Registration in Emergencies

Oxfam Practical Health Guide No.6

John Mitchell & Hugo Slim

REGISTRATION IN EMERGENCIES

John Mitchell and Hugo Slim
Rural Evaluations

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INTRODUCTION

This manual gives you a step by step account of how to prepare for and manage an emergency registration day using the Oxfam kit. Part One concentrates on planning and Part Two on the setting up and implementation of a registration. Part Three, the Annexes, deals with some special situations you may face. Part Four of the manual gives two examples of registration, drawn from Oxfam's experience of administering emergency relief in different situations.

Why the need for a kit?

A great part of Oxfam's relief work is concerned with the distribution of food and non-food items to large numbers of distressed people. Recent experience in famine and refugee crises has shown the importance of the accurate registration of affected populations. A good registration system in the early stages of a relief operation gives relief workers a better picture of the emergency situation and gives the people they are assisting confidence that the distribution system will be fair.

Experience has also shown that the initial registration of an affected population may be the only opportunity relief workers have to see the whole of their beneficiary population at one time. As such, registration is a good opportunity to gather additional information about people and to offer them extra services. Relief workers can screen for nutritional and health status, learn important demographic information and assess additional needs. Registration may also — but not always — be a good time to offer extra services such as vaccinations, doses of vitamin A and the distribution of non-food items.

The aims of the manual and the kit

This manual and the Oxfam registration kit will help you set up a fast and fair **'emergency registration system'**. Every relief situation is different and therefore the kit is designed to be as flexible as possible. In particular, the relief card has been designed to be adaptable and versatile.

The lay-out of a registration centre presented in this manual provides a model which can be adapted to suit your particular circumstances and surroundings. You will still have to improvise. The purpose of this manual is to indicate the main priorities you should consider when organising a registration, in order to ensure that it is fast, fair and trusted by the people you are assisting.

This kit and its manual are an addition to Oxfam's existing emergency kits for water, feeding and EPI which form the basis of our disaster preparedness capacity for responding quickly to relief situations.

The scope of the kit

The kit and the manual have been designed for four main relief situations:

1. A large, pre-planned relief operation aiming to serve a 'known' sedentary community.

2. A pre-planned relief operation aimed at mobile populations like nomadic groups.

3. A sudden relief operation aimed at 'unknown', internally displaced or refugee populations, characterised by a continuous flow of new arrivals.

4. A relief operation dealing with a sudden natural disaster such as a flood or an earthquake.

The kit and the model of **emergency registration** set out in this manual are for use in the early stages of a relief operation. Using this system will help you to get a fast and reasonably accurate **count** of the numbers of people you are trying to assist in your relief programme. The additional information recorded in the ledger (see pages 20, 21 and 22 on 'The ledger and the clerks') will also give some **simple demographic information** about the sex, age and household structure of the affected population. This information will help in planning and implementing an appropriate short or medium-term relief programme.

The limitations of emergency registration

Emergency registration is limited in two main ways:

1. It will not give you the means of identifying every individual on an on-going basis in long-stay refugee camps.

2. It will also not keep up with the social changes in an affected population such as births, deaths, marriages and separations.

It is therefore recommended that an emergency registration system should only be used for a maximum of six to nine months. For more complex, long-term situations a more detailed registration system will be needed, involving personal identity cards, photographs and more sophisticated cross-referencing and updating procedures.

PART ONE

PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Making a registration policy

Before setting up a registration system, think hard about the objectives of the relief operation; define the target population and decide on the best distribution system.

Do you really need to register?

Not all kinds of relief distributions need registration. It will depend on whether you are setting up a **'direct'** or **'indirect'** distribution programme.

A 'direct' system of distribution is one where the relief agency manages registration and distribution and gives relief items (food, etc.) directly to the individuals who need them. For a direct system, the relief agency must have a means of identifying individuals or families within the affected population so that distribution can be made on an individual basis.

An 'indirect' distribution is one which is managed by the beneficiary community. Relief items are handed over in bulk for the community to distribute among themselves through their own local groups. For this system a detailed 'agency-managed' registration is not necessary (see Annex One for 'Community-managed registration').

You will only need this registration kit if you are undertaking a 'direct' distribution programme and so actually want to see and count everyone in need of assistance.

Registration is an expensive process involving many staff, a lot of organisation and often a lot of effort, travel and time on the part of the beneficiary communities. Make sure you consider alternative distribution methods before choosing direct distribution and 'agency-managed' registration (see Annex One).

Choosing the unit of registration

Once you have decided on a direct distribution you must meet with representatives of the beneficiary population to choose the most appropriate unit of registration. You need to decide if it is best to give individual, family or household cards and how you will register vulnerable groups like orphans, unaccompanied minors and single adults.

In your discussions with community leaders try to get a clear understanding of the social organisation of the population in need and how best they should be registered. Make sure that you understand what they mean by words such as 'family', 'family head', 'household', 'father', 'brother' and 'sister'. These terms mean different things to different peoples. You should work with community leaders to decide which unit to register and who is the best person in that unit to act as cardholder. This may often be a woman and women's roles in the family should not be overlooked. **Try and hear their views.**

Following these discussions you should decide if a ledger is necessary and if it is, which way you should list people in the ledger (see pages 21 and 22 on 'The purpose of the ledger').

In some situations the beneficiary population may be made up of several different ethnic groups. It is important to separate these groups during the registration process and to assess whether they each need a different kind of registration unit to match their type of family structure.

Deciding on extra services and demographic data requirements

Registration may be the only time you will see all the beneficiary population together at once. As such it is a good opportunity for providing additional relief services and for collecting useful information about the status and prospects of the population.

1. Extra relief services at registration

The main relief services you can offer are health services like vaccinations, doses of vitamin A and de-lousing. Non-food items may also be given out — clothes, blankets, cooking pots, etc. By using the outside the registration area such as the clinic, hospital or therapeutic feeding centres.

2. Collecting information on the beneficiary population

Registration can also be a good time to collect information which can give you a better picture of the affected population and help in relief planning — see Annex Six. Nutritional and medical screening can be undertaken and simple surveys can be made to assess immediate and long-term needs (see page 29 on 'Extra services'). You can also gather some extra demographic information about the affected population. Decide what you need to know and fill in the empty ledger columns accordingly (see pages 20, 21 and 22 on 'The ledger and the clerks').

When deciding about these extra services and surveys be careful not to overload the system and thus slow down the registration process. As will be seen, speed is essential to an efficient registration. Data collection and medical services can slow down the process and may be more easily provided at another time or place. Only extra services which are particularly necessary should be offered on registration day or at a registration point.

3. Keeping information

Once demographic and health related information has been gathered at registration it should be processed, stored and protected. If possible, this should be done on computer at regional offices where it will provide the baseline data to monitor the impact of the continuing relief programme (see Annex Six).

Planning and liaison

There are two kinds of conditions in which registrations will take place; in some situations there will be plenty of time for planning, in others there will be very little time.

> 1. Pre-planned relief operations: there will often be enough time available to make reasonably detailed plans and to liaise with local authorities and leaders from the affected population. During this time you will be able to select a good registration site, choose staff and fix a date for the registration day.

2. Sudden relief operations: in refugee situations; in situations - involving the arrival of displaced people; or after natural disasters, you will have to plan quickly and may have to improvise on the spot. You may well have to plan everything the night before the registration must begin.

In any planning the three most important groups to work with are:
— the local authorities
— the beneficiary population
— the registration team.

Good liaison with these groups is essential. Each of them must understand the registration process, the way it works and the way in which it will improve conditions by making relief services faster and fairer.

1. Local authorities

The planning of any registration must involve liaison with local government authorities. Their permission will be necessary and they should be fully briefed. Specialist government assistance, for example, Ministry of Health help with any medical screening or vaccination, should be requested.

