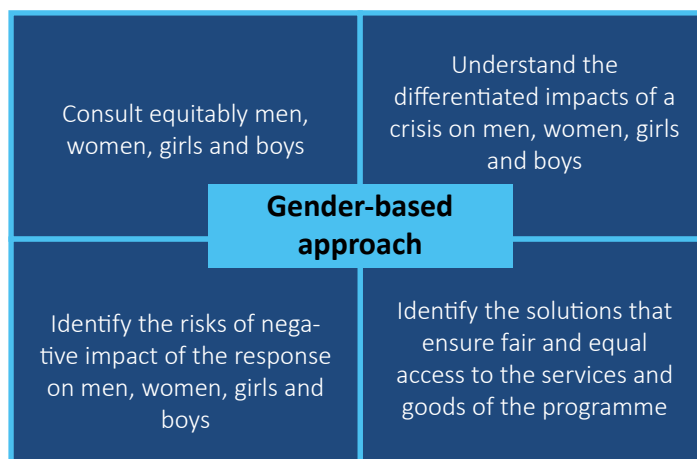
Justification:

- Since conflicts and natural disasters affect **women, men, girls and boys** in a different way, humanitarian aid should be provided in accordance with the specific situation of each group in a given context and the relationships that exist between them..

- **People with disabilities** (physical or mental) mainly face social discrimination and physical barriers: limited access to water, sanitation and hygiene services in an emergency situation, difficulties reaching aid distributions, inability to participate in the decision-making process by lack of information or means to make their voices heard.
- Although SI is not an actual actor of the health sector, people living with HIV or being particularly vulnerable to be exposed to HIV in crisis situations require special attention during an intervention in order to protect them against discrimination, neglect and any form of violence (breakup of the community cohesion and appearance of new sexual behaviour and sexual violence exacerbate the risk of transmission). It is necessary to systematically, in a cross-cutting way, take into account their needs and specific vulnerabilities.

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¹² ECHO (2013)
Factsheet Gender:
Different needs, adapted assistance: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/thematic/gender_en.pdf

¹³ For more details, see the “[Taking gender into account](#)” Position Paper



Key principles of implementation:

- SI is committed to establishing the design of its interventions on a gender-specific assessment and data disaggregated by sex and age, in order to provide equitable and accessible humanitarian aid in a safe way to all members of a target population.
- When the humanitarian crisis to which SI reacts presents cases of gender-based violence, its intervention must include preventive measures, and in particular close coordination with specialised actors.
- SI provides non-discriminatory, differentiated humanitarian aid accessible to all and adapted to the abilities of each.
- SI integrates the specific needs of people with disabilities or living with HIV at an operational level, ensuring inclusive and equitable activities, from the outset of the assessment throughout the entire project cycle until the final quality evaluation.
- Information about SI projects and the Complaints Response Mechanism are accessible to all and especially to people with disabilities or living with HIV.
- As much as possible and depending on the context, the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action¹⁴ must be respected. During its assessments, SI is committed to systematically integrating the interests and needs of children. The organisation requires from its team members respectful and protective behaviour towards children in the intervention areas¹⁵.
- The humanitarian action of SI does not endanger specific groups, nor does it create or amplify existing stigmatisation related to a social, physical, mental or intellectual condition.

¹⁴ Global Protection Cluster, Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action: <http://cpwg.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/03/CP-Minimum-Standards-English-2013.pdf>

¹⁵ For more details, see the [Child Protection Position Paper](#)

C. ASSESSING AND LIMITING IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The principle of “do no harm” includes knowing what the impact of the crisis and the intervention will be on the immediate environment in order to maximise positive and reduce negative impact. The concept of environment is defined as: *“the physical, chemical and biological elements and processes that affect disaster-affected populations’ lives and livelihoods. It provides the natural resources that sustain individuals and contributes to quality of life”*¹⁶.

Justification:

- Humanitarian action is often provided in a natural environment made vulnerable by an acute crisis or chronic crises. Camps of refugees/displaced persons in particular can have a major negative impact on the environment because they require the use of local natural resources (wood, water, wildlife, etc.) in an unsustainable way. Even one-time overexploitation of these resources can quickly create land-use conflicts between the refugee/displaced populations and the resident populations of the area.
- Massive humanitarian emergency aid results in large quantities of waste that are not always recyclable or recycled (medical waste, plastic latrine slabs, plastic sheeting and bags, batteries, tires, etc.). Some of

this waste represents a direct danger to the health of the populations and the local natural resources (water, soil, vegetation, wildlife, etc.).

Key principles of implementation:

- SI is committed to limiting as much as possible the environmental impact of its activities and to sharing information about this impact with actors specialised in this field¹⁷.
- SI is committed to managing its equipment and its waste in a responsible manner.
- When designing its humanitarian aid, SI opts for a minimal environmental impact. It conducts assessments on environmental impact prior to implementing its activities in order to choose those options least disturbing the local environment.
- In areas where the vulnerability of the populations is among other things caused by an exposed natural environment, SI integrates the promotion and the development of sustainable, environmentally friendly practices in the design of its intervention (agroecology for activities supporting agriculture, water conservation for areas with a shortage of water, etc.).

