



Humanity and Dignity Through Knowledge

A Ten-Year Vision

June 2005



Feinstein International
Famine Center

We have a vision of a future ten years from now in which famine, widespread violations of human rights, extreme suffering and crimes against humanity are held to be self-evidently unacceptable by states and their peoples. A vision in which nation states, and the international community, in all its manifestations, feel duty bound to act – and do act – to prevent and alleviate such abuses.

The Vision and Strategic Plan

In this document we present the vision that will guide the Feinstein International Famine Center for the next ten years. We explain how the Center will build on its current international status and expertise in combining research, teaching and institutional change activities. We explain how it will respond to opportunities for growth, and how the Center will achieve greater impact in alleviating suffering and protecting the rights of marginalized and vulnerable people affected by conflict and crisis. Integral to our vision is the systematic use of processes that help ensure that community-level needs and aspirations are understood and prioritized in the actions and policies of national and international bodies.

Our vision requires the Center to change and grow in six key interrelated areas:

- We will reshape our programs and enable more multidisciplinary and reflective approaches to research that optimize both the Center's and the University's collective expertise.
- We will further develop our existing expertise in institutional change and become a key resource for organizations wishing to adapt to an increasingly complex operational and policy environment.
- We will strengthen our teaching within the University and build the capacity of our academic partners overseas to offer quality and affordable courses on humanitarian issues.
- We will greatly improve our capacity to disseminate our research to a wide audience, from academics to policy makers to community-based partners.
- We will work strategically with a global network of individuals and organizations who share the Center's vision – as the hub of an international and diverse group of actors committed to making a difference in the most threatened and most marginalized communities.
- We will secure the future of our Africa-based work, and therefore enhance our capacity both for long-term engagement with local partners and for validating our research with communities in crisis.

In defining the way forward, the Center recognizes the non-linear, rapidly-evolving and highly politicized nature of the systems that affect those caught up in conflict and crisis. This is a challenging environment in which to work. Our ten-year vision and three-year strategic plan aim to strengthen the Center while also retaining its flexibility to respond to new challenges and new threats.

We invite our fellow faculty, our partners and collaborators around the world to join us in what we believe is a truly compelling endeavour.



Peter Walker, Center Director





Contents

Complex Political Emergencies	1
The Changing Face of Crisis	2
The Feinstein International Famine Center, 1996 to 2005	3
Drivers of Change	5
Defining Our Vision, Refining Our Mission	6
Making Change Happen	8





Complex Political Emergencies

The world of complex political emergencies, which so often result in humanitarian crises, encompasses a myriad of actors, value systems and political processes which affect, either positively or negatively, the lives of people caught up in them. Humanitarian agencies and aid programs are there, but so too are rights-based organizations that aim to protect people against gross violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, including crimes against humanity. In conflict situations, the institutions and practices of peace keeping are often present. These sit along side the actions of warlords, besieged governments and totalitarian leaders who do much to shape the environment of crisis and conflict. At

the community level, a diverse range of responses and operations are affected by the political economy and policy processes of the international aid community, which includes powerful donor nations. Driving aid policies within these nations

is a complex and interwoven set of domestic and foreign policies concerning security, trade, human migration and governance. This is all part of the world of complex political emergencies that continues to evolve, and must change, if we are

to better support the basic needs and future aspirations of those caught up in crisis.

In addition to the breadth and complexity of this world in terms of actors, attitudes and policies, there are also temporal factors to consider. Our work

seeks to understand and address vulnerability in its wider historical context, including prolonged

William Garvelink, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, USAID: *Unlike traditional academic centers, the Famine Center combines the expertise of practitioners and academics. The Center brings the results of its field research into the classroom and, most importantly, through evidence based policy and practice analysis, it engages directly with aid agencies and government ministries to help shape policies and programs for addressing humanitarian crises. Over the past five years, the Center's work has been highly influential in informing USAID's analysis of humanitarian and livelihood needs in Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Darfur.*

Our touchstone is the humanitarian imperative – the duty to alleviate and prevent suffering.

**Jeff Clanon, Director of Partnership Development, Society for Organizational Learning:**

I have worked with many organizations in both the public and private sectors on issues involving large scale, systemic change. Very few organizations have the combination of factors that are necessary to actually create and sustain the changes they aspire to achieve. These individual and organizational factors include an inspiring, clear, compelling vision; mature, competent leadership where the vision, not egos, drives behavior; committed, competent and credible staff who can work collaboratively and learn from one another; and the capacity of the organization to perceive and work at a systemic level.