2. The beneficiary population

At all times, both before and during registration, you must make sure that **community representatives are fully informed about the registration process and its objectives.** They must be involved in its design, see that it is fair and agree that it is for the good of the community. In this way they will be in a position to explain it to other people and help in organising it. (See page 18 on 'The megaphones and the communicators'.)

In situations involving refugee or displaced communities, traditional social structures may have broken down and you may have to work with people to set up a new, temporary leadership. In crisis situations, literate and articulate people such as teachers, health staff, officials, sixth-formers and religious leaders often emerge as spontaneous spokespersons and managers. If you decide to work with these people make sure that they have the confidence of the people as a whole and are representative of all members of the community.

3. The registration team

Registration of large numbers of people will require large numbers of staff. The first priority is therefore to choose a good and trustworthy team and to brief them fully on the registration system as it is outlined in Part Two.

Staff selection

You will need three main types of staff:

1. Ancillary staff — guards/markers/shepherds.
2. Literate clerical staff — registration clerks.
3. Literate leadership staff — supervisors/megaphone staff.

(See pages 14 and 15 on 'Staff uniforms and job descriptions').

Where to find them?

You are likely to have a choice between two alternatives — 'insiders' selected from within the beneficiary population or 'outsiders' chosen from other areas. There are advantages and disadvantages of both which you should consider.

i. Insiders

The advantages of insiders are that they will be able to speak the same language as the beneficiary population, that they may know some or actually be some of the community leaders and that they will have an intimate knowledge of the customs and social structure of the affected population.

The disadvantages may be that they have a vested interest in cheating the system or may be under pressure to abuse it.

ii. Outsiders

The advantages of outsiders are that they usually do not have a vested interest in cheating the system and that you may know them already.

The disadvantages may be that they cannot speak the language of the affected population and may not know their customs and social structure.

Circumstances will dictate which kind of staff you can employ and whether or not you can get a good mixture of insiders and outsiders. The local authorities will often prefer you to use staff from local government ministries or people's organisations and you must make sure that these staff are fully included in your briefing sessions as outlined below.

Hiring staff

Once you have identified your staff it is best to recruit them on a limited contract basis with a cash salary if possible. Local wage rates can be used as a guide for salary scale. Registration staff will be working hard for long hours and this should be reflected in their pay.

Briefing session

Before you start to set up the registration you must hold a formal briefing session with all your staff. Even when conditions are extremely hectic, such a meeting will always be of great benefit.

In the briefing session you should make sure that everyone understands their role in maintaining the flow of people through the registration system. You should make sure that Supervisors, above all, have a clear understanding of how the whole system works.

(See pages 14, 15 and the rest of Part Two for detailed job descriptions with which to brief staff and Diagram 1 on page 11 for the plan of the registration site.)

Special training for ledger staff

Many of your staff may not be familiar with the kind of book entry — putting information into specific columns — needed for filling in the ledger. Take time to explain it to them and practise the recording system with them. Diagrams 2, 3 and 4 on pages 21 and 22 will help to explain what the ledger clerks have to do.

Setting up the site

After the briefing, your staff must set up the registration site or centre. It is good practice to involve all of them at this stage so that they can see the logic of the system (see Diagram 1 on page 11).

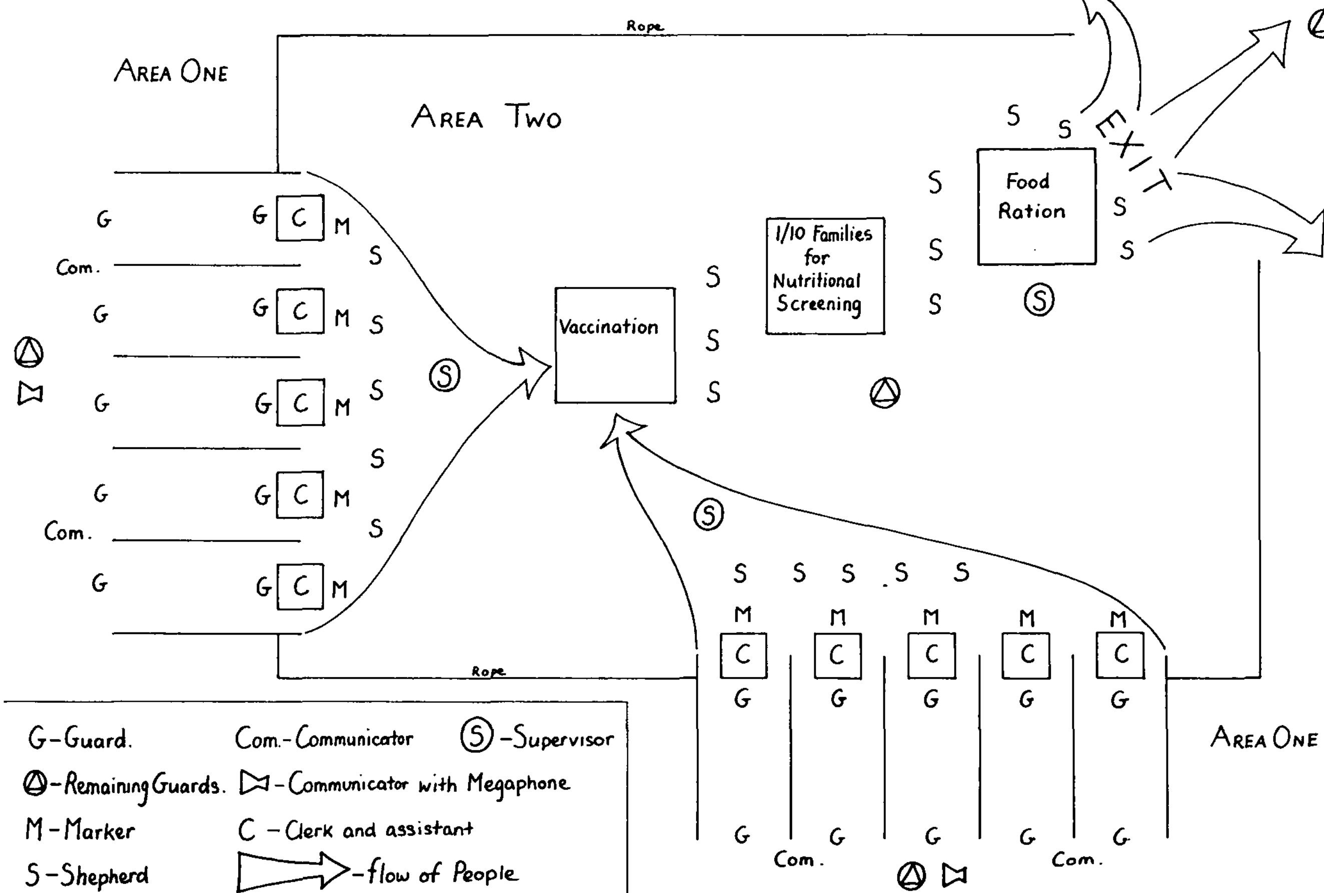
Trial run

Once the registration site has been set up, it is a good idea to involve all your staff in a trial registration session, making sure that people pass through the entire system from beginning to end. Make sure that every person in the team understands what everyone else is doing.

Issue of staff uniforms

At this point you should issue the uniforms included in the kit to all staff. The staff should understand that these uniforms are **for their use only** and should not be lent to other people. You might find it necessary to collect and count all uniforms at the end of every registration or distribution.

Diagram One : Example of Registration Site and Staff Positioning.



PART TWO

USING THE KIT TO SET UP AN EMERGENCY REGISTRATION

This part of the manual will give a step by step account of how to set up and run a registration day. The process is described by examining the purpose of each item in the kit and then looking at the role of the staff members responsible for the use of that particular item. First, however, it is necessary to look at the whole kit.