¹⁶ Sphere Handbook, 2011

¹⁷ For more details, see the Position Paper on the Environment (scheduled for 2017)

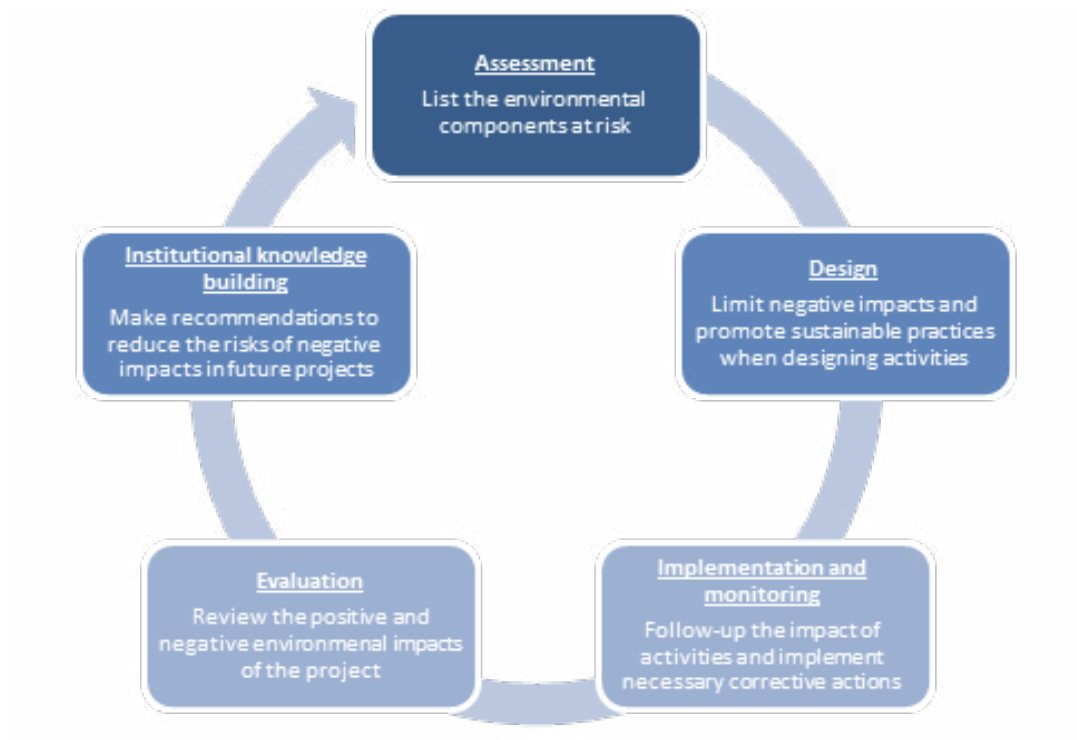


FIGURE 3 INTEGRATING IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE PROJECT CYCLE

D. DEFINING OPERATIONAL AND EXIT STRATEGIES FROM THE OUTSET OF AN INTERVENTION

In response to a crisis, SI intervenes according to an operational strategy that is based on the needs assessment: priority needs and gaps, SI expertise and the presence of others stakeholders. This strategy for defining humanitarian aid that can consist of several programmes (operational strategy focus) including several projects is a key element of the humanitarian action of SI.

When designing humanitarian action, SI also defines from the outset the exit strategy that will be initiated on fulfilment of predetermined conditions: achievement of the objectives set, confirmed and stable return to the situation prior to the crisis, transfer of responsibilities to another actor. The integration of reflection on the terms of disengagement or the future of the activities of a programme is another key element of the humanitarian action of SI.

Justification:

- The exit strategy for a programme influences the choice of the methodologies and techniques used. In order to guarantee a positive impact beyond the action, SI identifies its approach by considering the conditions, constraints and opportunities of a future disengagement.
- The sudden and unprepared interruption of programmes can be dramatic for the assisted populations and the sustainability of the implemented activities. Any intervention should therefore systematically have an exit strategy designed from the very beginning.

- The unjustified prolongation of humanitarian aid on the other hand can create dependency jeopardising the goal of a progressive return to autonomy. SI accompanies all its activities by exit strategies in the short, medium and long-term in order to be able to transfer responsibilities to and strengthen the resilience of the affected populations.

Key principles of implementation:

- Each activity implemented by SI is part of a global intervention strategy which is distinct from any financing agreement. This means SI can implement programmes that contain several projects each funded by a different donor.
- From the outset of the assessment and throughout the entire project cycle of each intervention, the exit strategy is clearly and systematically integrated and includes a planning and a budget.
- This means the process ensuring the transition to a local and autonomous management of infrastructure or services by the populations is designed from the outset of the activities and strengthened throughout their implementation.
- To determine the initiation of the exit phase, SI consistently compares the relevance of its humanitarian action to thresholds and minimum conditions using context assessment tools, in close relationship with the populations.

E. ENSURING SI TEAMS HAVE SAFE ACCESS TO THE POPULATIONS

Because SI often provides humanitarian aid in insecure environments, the organisation has the inherent and permanent duty to protect its teams and operational partners. Strict security rules adapted to each situation are implemented¹⁹.

Key principles of implementation:

- In order to reduce the risks for its employees, each base has a security plan. The prevailing risks are also constantly compared to the expected benefits for the populations. SI is committed to preventing its teams taking unnecessary risks.
- SI provides specific security training to all team members (staff responsible for security management, staff most exposed in the field, etc.).

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¹⁹ For more details, see the [User's Manual for Security Management](#)

2. QUALITY RELATED FACTORS OF THE PROJECT CYCLE

In a continuous concern for quality and relevance, SI is implementing its humanitarian aid based on the Nine Commitments set out by the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability²⁰ and its quality related factors.



FIGURE 4 CORE HUMANITARIAN STANDARDS ON QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY (CHS)

²⁰ <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/CHS-Guidance-Notes-and-Indicators.pdf>

A. THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The teams at SI are committed to implementing effective and relevant humanitarian aid programmes adapted to the context and the specific needs of the affected populations. This means each project is based on a preliminary context and needs assessment before being implemented.