Contents of the kit

In a full kit you will find the following items:

1. Staff uniforms x 100.
2. Rope x 450 metres.
3. Megaphones x 2, plus Duracel batteries x 8 packs.
4. Stationery
   — registration ledgers x 10
   — carbon paper x 250 sheets
   — pens x 30
   — referral forms x 15 pads of 200 pages
   — tippex correction fluid x 10
   — 12-inch rulers x 10
   — calculators x 10
   — padlocks/keys x 2.
5. Relief cards x 2000.
6. Card clippers x 15.
7. Marker dye x 5 x 100g packs of Gentian Violet

The contents of each kit will be enough to set up an emergency registration for 10,000 people. Each item is essential for the basic registration system outlined in this manual. However, you may have some items on hand already and so may not need the whole kit. In this case you can order each of the seven major items separately from Oxfam.

There are some other large items which are necessary for registration but which it is not possible to include in the kit. These are such things as tables, chairs, buckets for dye and poles for tying the rope to. You will have to obtain these locally or improvise.

1. Staff uniforms and job descriptions

The first item in the kit is the 100 staff uniforms — simple white vests with the Oxfam logo. Registration is often busy and crowded. You will need a lot of staff to carry out various functions. The uniforms will help you recognise them easily and will give them the authority needed to carry out their jobs.

You will need six main types of staff. The number of staff you need will depend on the number of people you are registering each day.

The following section suggests approximate staff/population ratios based on a daily population of 10,000. However, these ratios are estimates and you may need more or fewer staff according to the nature of the beneficiary population and the site of the registration.

Guards

The role of the guards will be to cover all possible entry and exit points, supervise crowd control and check for dyes. (See pages 16 and 17 on 'The rope and demarcation'.)

You will need 40 guards for every 10,000 people registering each day.

Communicators

The role of the communicators is to use the megaphones to communicate with and organise people, mainly in Area One. (See page 18 on 'The megaphones and the communicators'.)

You will need six megaphone staff for every 10,000 people registering each day.

Registration clerks

The role of the clerks is interviewing, book entry and issuing cards. (See pages 20, 21, 22 and 24 on 'The ledger and the clerks' and 'The cards and the clippers'.)

There should be two clerks at each registration desk and so you will need 20 clerks for every 10,000 people registering each day.

Markers

The role of the markers is to mark each person with a dye immediately after registration to prevent them coming round again. (See page 28 on 'The dye and the markers'.)

There should be a marker at each registration desk so you will need ten markers for every 10,000 people registering each day.

Shepherds

The role of the shepherds is to guide people inside the registration compound (Area Two) from the point of registration to other extra services and to the exit. (See page 29 on 'Shepherds, extra services and exit'.)

You will need 20 shepherds for every 10,000 people registering each day.

Staff for extra services

You will need extra staff depending on what extra services (vaccinations, medical and nutritional screening, incentive rations, etc.) you are offering.

Supervisors

The role of the supervisors is to supervise all the staff and beneficiaries at each stage of the registration process.

We recommend a total of four supervisors:

- one for Area One
- two for the registration desks
- one for any extra services you are offering.

(See Diagram 1 on page 11.)

Coordinator

There must be one overall coordinator to take total responsibility for the registration — to monitor the progress of the system, to check on each stage of the process and to be responsible for liaising with and reporting to community leaders and local authorities.

Emergency registration is often hot and tiring work. There will be little time for staff breaks so the coordinator should make sure that food and drinks are brought out to staff during the day.

2. The rope and demarcation

The second item in the kit is 450 metres of brightly coloured nylon rope which you can use to mark out the registration site.

One of the most important aspects of registration is to separate people in the **three main areas**:

Area One — before registration (waiting)
Area Two — during registration (actual registration)
Area Three — after registration (exit and dispersal).

Site selection

You should consult the appropriate local authorities about the site for the registration. The choice of site may be limited but if possible the place chosen should be a large, flat open space with plenty of room to rope off the three main areas. If possible the site should also have some shade and a good water source. Registration involves a lot of waiting and usually involves all family members, including weaker people like children, the elderly and the sick. A separate space for pack animals and an isolated defecation area may also have to be organised away from the waiting area.

For registrations in urban environments, try to use stadiums or big buildings, with limited entry and exit points.

Marking out the site

You should use the rope to mark out each of the three areas clearly. Sometimes the site will have natural barriers like rivers, tree lines, hedges, roads and buildings which you can use to mark out areas within your roped system. (See Diagram 1 on page 11.)

The main purpose of laying out the site is to keep Area Two marked off as a **CLOSED AREA** and to stop people from Area Three mixing with people from Area One and trying to register twice.

Key staff — Guards

Reliable guards are essential for the efficient running of any registration process. They have four main functions:

1. The guards control crowds and ensure that people are organised into appropriate groups in Area One (see Annex Two).

2. At the entrance to Area Two the guards check that people entering are not already marked with dye from a previous registration.

3. At the entrance to Area Two they also act as a 'tap' and control the flow of people from the waiting area (Area One) into the registration compound (Area Two). This 'tap' function is vital. If the flow of people is too fast, Area Two will become crowded and registration clerks will be flooded. Such overcrowding can easily get out of control and create panic and confusion. On the other hand, if the guards' 'tap' is too slow the whole process will be running too slowly and the registration will take too long. People in the waiting area will then become impatient and lose confidence in the system.

4. The guards stop people mixing between Areas One, Two and Three. All other local people who are non-beneficiaries should also be kept well away from all three areas.

One of the most important aspects of the registration process is to regulate the flow of people through the system. As such, supervisors from Areas One and Two should be constantly checking on the flow of people and advising the guards accordingly. (See Diagram 1 on page 11 for positioning of guards.)

3. The megaphones and the communicators

The third item in the kit is the two megaphones.

The megaphone staff's primary role is to talk to and organise the crowds waiting in Area One. Without clear communication and good organisation at this point a lack of confidence may develop and fear and panic may set in — see Annex Two.

Although there are only two megaphones in each kit, it is recommended that there should be six communicators for every 10,000 people. Using a megaphone all day is hard work and the communicators should take it in turns. The four communicators who are not using the megaphone should work with the Area One supervisor and circulate amongst the waiting people answering questions and dealing with problems.

Key Staff — Communicators and Area One supervisor

Communicators have two main functions in Area One:

1. They should be working with community representatives in organising people into the appropriate groups for registration — villages, family units, vulnerable groups, etc. They should also be helping them to screen out 'cheaters'. (See Annex Three on 'Cheating'.) As soon as possible, people should line up and sit down in their respective groups. (See Annex Two on 'Crowd Control'.)

2. Communicators should also inform the people who are waiting about the purpose and details of the registration. This will include information about the system itself and the importance of the card and its future use. They should also give progress reports as the day goes on, telling people when their turn will come and also telling them where the water source is located and what extra services are available.

The **Area One supervisor** should control the guards and communicators in Area One and should be the main liaison officer with the beneficiary population. The supervisor will work closely with community representatives in identifying, screening and organising the people eligible for registration. The supervisor and community leaders should pay particular attention to checking that non-beneficiaries such as local townspeople are not entering the system.

Actual registration

When the beneficiaries are called from the waiting area in Area One, they pass through a guard's checkpoint and enter the closed compound of Area Two (see Diagram 1 on page 11). Here they come straight to a registration desk where two clerks are seated. This is **the actual moment of registration,** when the registration clerks interview beneficiaries, write down their details in the ledger and issue a relief card.

The registration clerks have two main roles — book entry and card issue.

4. Stationery: the ledger and the clerks

The fourth item in the kit is the ledgers and accompanying stationery.

The clerks should write the serial number of each new card into the left hand column of the ledger, interview the beneficiaries and enter their details into the appropriate columns of the ledger. (See Diagram 2 below for column headings.) It is essential that the clerks actually see everyone whose name and details they enter in the ledger. We recommend that one clerk interviews while the other one writes.

Five column heads on the right side of the ledger are empty so that any additional information necessary to the relief operation may be added. You might need to use these columns for an address of some kind; for details of mother tongue and ethnicity; or for details of household composition or personal status in terms of single parents, grandparents, other single adults, unaccompanied minors, etc.

Diagram Two : The Empty Ledger.

SERIAL NUMBER	DATE	NAME	HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD	SPOUSE	OTHER ADULTS	SEX		AGE								
						M	F	<5	6-16	>16	>45					

The purpose of the ledger

The ledger is the 'anchor document' of any registration. It has two main functions:

> **1. Cross-referencing** — At future distributions the ledger can be used to check the person presenting a relief card. The serial number on the card can be checked in the ledger and cardholders can be tested about details of their families to check they are not cheating. Cross-referencing can also be used in other relief programmes such as vaccination programmes. Here the ledger entry could be used to check how many children under five the cardholder has.
>
> **2. Demographic data source** — The second function of the ledger is to provide relief workers with a basic demographic profile of the affected population by age, sex, household composition, tribe and location. This information will help with the planning of additional relief programmes (see Annex Six).

Do you always need a ledger?

Filling in the ledger is the slowest part of any registration. Sometimes you may already have good 'lists' of the affected population compiled by local authorities or the beneficiaries themselves. If these lists are accurate then you can use them as the 'anchor document'. You can issue relief cards according to these lists by adding the card number beside each name on the list. This will make the registration process much quicker.

These lists will then act as a cross-reference to the cards but they will probably not contain detailed demographic information.

You must decide what kind of anchor document you need for your programme.

Ledger entry

There are two main ways to register groups of people in the ledger — individually or in summary form:

1. Individual entry — Diagram 3 shows an example of registering a family individually. The name of every family member is written down and their details are entered on separate lines.

Diagram Three : Individual Entry.

SERIAL NUMBER	DATE	NAME	HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD	SPOUSE	OTHER ADULTS	SEX		AGE				FAMILY SIZE
						M	F	<5	6-16	>16	>45	
A13992	16·9·89	MOHAMED MOUSSA	✓			✓				✓		
		SOPHIA SAYED		✓			✓			✓		
		HASNA ABDUL		✓			✓		✓			
		FATIMA MOHAMED					✓	✓				
		ABDU MOHAMED				✓		✓				
		KHADIJAH OSMAN			✓		✓				✓	6

2. Summary entry — Diagram 4 shows an example of registering the same family in summary form along one line in the ledger. Only the name of the household head is entered and details of the family composition are summarised in each column.

Diagram Four : Summary Entry.

SERIAL NUMBER	DATE	NAME OF HOUSEHOLD	HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD (SEX)	SPOUSE	OTHER ADULTS	SEX		AGE				FAMILY SIZE
						M	F	<5	6-16	>16	>45	
A 13992	16·9·89	MOHAMED MOUSSA	M	2	1	2	4	2	1	2	1	6

Individual entry obviously takes much longer and will slow down the registration. However, it will give you more specific information about all the individual people being registered. Summary entry is faster but will only give you general information about the kind of population being registered.

Summary entry is adequate for most short-term emergency relief programmes which only intend to focus on a community for six to nine months. However, when registering a displaced or refugee population which could need assistance for a much longer period of time, full individual entry is recommended as essential.

Carbon paper and copies

There is carbon paper in the kit so that a duplicate can be made of every page in the ledger. This second copy can then be taken out of the ledger and stored in a separate place nearby or at the head office. If the local office has a computer it may be useful to transfer the information from this copy to computer and start collating particular demographic data from it. This data may assist in relief planning. For example, information on the number and location of children under five would help in planning any vaccination programmes (see Annex Six).

5. Relief cards and 6. Card clippers

Items five and six in the kit are the relief cards and the card clippers. There are 2,000 relief cards in each kit and 15 pairs of clippers.

When book entry is complete the clerks will then issue the appropriately numbered relief card to the head of the household. Before handing over the card the clerks should clip it to indicate the following:

1. Family size — this is very important because it will show the size of ration to which cardholders are entitled when they present their cards at future distributions.

2. Any other information which matches details now in the ledger and which you have decided should be readable from the card. (See page 26 on 'Coding the card'.)

Actual registration is now complete. Beneficiaries now hold a valid card which entitles them to a specific ration of relief services. In the registration ledger you now have a means of cross-referencing the card and identifying the holder. You also have additional demographic information (numbers, age, sex, household composition, ethnic origin, etc.) about the beneficiary population as a whole.

Speed

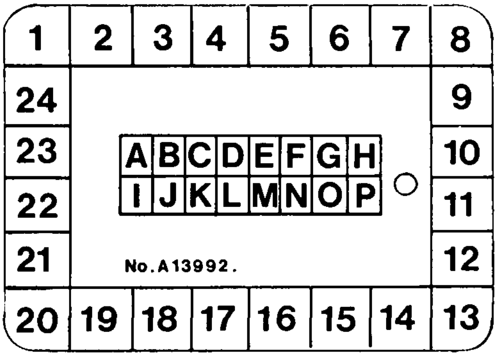
The speed of the whole registration process will depend on how fast the questioning, ledger entry and card issue can be carried out. Problems will always occur from time to time during recording and card issue. The **supervisors** must be on hand to answer questions from the clerks and make immediate decisions about eligibility so that the registration process is not held up.

Clipping the card

The card is marked by clipping it to make a hole in it, and the place where the hole is made indicates demographic details or information on relief services received. A pair of clippers should be at each registration desk and at each point where extra services are being distributed. Cards should **only** be at registration desks — a sequential set of 200 at each desk. Clerks should be responsible for accounting for these cards. At the end of registration all unused cards should be collected by the supervisors. The clerks should prove that the number of unused cards collected plus the number issued adds up to 200.

The cards and the clippers are the most valuable part of the kit and must be kept safely locked away when not in use. A lock and key are provided in the kit. The hole made in the card by the clippers is a particular shape, not easily copied, so that distribution staff should be able to recognise cards with false holes.

The standard Oxfam relief card found in the kit looks as follows:



The only piece of information on the empty card is the serial number. It is now up to you to 'code' the card and so make it carry whatever information you need.

There are 40 boxes on the card — 24 with numbers and 16 with letters. You must decide which box relates to each piece of demographic information you need or to each service you are supplying. The card will be clipped on two occasions during registration — at the registration desk to record demographic information (family size, etc.) and at the extra services points to indicate relief services received (food, vaccinations, etc.). It will then be clipped at every subsequent distribution of relief services during your relief programme.

Coding the card

The example below shows how the card has been 'coded' to store basic demographic data on one part of the card and information about food rations and extra services on another part. In this case the number boxes (1 to 24) refer to the distribution of relief services and the alphabet boxes (A to P) indicate demographic details.