Key principles of implementation:

- Every intervention, including in emergency situations, presupposes the systematic completion of an assessment.
- This assessment is whenever possible based on the livelihood approach (see IV.1) in order to obtain a systemic understanding of the vulnerabilities and the capacities of the affected populations.
- The conclusions are presented to and discussed with the target populations, and their opinion is taken into account.
- As soon as possible and according to protection issues, the findings of the assessment are disseminated to all stakeholders, including in emergency situations (in order to avoid duplication of effort).
- The initial assessment is updated or supplemented by in-depth studies at the launch of the programme (especially when there was an important time lapse between the initial assessment and the implementation of the activities).
- The assessment is participatory and multisectoral whenever possible. It will systematically start with a review of available secondary data followed by a collection of qualitative and quantitative primary data.
- SI uses its internal assessment tools as well as tools developed by other stakeholders. These tools are available on the [intranet](#)²¹.
- Every assessment is to be finalised in a report, made available internally and externally in order to share the results and the methodology to all stakeholders concerned (if necessary, the externally available version can be edited).

²¹ Intranet:
<http://intranet.solidarites.org/>

B. THE ASSESSMENT OF VULNERABILITIES TO SHOCKS AND POPULATIONS MOST AT-RISK

To understand vulnerability, it is necessary to determine the level at which households and communities are exposed to a shock or stress, their capacity to deal with it, their coping mechanisms and the limits of these. This approach allows SI to target those most at-risk.

their short, medium or long-term survival and livelihood.

It is essential to differentiate non-erosive (or reversible) coping mechanisms from erosive (or irreversible) coping mechanisms that endanger the sustainability of the households' livelihood.

Coping mechanisms are strategies households implement when facing one or several shocks in order to minimise the risks to

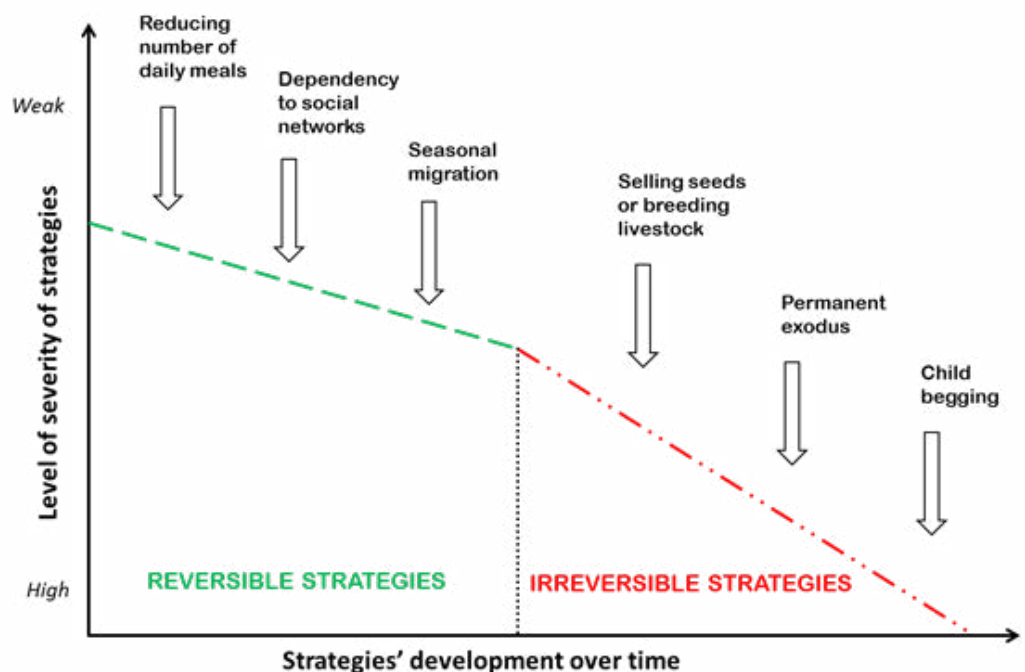


FIGURE 5 TYPES OF COPING MECHANISMS IMPLEMENTED BY HOUSEHOLDS EXPOSED TO A SHOCK

Justification:

- Households or communities implement successive coping mechanisms to deal with multiple shocks or stresses. Understanding these mechanisms allows understanding the context, developing appropriate interventions and identifying indicators to follow, and this in order to better anticipate the onset of a crisis.
- This knowledge also contributes to adapting projects to the evolution of a context.
- Each group within a community has specific coping mechanisms and is therefore vulnerable in a different way to a shock. Assessment of these differences allows SI to define the criteria for identifying beneficiary persons, households and groups.

Key principles of implementation:

- During a crisis, the identification of those immediate at-risk is based on vulnerability and implemented coping mechanisms. The analysis of the related criteria allows SI to decide when and how to intervene.

- SI selects the beneficiary households at field level based on the findings of the vulnerability assessment. This process is participatory and completed jointly with the communities concerned, whenever relevant and without negative impact. Four categories of contextual criteria are generally taken into account:
 - **Criteria related to coping mechanisms:** implementation of erosive coping mechanisms such as decapitalisation of essential goods, change in eating habits, increased debt, etc.
 - **Social criteria:** single-parent household, size of household, head of household with specific needs (single woman, with disabilities or chronic illness), household supporting dependents or persons with chronic illness, etc.
 - **Criteria related to capital:** access to land, cattle, alternative source of income, type of habitat, active/inactive ratio, etc.
 - **Criteria related to status:** refugee, displaced, returnees, etc.

C. COMMUNICATING AND PRIORITISING THE ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF AFFECTED POPULATIONS

In order to build a partnership based on mutual respect, SI focuses on two priorities: participation of the affected populations and listening to and sharing information with them.

Communication

Justification:

Transparent dialogue is a *sine qua non* if populations are to effectively participate in the definition of their needs and the means to intervene, and this in every phase of an intervention. This participation enables humanitarian action to be carried out for and with the affected populations.