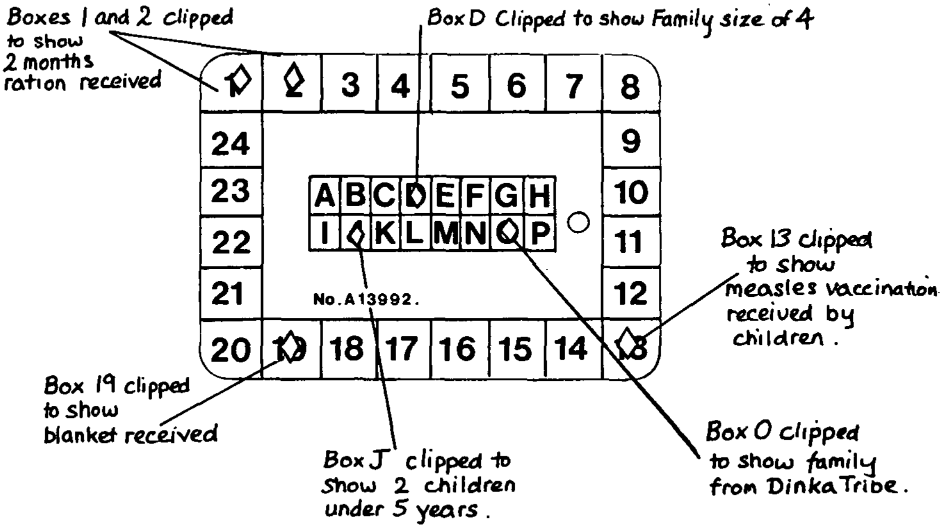


Diagram Six: A Clipped Card.

In this example, Boxes A to G have been coded to indicate family size — A being one and G being seven and above. Only Box D has been clipped. This means that the holder of the card has a family of four.

Boxes I to K have been coded to indicate how many children in the family are under five. (I = one child, J = two children and K = three children.) Only Box J has been clipped so that this family has two children under five.

Boxes O and P have been coded to indicate ethnicity. Box O has been chosen to mean the Dinka tribe and Box P to mean the Afar tribe. In this example only Box O has been clipped, showing that the holder of the card is a Dinka.

Box numbers 1 to 12 have been coded to indicate food rations. Boxes 1 and 2 have been clipped. This means that the holder has already received two rations for his/her family of four.

Box numbers 13 to 20 have been coded to indicate 'extra services'. Box 13 means measles vaccination and Box 14 means a blanket. They have both been clipped. This means that the holder and his/her family have received measles vaccination for those who need it (children and lactating mothers) and have each received a blanket.

Reading the card

Before the registration and in all distributions afterwards, relief staff should know the codes and so be able to 'read' any card from the way it is clipped.

The card on page 26 should tell the person reading it that the holder is a Dinka with a family of four (including two children under five), who have received two months' food ration, have been vaccinated against measles, and have a blanket.

7. The marker dye and the markers

The seventh item in the kit is the Gentian Violet marker dye.

The purpose of the dye is to mark people and prevent them from coming round again and registering two or more times. It has a limited effectiveness because it only stays on the skin for about 48 hours and can be removed by the determined cheater (see Annex Three on 'Cheating'). The limited time span of the dye is the main reason for trying to complete registrations in a single day or as quickly as possible. (For problems of new arrivals see Annex Four on 'New arrivals and returnees'.)

Using the dye

Before using the dye, two main issues should be considered. Is the dye acceptable to the beneficiary population and if so where is the best place to mark people with it?

1. Acceptability

As part of your planning discussions with community representatives it may be necessary to explain the idea of the dye to them and to find out if marking is acceptable to them or offensive to them. If it is offensive you should take time to test it with people and gain their confidence and acceptance. This will avoid problems on the day.

2. Where should the mark go?

Dye can be put on fingers, in the hair and on the inside of the ear. However, the best part of the body to mark is the finger, concentrating on the nail. This is less intrusive and avoids staining clothing and splashing dye on people's faces.

Making up the dye

The dye in the kit is Gentian Violet. It comes in a concentrated crystal form and should be diluted with water. The recommended strength is a 2% solution — one part Gentian Violet to 50 parts water. One 100g pack should therefore make 5 litres of dye solution. The dye dissolves better if alcohol (ethanol) is added. It should be added at a ratio of 10% — you will need half a litre of ethanol for every 5 litres of dye solution.

You will need a strong container in which to mix and hold the dye. One container of dye should be placed at each registration desk.

Key Staff — Markers

The markers must stand next to the registration desks (see Diagram 1 on page 11) and promptly mark **every person in the family** once they have been registered and collected their card. Markers are likely to get splashed with dye and should therefore be given aprons if possible.

Shepherds, extra services and the exit

It is up to you to decide what extra services you can provide (see page 5). However, you should remember that registration is often a tiring and time-consuming process both for the beneficiary population and the registration staff. Therefore you should be careful not to overload the system with extra services or detailed surveys. These can slow down the whole process and are not always necessary.

After people have been registered at the desks they will move through into the main part of Area Two. It is here that any extra relief services (food distributions, vaccinations, etc.) or any nutritional screening or simple surveys can be made (see Diagram 1 on page 11).

Extra services as an incentive

It is often a good idea to use your extra services as an **incentive**. Giving an additional food ration or some non-food items after registration has three advantages:

1. It encourages people to come to the registration.

2. It rewards people for making the journey and for waiting at the site.

3. It validates the registration system immediately by proving that the card works straight away.

People will only be encouraged to register if they are aware of what is on offer, so it is important to inform the beneficiary population about these incentives well in advance of registration.

Key Staff — Shepherds

The role of the shepherds is to guide the newly registered cardholders from the registration desks to the extra services on offer in Area Two (see Diagram 1). It is vital that distribution of these services is confined to the closed compound (Area Two).

Exit

After the distribution of extra services, other shepherds must guide the beneficiaries to the exit point from Area Two and out into Area Three from where they must leave the site. Guards in Area Three must make sure that people disperse and do not wait in Area Three or return to Area One.

ANNEX ONE

COMMUNITY-MANAGED REGISTRATION

If relief agencies are able to implement 'indirect' distributions through community leaders, full agency-managed registration is not necessary. These communities can register themselves and distribute amongst themselves.

When community-managed registration is best

This kind of community-managed registration or 'self-registration' should be encouraged where possible and is particularly appropriate in the following situations:

1. Where relatively small, intact communities are receiving relief distributions.

2. Where there is a 'clash of cultures' between the values of the affected population and the organisational requirements involved in emergency registration. Some communities find it impossible to relate to the processes inherent in emergency registration. Such ideas as regular attendance, marking, queuing, counting, individual identification and single rather than group hand-outs are unacceptable to them. Cultural difficulties of this kind frequently occur with nomadic people (see Annex Five).

Co-operation with the community

The main principle of community-managed registration is the devolution of responsibility for registration and distribution to the affected communities themselves. Communities register and distribute according to their own principles and values and through their own group structures.

In any 'indirect' relief operation the relief agency will only be giving food in bulk and monitoring its impact in general terms. The agency will not be registering, distributing or targeting relief items. As such it is vital to have good contacts and close communication with the recipient community.

It is essential to work closely with community leaders and make sure they explain their method of registration and distribution. The relief agency must understand the system being used by the community and must have a network of 'contacts' who report on the process in some way and provide a basis for monitoring and accounting.

Advantages of community-managed registration:

1. Affected communities will not have to adapt to new systems of registration and distribution imposed by outsiders, which are often inappropriate for and alien to their lifestyle and values.

2. Participation in the distribution of relief supplies maintains the dignity and independence of the affected population and recognises their group structures and social values.

3. Self-registration is more cost effective, easier to organise and does not require the large numbers of staff and amounts of materials involved in full agency-managed registration.

Disadvantages of community-managed registration

1. Monitoring and accountability are more difficult. The relief agency has to take on trust that community leaders are registering all the people in need and that all groups are being represented. To monitor registration figures presented by group representatives, spot checks or dwelling counts could be used to make comparisons (see Annex 4).

2. There is no quick access to detailed demographic and health-related information about the whole community as there could be on a full, agency-managed registration day.

A comparison of agency-managed and community-managed registration:

Factors	Agency-managed registration	Community-managed registration
Sudden, mixed population with no common social structure.	Can set up temporary system of social organisation, identification and entitlement fast.	Few social structures exist and so cannot be drawn on for rapid registration.
Accessible communities with social structures intact.	Involves temporary duplication or replacement of existing social organisation.	Can use existing social organisation and leadership to register people in an appropriate way.
Reaching marginalised people. (Equity.)	Aims to register all individuals on basis of need as perceived by agency and so avoid local social bias.	May consolidate social bias against marginalised people and favour the less needy.
Administration and management.	Requires a lot of staff, equipment and expense from agency. Needs time and cooperation from people to learn new system.	Needs fewer staff, etc. Is cheaper but needs good communication between agency and community.
Cultural.	Involves imposing temporary novel structures and makes equity and entitlement dependent on agency's criteria.	Uses local social organisation and traditional ideas of equity and entitlement.
Other opportunities.	Provides occasion for agency to see community in detail and provide other services and gather information.	Less intervention from agency. No reason for all people to be present and so less opportunity to provide services and gather information.

ANNEX TWO

CROWD CONTROL

Crowd control is an important element at all stages of the registration process but is most important during the waiting period in Area One. It is here that many desperate and anxious people may be gathered who will need constant reassurance. The people waiting must have confidence and trust in the registration system.

The main reasons for a crowd to get out of control are as follows:

— if they feel that they do not know what is happening;
— if they think that what is happening is unfair;
— if they feel that time or food is running out;
— if there is no internal organisation in the crowd.

The main ways to prevent a crowd from getting out of control are as follows:

1. Working closely with community leaders to organise people into small, recognisable groups like villages, clans, families, etc. Sitting people down in orderly lines in these groups.

2. Giving clear and regular messages to the people waiting, telling them how each stage of the registration system will work.

3. Giving people regular updates on how the system is progressing so that they know how long they can expect to wait and when their turn will come.

4. If possible, arranging that people who are waiting are able to see for themselves that the system is working fairly and quickly. Involving community leaders in the monitoring of the process is helpful.

5. Dealing quickly with any case of cheating or disorderly behaviour. Such cases should be firmly dealt with by staff and community leaders.

ANNEX THREE

CHEATING

There are a variety of ways in which people can 'cheat' the system at registration. It will be impossible to stop cheating completely but you should be aware of the main ways of cheating:

1. Multiple registration — where people come round the system again and re-register for a second or third time.

2. Members of the beneficiary population may 'hire' local non-beneficiary children and pretend they are their own children on registration and distribution days.

3. Leaders of the beneficiary communities may 'hire' people from other beneficiary groups, who will pretend to be members of their group and so inflate the numbers registered.

4. Members of the beneficiary population may bribe registration staff to inflate family numbers or give out extra cards at the registration desks.

5. Staff corruption — where registration clerks or supervisors take cards for themselves. They then pay families to go to distributions and use the cards to get rations for them; or they may sell the cards to local merchants, who do the same.

Most of these methods of cheating create 'ghost' registrations in the ledger which exaggerate the numbers in the affected population. You should not expect to stop all cheating but it is possible to limit it by the following precautions:

1. Registering all the beneficiary population in one day and in one place, making consistent use of the marking dye.

2. Being careful when selecting staff. Making sure staff have other incentives (payment, motivation and involvement) and so do not need to resort to corruption.

3. Consistent vetting of people waiting in Area One and constant vigilance of staff and beneficiaries in Area Two.

4. Making an effort to gain the beneficiaries' confidence in the system. The more they trust the system the less they will feel the need to abuse it.

ANNEX FOUR

NEW ARRIVALS AND RETURNEES

In most relief programmes, people will be arriving and departing, especially in refugee camps or in relief programmes dealing with displaced people. Both situations may involve 'new arrivals' and 'returnees'. Special attention should be paid to both groups but particularly to new arrivals, who may present the most problems.

New arrivals

When new people arrive they should be registered according to the registration policy and join the programme in the normal way. However, there are two ways in which new arrivals can create a problem — 'multiple registrations' and 'mixing'.

1. Multiple registrations

Multiple registrations happen when previously registered beneficiaries pretend to be new arrivals and register a second or third time. This problem is a major one and can lead to thousands of 'ghost' registrations.

There is no easy way to prevent this kind of multiple registration without a comprehensive personal identification system. The Oxfam kit does not provide this so the only way to keep checks on ghost registrations is by 'spot checks', 'dwelling counts' and re-registrations.

2. Mixing

Mixing happens when new arrivals enter the camp without registering and so become mixed up with the registered population.

This problem is an organisational one. It will be more difficult to find and organise new arrivals if they go straight into the camps and mix with the registered beneficiaries.

The main way to stop the mixing up of registered beneficiaries and unregistered people is therefore to set up a single registration point outside the camp area. New arrivals can then be dealt with separately in advance of any confusion.

Types of mis-registration

Multiple registration and mixing give rise to two kinds of mis-registration. Multiple registration means that more names are registered than actually exist so that the ledger is full of 'ghost' registration. Mixing means that the camp is full of unregistered newcomers so that there are more people in the camp than there are names in the ledger.

Checking the extent of mis-registration

There are two main ways of estimating the population of a camp — spot checks and dwelling counts.

1. Spot checks

Spot checks involve an actual head count and are best carried out at unsocial hours like midnight or dawn when the majority of people will be in their houses. You will need a large number of staff to go round counting every person.

Spot checks may not be appropriate in every situation as numbers may be too great. They also involve the invasion of privacy and may be considered to be excessively authoritarian.

2. Dwelling counts

Dwelling counts are less intrusive but often less accurate. You should estimate the average number of people in each house (tent, tukul, etc.), count the number of houses in the camp and then multiply one by the other to estimate the population.

Re-registering as a solution to serious mis-registration

Both these methods will give you a reasonable estimate of the total number of people actually living in the camp. You can then compare this estimate with the total figure in the ledger. If the ledger figure is very different to your estimate, you should consider re-registering.

Re-registering means re-counting. It will mean organising another registration day or reviewing the community-managed registration system that has been set up. Frequent re-registering should be avoided. Lots of 'new' figures often lead to a lack of credibility and affects relief planning and donor confidence. Constant re-registering also confuses and frightens beneficiaries and undermines their confidence in the relief system. You should only consider re-registration as a last resort.

Returnees

Returnees are usually of two types — refugees or displaced people who are returning home or people who are no longer eligible for programme aid. When people return home or leave your programme you must remember to do two things:

1. Collect and destroy their relief cards and so prevent the cards being sold on to other people staying in the programme area.

2. Cancel their names and serial numbers from the registration ledger.

Returnees often receive a parting distribution of some kind —food for the journey or agricultural inputs. These last distributions provide a good opportunity to collect people's cards and the distribution can be made conditional on the handing in of cards.

ANNEX FIVE

REGISTERING NOMADIC POPULATIONS

Nomadic populations present special problems for the registration and the distribution of relief items. Their most distinctive feature is their mobility. Because of their mobility a number of things must be considered in any programme aiming to register and distribute to a nomadic population:

1. As a highly mobile population they are often able to register at several different sites in any one programme and multiple registration is a major problem. It is therefore **essential** to register nomads in a single day — either in one place or at several sites each more than a day's walk away from any other.

2. Family structures are often much more complex among nomadic communities. The 'family' is often very large and although it is spoken about as a single unit, is often split up into smaller units which live in different areas. This will make your choice of registration unit complicated.

3. Nomadic people often have collective attitudes to ownership and rights. This often makes individual targeting almost impossible. It is often best to choose 'indirect' forms of distribution (see Annex One), in which case individual registration will not be necessary.

4. During the rainy seasons, most nomadic groups are more spread out than usual and take their animals to distant grazing lands. It is therefore best to register nomadic populations in the dry season when they regularly congregate at well-known water points.

5. Nomadic groups are often very independent and do not respond well to highly organised registration and distribution systems. Relief interventions which try and insist on nomadic groups attending at particular times and places seldom work.