Key principles of implementation:

Communication with the affected populations should be:

- **Accessible:** communication must use the local language, and be in a suitable format (written, verbal, visual or any other format decided upon by the community) and free of technical jargon and acronyms.
- **Secure:** communication must not endanger persons nor should they have to endanger themselves to have access to information.
- **Up-to-date:** communication must reflect a current status and therefore be updated frequently.

- **Engaging:** the means used for communicating must attract the attention of those to whom it is addressed.
- **Transparent:** programme related data is communicated to the populations (to the extent it does not endanger them or the SI teams).
- **Reciprocal:** the population must know how to communicate their opinion on the type of information they wish to have access to and the quality of the information provided.

SI teams ensure a continuous dialogue with the communities from the assessment on, explaining who SI is, its mandate, its methods, who it works with and who funds it.

SI provides information about the programme objectives, the achievements and difficulties and determines together with the populations an adapted communication process allowing permanent exchanges in both directions.

Participation of populations

Participation is “first and foremost an attitude – a state of mind – that sees people affected by a crisis as social actors with skills, energy, ideas and insight into their own situation”²².

There are different levels of participation, ranging from **passive participation** (simple information) through **interactive participation** (needs assessment and design of programmes with populations with decision-making power) up to **humanitarian action supported by local initiatives** in which an external organisation can participate.

This means participation cannot simply be reduced to providing money, materials or labour, or to realising cash for work or in-kind donations, unless the participants were integrated in the decision-making process determining these activities.

Justification:

- Respect for the affected populations must be THE cornerstone of the humanitarian action of SI, and the active and voluntary participation of the communities is THE sine qua non for programmes to be carried out in a framework of sincere and mutual respect.
- Participation intends first of all to (i) enhance and extend the impact of humanitarian aid, (ii) improve the relevance of the activities, (iii) make the activities more responsive to evolving needs and (iv) avoid or reduce negative impact of the humanitarian action.

Key principles of implementation:

- SI proactively includes the populations in the decision-making process throughout the entire intervention: from the assessment based on field visits, group meetings, market observations and exchanges, to the participative definition of the vulnerability criteria, to the implementation of a participative follow-up and a monetary or physical investment in the activities, to the final evaluation including consultation with the communities to analyse the achievement of the results.
- Regardless of the level and degree of their participation, SI pays special attention to marginalised, powerless people or excluded groups and ensures that their involvement in the humanitarian action does not create additional risks.
- Developing a participative strategy essentially involves answering the following three questions:
 - Why is it necessary to implement a participative process and what is the objective?
 - Who is participating?
 - How and when to deploy a participative strategy?
- Crisis affected populations can be directly involved in the humanitarian action or can participate through their representatives. It is important to ensure that the most vulnerable and socially marginalised are also involved.

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²² [Participation Handbook for humanitarian field workers](#), URD Group, 2009

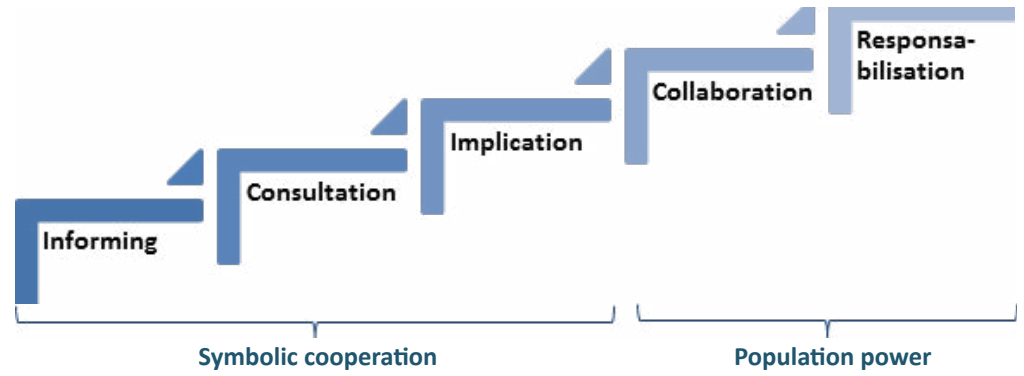


FIGURE 6 LADDER OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION. ADAPTED FROM ARNSTEIN, S.R. 1969.

D. ENSURING VALUE FOR MONEY

The concept of “value for money” is initiated from the requirement for public funds to be used as effectively and efficiently as possible, and to achieve predefined objectives. It covers two concepts: **effectiveness**, meaning the extent to which the objectives of the humanitarian action were achieved, or are in process of being achieved, and **efficiency**, meaning the measure whereby resources (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted in to results in a cost-effective way.

Justification:

- SI is committed to optimising the available resources in order to ensure high quality when implementing its humanitarian action. This means maximising the impact of the funds and resources used in order to improve the living conditions of the populations during and after a humanitarian crisis.
- SI is accountable to its financial donors and therefore committed to realising the best “value for money” in its interventions.
- SI being a humanitarian organisation, effectiveness is given priority over efficiency. As a consequence, the intervention cost can be higher, if necessary and justified by a humanitarian imperative.

Key principles of implementation:

- SI has specific supply and procurement regulations, organised by type of market (goods, services), ensuring transparent and fair competition for suppliers delivering quality goods at the best possible price, thus optimising the quality-price ratio.
- At every stage of the intervention, “value for money” is a guiding principle: from the outset of the initial assessment allowing to design projects responding to unmet needs in the most rational and effective way possible, to the coordination with other actors in order to avoid duplication of activities.
- When choosing between a minimum of two types of resource or strategy, SI opts for the lowest price for the same level of result or quality (cost-effectiveness). When possible and relevant, saving money can allow for a better coverage of the humanitarian needs.
- Demonstrating “value for money” is either done *ex ante* (during the assessment) or *ex post* (during the final evaluation). Effectiveness and efficiency are two of the DAC criteria of OECD.