6. Nomads often have a particular view of relief camps. Those groups that are still mobile and 'on their feet' tend to view camps as a resource centre in which they should 'stake a claim' but around which they can continue to lead a traditional life-style. Only selected members of their community will actually stay in the camp but these people will be expected to act on behalf of the floating community around it. This leads to a special idea of **'registration by proxy'** whereby nomads in the camp expect to represent others not actually present and to be able to register them and get food for them.

All these factors mean that any registration system for nomadic populations should be loose and flexible and well-researched. All the evidence suggests that a system of 'community-managed registration' (see Annex One) should always be a first choice for a nomadic community which is still 'on its feet'.

ANNEX SIX

USING REGISTRATION INFORMATION

As outlined in Part Two, two types of information can be obtained at registration — demographic data collected in the ledger (see pages 20, 21 and 22) and health-related data collected from on-site surveys (see page 6). In the planning stage for a registration you should have decided what kind of information is relevant to your programme (see page 1).

Having this information to hand will help in targeting and monitoring your relief programme. The data collected at the registration day can be used as the baseline data for your relief programme and represents a 'snapshot' of the affected community on day one. The information available in this early 'snapshot' allows you to do two things:

1. Programme planning

Demographic and health-related data collected at registration should help you to start targeting your relief programme appropriately from day one. When this data is processed, detailed relief planning for food commodities, logistics requirements and health and nutritional intervention can begin.

For example, from registration data you can plan food requirements and food movements over a period as follows:

If you register 65,000 people, they will each need a grain ration of 15 kgs per month. This is a total sum of 975 metric tonnes of food per month, which will require 195 trips by 5 mt trucks.

2. Monitoring programme impact

By using registration data as a base, you can monitor the impact of your relief programme by seeing the difference between the 'snapshot' taken at registration and any surveys you carry out during the programme. Comparing day one registration data with later programme data will give you a 'moving picture' of people's condition and the impact of your relief operation.

For example, using registration data you can compare nutritional figures over time or monitor the attendance rates at your distributions. If you have registered 65,000 people and over the months the number of rations being distributed drops to 59,000 to 54,000 to 52,000, you can start to look at reasons for this. The reasons might be seasonal; they might be related to falling need; they might be related to inappropriate rations or they might be related to difficulties in reaching the distribution point because of distance, fear or harassment; or it could well be that the initial registration was flawed in some way and the basic data is incorrect and inflated.

The misuse of registration information

There are therefore many ways in which you can use registration data for planning and monitoring. However, there are also many ways in which information collected at registration can be misused.

Information about the numbers of affected people in any disaster and details about their state of health can become **highly political information** and can be misused by relief agencies, donors, pressure groups, the media and local authorities. Such misuse of information often acts against the interests of the people in need.

Relief agencies may use population counts or health status figures out of context to exaggerate their own importance in an area and to seek more donor support which may not always be appropriate. The **media** and **donors** may sensationalise figures to embarrass and destabilise governments and create panic. This can often backfire and have a bad effect on the affected communities whom the government then see as the cause of the trouble. The **local authorities** can use relief data to find out information about affected communities. They can then use this information for their own political purposes.

All these groups often indulge in the 'numbers game' in which they play one set of figures off against another, usually out of context and usually for their own political concerns — which are seldom the same as the concerns of the people in need.

The recipient communities themselves also often inflate family size as a 'survival strategy' or in an attempt to gain a larger share of the distribution (in anticipation of the months when food does not arrive or is not distributed).

As a result, it is best to be careful with any population or health-related information you collect at registration and recognise that its main use should be an operational one — for programme planning and monitoring. If such information is given out, it should always be given out 'in context'.

PART FOUR

TWO EXAMPLES OF OXFAM EMERGENCY REGISTRATION

The following two examples come from Oxfam's experience in Ethiopia and Sudan. The first example describes a well organised agency-managed registration similar to the kind which is described in this manual and which can be carried out using the Oxfam kit. The second example shows how this kind of agency-managed registration and distribution is not always appropriate. Formal agency-managed registration is not always necessary and sometimes only confuses the situation. Systems of community-managed registration and distribution are often more appropriate and should be worked out with the community.

1. SOUTHERN TIGRAY DISTRIBUTION, ETHIOPIA, 1988

The people being registered

This example involved the registration of a mixed population of sedentary highland farmers and Afar pastoralists from southern Tigray. This part of Tigray was a conflict area and not directly accessible. Distribution therefore had to be made from outside Tigray, near a town called Alamata in neighbouring Wollo region. Oxfam registered a total of 73,108 people and made three distributions of dry rations in the following months.

The reasons for the relief operation

Following very poor rains in 1987, people in southern Tigray were presumed to be short of food. Farmers had little harvest and there was not enough pasture for the Afar pastoralists in the area. Precise needs assessment was not possible but the government and Oxfam identified people from two districts as vulnerable and in need of food assistance during 1988.

The reasons for registration

Oxfam staff realised that registration was the only time that they would see all the beneficiary population. Registration was therefore a good opportunity to gain two kinds of information:

— a precise head count of those in the area

— the nutritional status of children.

By registering every family member in person once, Oxfam aimed to set their food distribution programme on an accurate basis which did not rely on old population estimates and which had a picture of the nutritional status of the children in the area.

Oxfam also saw the one-off registration system as a way of setting up a fairer distribution programme which would aim to put food directly into the hands of the people in a politically difficult area. By having a single registration day, Oxfam also wanted to limit individual cheating and multiple registration. A single registration day gave people very little opportunity of registering twice.

The registration

Oxfam had time to choose a site with the authorities. This had good shade and a working borehole for water. They were also able to design a complete registration system using plastic family ration cards, which were printed and made up in Addis Ababa, and a ledger system for cross-referencing. Oxfam staff also had time to experiment with different types of dye for marking registered people. They eventually chose Gentian Violet, as the safety and availability of other dyes were not certain.

Oxfam registered people over a period of four days. One day was spent registering 17,867 Afar pastoralists from the area and three days were taken to register 55,241 people from the farming communities — an average of 18,413 people per day.

The registration procedure

The process of registration was as follows:

1. Oxfam sent messages through government and village officials in advance of the registration day. This gave each village and each clan a particular 'appointment'. It told them the place and the date for their registration and asked them to bring all their family members to the site.

2. People arrived early in the morning in village or clan units and sat down outside the registration compound where shade and water were available.

3. 'Megaphone men' constantly circulated amongst the waiting groups informing them of the details of the registration process and the importance of the card. They also gave them 'progress reports' on how the process was going, when their turn would come and what they had to do.

4. From this point people went into the registration compound which was a roped-off area with two groups of ten desks. At each desk was a team of two clerks.

5. Each family approached one desk where they were interviewed and asked for the names and ages of family members. The names were entered into a main register alongside the serial number of a card. The appropriate card was then issued to the family head.

6. Each member of the family was then 'marked' with dye on the finger to stop them registering again.

7. At this point one in every ten families was selected and taken off for nutritional screening.

8. 'Shepherds' then guided the families to the ration point where they were given a small 'incentive ration' (3 kgs per person).

9. People were then led out of the compound and encouraged to leave immediately.

Distinctive features of this registration

The most notable features of this operation were that it was pre-planned, highly organised and agency-managed. This particular type of registration was chosen by Oxfam because they had no direct and regular access to the communities in need. Community-managed distributions could therefore not be monitored and could be open to abuse in what was a politically difficult area. The following factors therefore made an agency-managed registration and distribution seem more appropriate:

1. The operation was on the border of a civil war zone and was aiming to serve people in an inaccessible conflict area.

2. The registration process specifically attempted to target all individuals within the affected area, so trying to meet needs in a very precise and 'direct' way.

In view of this, the following factors were in Oxfam's favour:

1. There was time for detailed negotiation and planning with government officials and community leaders who could then inform the villagers and clans of Oxfam's plans in advance.