E. MONITORING AND STEERING HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Monitoring²³ is characterised by the systematic and continuous collection of information for analysis and use in the operational decision process.

For every intervention, SI implements four types of monitoring with complementary subjects: Context and needs, Process, Activities/Outputs, and Results/Outcomes and effect/impact..

Justification:

- In addition to the constantly evolving capacities of a population during a crisis, the conditions in which SI operates are often unstable. This requires its interventions to be flexible and adaptable. Regularly monitoring the context and the activities and their impact allows SI to adapt to changing circumstances in order to always respond appropriately to the populations' needs.
- Monitoring activities and their results is essential to the requirement of quality, allowing SI to measure the adequacy between the activities and the objectives and between the activities and the evolving needs. This ultimately ensures compliance with the commitments of the organisation towards its partners and the affected populations.

Key principles of implementation:

- Every intervention has an integrated plan for monitoring and evaluation, which is an essential management tool from the outset of a project.
- Only data necessary for monitoring and operational decision-making are collected. They are systematically analysed and the outcome is shared. SI does not collect unnecessary data in order to:
 - Limit the load on the target populations (surveys and other data collections may disrupt their income-generating activities and affect their dignity);
 - Limit the protective risks.
- SI has a complete set of tools for monitoring and planning, under the responsibility of each programme manager²⁴.

²³ SI uses both terms indiscriminately.

²⁴ Different monitoring mechanisms exist depending on the context. For more details, see the report on mapping of the SI monitoring systems. All monitoring and planning tools are available on the [intranet](#).

F. HANDLING POPULATIONS' COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACKS

Populations receiving humanitarian aid must have the possibility to assert their rights and raise issues related to ethics, behaviour or targeting. Ensuring access for all to a Complaints Response Mechanism (CRM) is part of the SI commitment towards the populations for which it intervenes, and thus of its accountability to those populations.

Justification:

- Complaints and feedbacks mechanisms allow populations to engage in the humanitarian action, their views to be taken into consideration, and the power relations to be balanced. Mistakes can be acknowledged and corrective action taken.
 - Taking into account the comments and complaints of the populations is an effective way to continuously improve the humanitarian action for the benefit of the communities.
- incident meetings, etc.) mechanisms.
 - The minimum standards for choosing a method for the CRM are security and inclusion. The SI teams ensure the proposed CRM is accessible to every person, without distinction of status, age, gender, physical or sensory ability and without endangering people. At least one of the implemented mechanisms must allow for confidential access.
 - SI also ensures that complaints are treated in confidentiality and that they are given a prompt response.

A CRM differs from a Professional Whistle-blowing Policy in its users: while the Professional Whistleblowing Policy is intended for SI employees, the CRM is implemented for the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of SI humanitarian action. If a complaint is made through the wrong channel, it is the responsibility of the person receiving the complaint to forward it to the right person.

Key principles of implementation²⁵ :

- According to the context and following an assessment of the existing and accessible communication processes and codes in the community, SI implements a CRM via different access points (message box, community teams, accountability committee, hot line, etc.). The issues of the populations are also received and taken into account through informal (debrief of agents, etc.) and formal (critical

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²⁵ For more details, see the [Complaints Response Mechanism](#)
Internal Note

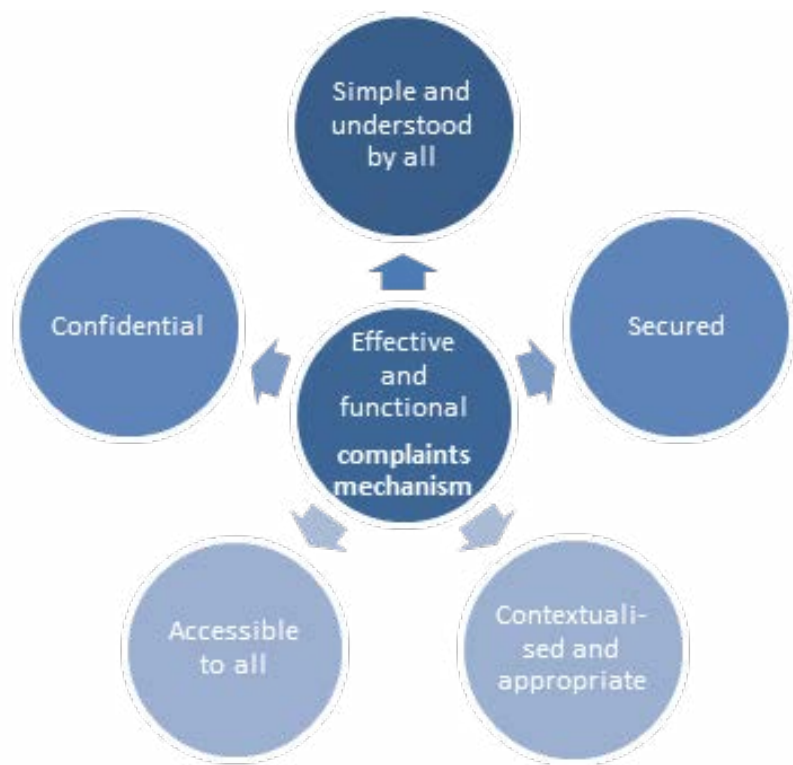


FIGURE 7 FIVE CRITERIA FOR AN EFFECTIVE CRM

G. EVALUATING PROGRAMME QUALITY

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL uses the concept of evaluation as defined by ALNAP²⁶, of which it is a member: *“A systematic and impartial examination of humanitarian action intended to draw lessons to improve policy and practice and enhance accountability”*²⁷.

Justification:

- Evaluation allows for a structured assessment of the quality of the humanitarian action of SI, during or at the end of a programme. Unlike monitoring, which provides a continuous view, evaluating allows for a photograph of a project or a programme at a given time.
- SI's drive to continuously improve the quality of its humanitarian action requires conducting regular programme evaluations in order to learn from experiences, search optimisation of processes and improve outcomes.
- Evaluations are carried out either for learning or for accountability purposes. The evaluation methodology is determined by this primary goal.

Key principles of implementation²⁸:

- The evaluations of SI rely on the quality criteria of the OECD-DAC (1999): Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Connectedness/Sustainability, Coverage, Coherence, Impact and Coordination. The assessments are conducted based on predefined evaluation questions.
- SI conducts a final evaluation for all programmes with the following characteristics:
 - Duration greater than or equal to 12 months; a succession of two short emergency programmes with a minimum of 12 months is subject to the same rule.
 - A pilot programme, regardless of its duration.
 - A budget greater than or equal to €750,000.
- An intermediate evaluation is carried out when the programme duration is greater than or equal to 18 months.
- When the results of an evaluation contain useful lessons to improve humanitarian action and when the dissemination of this information does not endanger the protective situation of the populations and SI teams, SI publishes its reports on the ALNAP website.

²⁶ ALNAP is a network of humanitarian organisations whose goal is to improve the quality of humanitarian aid through learning and accountability.

²⁷ Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria – An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies, ODI, London, UK

²⁸ For more details, see the Internal Note on the [“Framework for evaluating the quality of programmes at SI”](#)

H. INSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE BUILDING (IKB)

The concept of Institutional Knowledge Building (IKB) refers to the process of identifying and formalising knowledge or know-how acquired by SI in order to share it with and make it useful for others. IKB involves explaining, analysing and drawing lessons from a practice or experience with the objective of appropriating, adapting and replicating it for in other contexts.

Justification:

- IKB contributes to the continuous improvement of the performance of the organisation.
 - IKB allows avoiding the loss of knowledge held by the teams, conveying techniques and methodologies, avoiding the repetition of mistakes, and promoting the exchange and sharing of experiences between bases and missions.
 - IKB allows SI to demonstrate its expertise and justify its humanitarian action and strategic decisions.
- IKB information is systematically made available via the intranet and occasionally, depending on the scope of the documents, via the SI Internet website or other humanitarian websites (Reliefweb, CaLP, Eldis, etc.).
 - For the teams both at mission level and at the head office, the intranet³⁰ is the main reference for accessing the internal and external tools and resources necessary for the implementation of interventions. To ensure an overall vision, the SI intranet is structured in the following way:
 - Basic SI documents: its history, its position.
 - Procedures and tools: all reference documents that are mandatory to use.
 - Resources: a selection of external documentation and all the IKB documentation.
 - Training: reinforcing the professional skills of the SI teams.
 - Internal Communication: internal newsletters and social media links.

Key principles of implementation²⁹:

- The IKB approach within SI is based on three axes: completed activities (technical and methodological IKB), programmes achieved (inter-departmental IKB), and cross-cutting issues (IKB derived from the experience of several different missions).

²⁹ For more details, see the Internal Note on "[Institutional Knowledge Building \(IKB\) within SI](#)"

³⁰ Intranet: <http://intranet.solidarites.org/>

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL'S SPECIFIC APPROACHES

IV

1. THE LIVELIHOOD APPROACH AT THE CORE OF SI'S ACTIVITIES

As part of its humanitarian action, SI is not only committed to covering the needs of crisis affected populations, but also to reducing the identified economic, health and environmental vulnerabilities. The livelihood approach provides for a multisectoral assessment that allows SI to understand the causes of these vulnerabilities in an integrated and holistic way.

It is considered that *“a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base”*³¹.

This approach includes households' environment, capital (skills and property) and activities necessary for their survival.

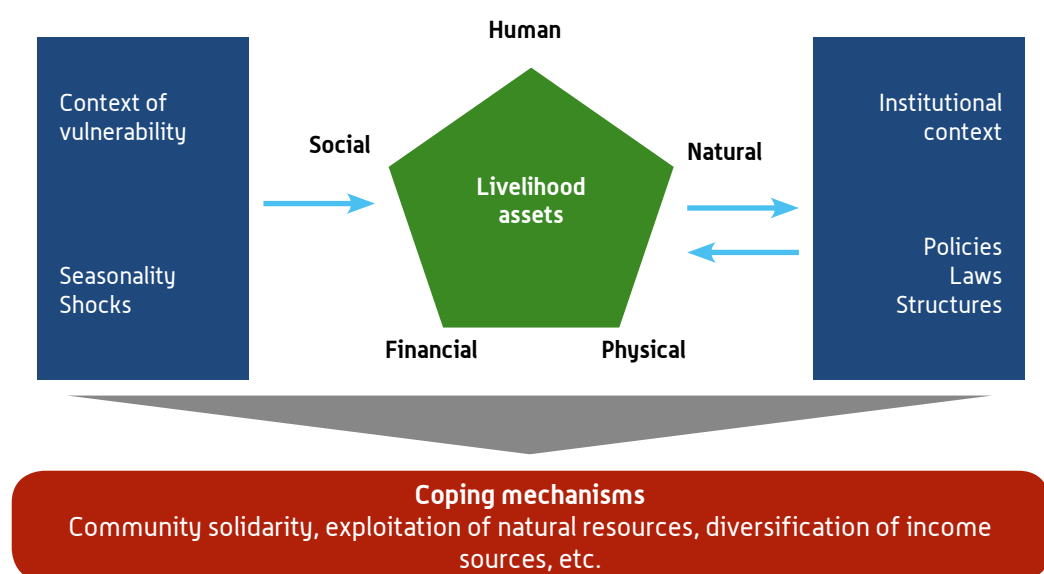


FIGURE 8 COPING MECHANISMS ARE THE RESULT OF THE INTERACTION BETWEEN CONTEXT AND LIVELIHOOD CAPITAL

31 [DFID's Sustainable Livelihoods Approach and its Framework](#), 2008

It is of strategic concern for SI to take into account the capabilities and the coping mechanisms of affected populations. The livelihood approach provides insight into the capacities of households and communities. Analysing the impact of external factors affecting them (seasonal, political, economic, sociocultural and environmental) and their coping mechanisms means identifying their real needs in order to determine the right time to intervene and the form of assistance to provide.