2. There was time to find the necessary equipment for the registration such as rope, stationery, megaphones, staff uniforms, cards, etc. A good site was selected beforehand and marked out.

3. People were organised into very clearly defined social groups — villages or clans. This meant that 'appointments' could be made for each group.

4. Large numbers of local staff were available — about 150 in all. Many of Oxfam's senior staff were experienced in large-scale relief operations and had good local knowledge and contacts.

The disadvantages of this registration were as follows:

1. People had to walk long distances — particularly the Afar who sometimes walked for a week to reach the site.

2. The whole family had to come to be registered, even the children and the elderly.

3. Although 17,867 Afars were registered, only a few hundred returned for distribution in the months to come.

Conclusions: lessons learnt

This example shows that when registration equipment is in place, when objectives are clear and when staff and beneficiaries are well briefed, agency-managed registration can be an efficient process, particularly suited to assisting large numbers of people fast. It also shows that such a system has to be well planned and well co-ordinated.

However, this example also shows that agency-managed registration and distribution can be disruptive to people's lives and does not suit everybody. The fact that the vast majority of the Afar pastoralists never returned for distribution indicates that either they no longer needed food aid or that the system of individual registration and a single distribution point did not suit them. Reasons for their absence are not clear but it does show that pastoralists are often a special case and do not respond to agency-managed organisation in the same way as sedentary populations. This point is well illustrated in the second registration example.

2. MUNDARI RELIEF PROGRAMME IN JUBA, SOUTHERN SUDAN, 1986

The people being registered

The Mundari are nilotic, transhumant pastoralists who live mainly in the Terekaka district of southern Sudan. They rely predominantly on livestock herding. In recent years they have become increasingly displaced by the war in south Sudan. This has affected their traditional way of life and resulted in severe food shortages.

Although they were in great difficulties, the Mundari were still mobile and able to continue some of their pastoralist activities during this relief operation. They were not totally dependent on food aid or completely displaced from all their traditional areas.

The reasons for the relief operation

1. Since 1984 the Mundari had been reported to be losing livestock as a result of raiding during the civil war in the South. Frequent displacement resulting from war activities had also been putting increasing pressure on good pasture opportunities in their traditional areas.

2. In March-April 1986 displaced Mundari began to arrive around Juba. They formed a small camp on land allocated by the government which was about seven miles outside Juba. At this stage there was a camp of about 100 tents and an estimated 3,000 people were reported to be in and around the camp, many of whom were in poor physical and psychological condition.

3. A big increase in military activity near Juba then followed. The Mundari in the camp refused to stay outside Juba and moved into Juba itself along with thousands of other Mundari fleeing the increased military activity. A main camp was now set up in Juba with Oxfam as the lead-agency responsible for food distribution. The camp had some 300 tents and about 5,000 people.

The reason for registration

Oxfam staff wanted to see equal distribution of the limited and irregular food consignments to the area. They therefore tried to register the camp population and organise regular food distributions. In the following months they tried three systems of registration. The first two systems were agency-managed and linked to head counts, lists and cards. Both these systems failed and proved inappropriate. The third system was community-managed and seemed to involve less conflict and to work more smoothly.

First attempt — food monitors, lists and dwelling count

Registration of people in the camp was carried out by eight Mundari food monitors selected by Oxfam. Each monitor was responsible for a group of people under one chief. These eight monitors used their local knowledge of the people and a dwelling count to draw up lists and register people. They were given complete responsibility for this registration and used the tents as their basic unit of registration and identification.

It became apparent that this registration was inaccurate for two main reasons. Firstly, the combination of a changing military situation and a mobile pastoralist population made for a constant flow of people in and out of the camp. Added to this was a particular Mundari understanding of a relief camp — it was seen as a place to leave certain family members as a guarantee for relief food. Other family members went on with other activities outside the camp — mainly herding and gathering firewood for sale in Juba. (The latter became a big business.) However, it was clear that people outside the camp expected to be registered by their family inside the camp. Secondly, the Mundari monitors were under great social pressure from relatives to mis-register and draw up exaggerated lists.

Distributions based on this system often broke down because of fighting. During the ensuing confusion relief food was often stolen.

Second attempt — a card system

A ration card system was then introduced. Oxfam staff designed a family ration card and printed it in Juba. Again the tents were used as a basic unit of registration and one card was issued to the woman in each family. The women were then asked to bring their card and their children to a 'registration day'. The plan was then to count the children of each family on a single day using Gentian Violet as a marker for the day.

The registration day was a non-event as the Mundari refused to be counted for cultural reasons and nobody came. The card system then deteriorated as many children were presented under one card and as people came forward as new arrivals or claiming to have lost their old cards. It soon became clear that multiple card holding was a huge problem and the cards meant nothing.

Third attempt — distribution by elected group leaders

Because of the lack of accuracy and control in the previous systems, Oxfam staff decided to put the responsibility for food allocation and distribution into the hands of elected community representatives. Meetings were held and the role of the eight food monitors was changed. Food monitors would hand food over to representatives chosen by each of the eight groups. These group leaders then distributed food at their own discretion to people they represented. The monitors were no longer responsible for actual distribution but checked the accounts of distributions made by the representatives.

This indirect system of distribution was used for the rest of the relief programme and required no formal registration. Oxfam had no exact way of knowing who received food and whether or not the most vulnerable people received their share. However, the system seemed to work more effectively and with less confrontation.

Distinctive features of this registration

This example shows a situation where agency-managed registration and distribution was clearly inappropriate. Far from being fast and efficient it proved to be slow and chaotic. There were four main reasons why Oxfam eventually chose a community-managed system. Three of them were practical organisational considerations. The fourth was a more fundamental cultural issue which showed that Oxfam's relief values were at odds with the Mundari's.

The three practical considerations were:

1. Oxfam staff had to deal with an influx of pastoralist people who, although they were displaced were still able to pursue some of their traditional activities in the area as well as taking up new activities such as selling firewood. Asking people to be

present at registrations and distributions was therefore unrealistic.

2. Supplies of relief food were arriving in the area on a limited and irregular basis. Consequently, Oxfam were never in a position to plan a distribution cycle or guarantee food to people who were registered and waiting at a certain time.

3. The lists of beneficiaries which were drawn up early in the relief programme were not verifiable in any way and could not be used as an anchor document which could be added to and updated.

The fourth issue was the cultural one:

4. Oxfam's views on what constitutes a 'fair distribution' were different from those of the Mundari. As pastoralists, the Mundari had a particular idea of the purpose of a camp. It was not a place to stay on a permanent basis but rather a point at which certain family members could stay in order to maintain a claim on relief food for the wider family. These family members in the camps felt very strongly that they were representing others who were not there. As such, when registering and drawing up lists, the Oxfam food monitors often had to include many family members who were outside the camp. This kind of 'registration by proxy' was integral to the Mundari's understanding of relief entitlement but confused Oxfam's initial attempt to divide up relief food equally by only distributing to individuals they could count on site.

Conclusions — lessons learnt

Oxfam field staff were very aware of a clash of cultures in their dealings with the Mundari. Value systems seemed to be very different and an initial ignorance of this led to confusion. It became obvious that the agency-managed methods of registration and distribution used in Oxfam's first two attempts were inappropriate for the Mundari. Static procedures such as counting, lists, cards and a scheme of equal individual hand-outs did not work.

Oxfam's experience in Juba shows that registration and direct distribution on an individual basis is inappropriate to a nomadic population still 'on its feet' and still mobile. Changing to a devolved system of community-managed distribution, which did not require formal registration by Oxfam, met with a better response from the Mundari who then had access to food aid on their own terms.

This experience also shows that relief agencies should be encouraged to develop community-managed relief programmes in the future. This may not always be possible but should always be considered as a less interventionist and more appropriate way of providing relief.