The livelihood approach allows for strengthening the populations' resilience. The concept of **resilience** refers to the ability of an individual or a group of people to face a shock or stress, and to recover from it to its previous state. To this ability to recover must be added the ability to adapt and to learn/transform and thus be better prepared to absorb a future shock or stress.

Within SI, strengthening resilience capacities is an integral part of the mandate and closely linked to the two main concepts of its humanitarian aid: vulnerability and contiguum

Key principles of implementation:

The livelihood approach is used at every stage of the project cycle. Already during an assessment, the livelihood approach allows to identify:

- The **geographic areas** and **livelihood groups** most vulnerable to food insecurity and waterborne diseases.
- The **risks** for the populations in order to define the different associated types of **vulnerability** and the existing capacities.
- The **coping mechanisms** (both erosive and non-erosive) the populations implement in a given situation.
- The potential **negative impacts** of a programme and any external **constraints** that could jeopardise its successful implementation or significantly compromise the expected results.

Assessing livelihoods should be a flexible and dynamic exercise since they are constantly evolving.

2. CONTIGUUM: THE URGENCY OF SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL takes the *contiguum* approach rather than the classical linear *continuum* approach of emergency-rehabilitation-development. The *contiguum* approach better reflects the complexity of humanitarian action since crises very rarely occur in a linear manner and crisis affected populations not systematically identify with the concept of emergency-rehabilitation-development. The *contiguum* approach incorporates the coexistence of short and long-term activities and different geographical dynamics.

This approach is even more justified during natural disasters, where it is important to consider differences in needs and to be able to offer humanitarian aid that goes beyond the emergency phase in order to define a coherent long-term strategy.

The *contiguum* approach is also essential in slow onset disasters where sustainable solutions should be implemented for the populations to strengthen their resilience capacities, rather than short-term activities when a threshold is reached.

The *contiguum* approach recognises the simultaneous coexistence of different realities for the populations of an area affected by the same crisis, since certain groups may require an emergency intervention while others living in the vicinity may require a long-term intervention. As a humanitarian emergency organisation, SI is committed to responding to the urgent needs of populations and coordinating with the actors implementing long-term activities in the same area.

Moreover, SI is committed from the outset of an emergency intervention to defining its exit strategy allowing for optimal sustainability of its humanitarian action.

3. DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR)

In order to optimise the impact of its programmes and increase their relevance and sustainability, SI integrates a disaster and epidemics related risk assessment (climate, geological, hydrological) for its two main areas of intervention: WASH and FSL.

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) aims to minimise or avoid losses caused by natural or man-made disasters through the implementation of preparedness, mitigation and prevention measures while strengthening the resilience of communities.

Natural disasters exacerbate populations' vulnerabilities by the destruction of habitats, crops, food stocks and infrastructure, and the disruption of trade. They marginalise the weaker and most exposed groups even more, destroying means of production and basic services, and seriously threatening their income from regular activities³².

According to the IPCC experts³⁰, the forthcoming global warming should lead to a higher frequency of extreme weather events, representing major risks (health, environmental and economic) for millions of people in the Sahelian zones, the coastal and tropical regions subject to cyclones, and the unplanned and overcrowded urban areas. Adapting the living conditions of the most vulnerable populations to the effects of climate change is therefore urgent³².

Key principles of implementation:

- SI works closely with the populations using a **community-based disaster risk management** approach that strengthens the existing capacities of populations and local actors to cope with disasters and reduces the structural vulnerabilities in order to avoid that hazards turn into disasters.
- When action plans or disaster preparedness plans already exist at national or local level, SI works with the operating institutions to implement and strengthen the guidelines of these plans.
- SI is also committed to promoting to climate change adaptation in order to strengthen the populations' capacity for resilience (introduction of drought-resistant seeds, development of water retention techniques, etc.).

32 For more details, see the Position paper on [DRR - Disaster Risk Reduction](#) and the [4-pages leaflet on DRR](#)

33 For more information, see the IPCC report [Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation](#): http://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/special-reports/srex/SREX_Full_Report.pdf

The A.B.C.D. (*Approach focused on Behaviour Change Determinants*) is an anthropology-based approach for studying behaviour along with its psychological, socio-cultural and environmental determinants. The approach is used to design relevant and sustainable interventions for any type of crisis in post-emergency and development contexts. By studying the social, economic and cultural determinants, this approach allows understanding the causes behind practices and behaviour related to hygiene, sanitation, management and use of water, and food and nutrition.

In its current form, the approach focuses particularly on hygiene. The A.B.C.D. explores five key behaviours that are recognised as playing a key role in the reduction of waterborne diseases. Initially, the existing high-risk practices of a target population are identified and prioritised, after which the determinants that influence these practices at-risk are identified.

Justification:

- A.B.C.D. is first of all a practice that avoids the pitfalls of patronising and the assumption that health, and by extension disease, is perceived in the same way in all countries and cultures.
- The water, sanitation and hygiene interventions of SI aim to prevent waterborne diseases in order to reduce the mortality and morbidity of the target populations. However, several impact studies in West Africa indicate that an approach based solely on health messages is not sufficient. The existing methods need to be completed by the search for and the use of tools that populations consider «logical» in their daily actions in order

to achieve sustainable results.

- The same goes for the food security and nutrition interventions of SI, since the access of a household or a community to food depends on factors which are not always following the same logic as the technical expertise. The identification of these factors is important to reach those most vulnerable to malnutrition.

Key principles of implementation³⁴:

- SI identifies from the outset of an assessment the inhibitions and motivations of target populations in order to understand their actual reasoning and thus the success or failure of previous programmes.
- The activities and their related messages will incorporate this information to raise awareness, transferring knowledge and skills, and gather around a collective activity.
- The technical choices and the selected management system for new or rehabilitated infrastructures are taken from the dialogue process with the target populations. This allows them to understand the logic behind the practices and strategies they implement on a daily basis, and thus ensures the sustainability of the intervention.

32 For more details, see the [Manual - User guide of the A.B.C.D. approach and tools](#)

5. THE NUTRITIONAL PRISM

SOLIDARITÉS INTERNATIONAL does not implement activities requiring medical expertise to treat Severe and Moderate Acute Malnutrition. However, in contexts where acute malnutrition constitutes a short-term mortality risk, SI integrates nutrition-related sensitive activities for the **prevention of malnutrition**, in partnership with nutritional actors. These prevention or “nutrition-sensitive” activities focus on the underlying causes of malnutrition: access to food and health care, access to water, sanitation and hygiene³⁵.

Justification:

- In the countries where SI intervenes, each year one-third of deaths of children under five and 20 per cent of maternal mortality are due to acute malnutrition³⁶.
- 50 per cent of the cases of malnutrition are directly related to the environment and particularly to poor water quality and poor health and hygiene practices³⁷.
- Because of its expertise in both WASH and FSL, SI *de facto* integrates prevention of malnutrition by addressing the underlying causes of acute malnutrition.

Key principles of implementation³⁸:

- SI integrates nutrition from the outset of an assessment by collecting data on the prevalence of acute malnutrition, identifying its determinants and most at-risk populations.

- An SI intervention can have the objective of improving the quantity and quality of the nutritional status of the populations most vulnerable to malnutrition. This means the intervention can integrate the following:
 - **Nutrition specific activities**, for example the distribution of *Plum-py'Sup* and *Corn Soya Blend* to populations at-risk and more specifically children under two and Pregnant and Lactating Women, based on the 1,000 day window of opportunity of Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN).
 - **Nutrition sensitive activities**, for example promoting dietary diversity and hygiene practices, improving income and productivity of livestock and cultivation systems, enhancing access to WASH services (“WASH in Nut”).

Diarrheal diseases aggravate malnutrition because they reduce the capacity for absorption of nutrients, and, vice versa, those who suffer from malnutrition are highly exposed to diarrheal diseases. The **WASH in Nut strategy** aims to break this vicious circle by prioritising a “WASH minimum package” in nutritional centres (access to water and latrines, waste management), targeting “mother/caretaker - malnourished child” couples to receive WASH in Nut kits at home (water purification kits), and improving access to WASH services in high-risk areas and communities vulnerable to malnutrition.

35 Ruel, H. Alderman H et al, 2013. Nutrition-sensitive interventions and programmes: How can they help to accelerate progress in improving maternal and child nutrition?, The Lancet, 2013.

36 Black R. E. *et al.* Maternal and child undernutrition: global and regional exposures and health consequences, The Lancet, 2008.

37 Prüss-Üstün A. & Corvalán C. 2006. Preventing disease through healthy environments. Towards an estimate of the environmental burden of disease. WHO, 2006.

38 For more details, see the Internal Note: “[Malnutrition: what position for SI](#)”

6. THE COMPLEXITY OF URBAN AREAS

In 2008, the urban population exceeded the rural population for the first time. By 2050, according to projections made by the United Nations, 66% of the world's population, or 6.4 billion people, will live in urban areas, with a majority of youth and a growing number of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs).

In the future, the increase in global population will almost entirely take place in the urban areas of developing countries, which will extend both horizontally and vertically.

Justification:

- The poorest migrants, pushed by economic or environmental determinants (the rural exodus) or forced by security conditions, are concentrated in unplanned urban areas that are highly exposed to health risks and natural disasters, and prone to social conflicts.
- The potential negative impact of an increasing population density is much more important in urban areas than in rural areas (sewage treatment, waste treatment, etc.) with about 40% of the mortality rate due to pollution of the soil, air and water.
- Many major cities of the least developed countries are located near an ocean in tropical areas, well exposed to extreme weather events (cyclones, etc.) or the effects of underwater earthquakes (tidal waves, etc.). The nature of constructions, often concentrated in inappropriate and dangerous areas and built with basic techniques without considering the natural hazards, increase the vulnerability of the populations of these mega-cities to disasters of natural origin.

Key elements of implementation:

- Considering what is at stake, the specificity of interventions in urban zones is a priority area of research for SI in order to avoid a negative impact of its interventions in complex, heterogeneous and often multicultural contexts.
- Prior to any humanitarian action in a big city, SI needs to understand its social and economic fabric, generally more dense and integrating a lot more actors than in rural areas, with populations impacted by a crisis in different ways, having different capacities and different, sometimes contrary, needs after a crisis. A mapping of the stakeholders and their relationships, the local markets, and the infrastructure is made and updated according to the needs observed
- Knowledge of the actors and of the dynamics of an urban area allows SI to rely on their driving forces not only for the emergency intervention but also for starting reflection on the reconstruction process as quickly as possible.



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