Over the past six months, while working closely with the Famine Center's Director and staff I have observed each of these factors in action. I have never worked with a more committed group of people. Their vision for the Center is compelling, not only to them but to everyone I know who has seen it. [Center staff] relate to one another with a genuine sense of openness and respect, and listen to and integrate each others ideas and perspectives...the foundation of their work is a deep understanding of the systems and cultures in which they are working.

conflict, and policies and processes that vary in their direct and indirect impact from a few weeks to several decades. Our touchstone is the humanitarian imperative – the duty to alleviate and prevent suffering.

The Changing Face of Crisis

The post-Cold War period has been a turbulent time. There have been some notable achievements, such as the enactment of peace agreements in countries formerly at war, and the introduction of accountability mechanisms and good governance at country and regional levels. Selective progress in disarmament, demobilization and reconstruction efforts are definite successes. Many Asian and Latin American countries have rising human development indicators and flourishing

economies. However, these gains are offset by some formidable losses: the absence of a global Cold War peace dividend, the lack of progress in the prevention of new conflicts as well as the continuation of existing ones, and lagging progress in de-mining and post-conflict reconstruction. Africa remains a major cause of concern. In 2005 African countries comprise the bulk of the world's least-developed nations, and trends in basic human rights, security, nutrition, health and education indicate a growing and devastating economic and social isolation from the rest of world. In sub-Saharan Africa, 13 out of 52 countries are either recovering from or are still actively engaged in war.

Despite the clear need for more effective action, the will and capacity of the United Nations system and powerful western governments to prevent or intervene promptly and effectively in support of populations that are marginalized or at risk is still limited. Through their inaction they lend tacit support to repressive and ineffective local governance. While acknowledging that some so-called 'natural disasters' may be difficult to predict, the international response to conflict-related crises, massive rights violations and crimes against humanity continues to be unacceptably reactive. Repeatedly, the system dithers, prevaricates and stalls. The politics of the day – rather than fundamental human ethics and values – determines the priority given to a crisis in a given area. In the event of conflict and disaster, countries of limited economic or strategic interest to the West repeatedly fall off the global political radar until tens or hundreds of thousands of lives are affected or lost. Although the lessons from past mistakes are well known, the mistakes are repeated. On the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide Canadian General Romeo Dallaire wrote "*Looking at Darfur, seeing Rwanda*".

While the political will of powerful countries to intervene has often been in doubt, in the post 9/11 era a new wave of issues has emerged that threaten the core principles and effectiveness of humanitarian-driven assistance and protection. Long known and respected for their neutrality and impartiality, aid organizations working in conflict areas around the world are increasingly

misperceived as agents of western foreign policy and values. The surge in the politicization and militarization of aid assistance – a process driven by western notions of reshaping ‘failed states’ and rewarding ‘high performing’ states – raises serious concerns about the viability of future humanitarian activities and the very notion of truly democratic development. This applies as much to post-tsunami aid and to forgotten but protracted crises – in the Democratic Republic of Congo and northern Uganda – as it does to the high profile cases of Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan.

Given the increasing politicization and undermining of both local development and humanitarian action, we believe that now is the time to work with like-minded partners toward reforming the system and creating a more humanity-driven, effective and civilized global safety net for crisis-affected and disempowered people.

The Feinstein International Famine Center 1996 to 2005

In the late 1980s, Jean Mayer, the President of Tufts University, envisioned the creation of an academic center to address hunger at a global level. Building on the dramatic growth and enhanced status of the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy (FSNSP) at Tufts, plus increased recognition in the US of improving nutrition as an agenda encompassing a broad range of scientific disciplines and policy processes, the proposed International Famine Center aimed to expand Tufts’ investment and involvement in nutrition to a truly international level. In common with the multidisciplinary and holistic approach of the FSNSP, the International Famine Center was seen as a way to combine high quality research and teaching with policy reform. Collaboration with other schools, most notably the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, ensured that Tufts’

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well-known expertise in international diplomacy, governance and policy contributed to the activities and impact of the Center.

In 1996 the Center became a reality and soon attracted substantial grants from donors such as the United States Agency for International Development and the Andrew Mellon Foundation. Over time a portfolio of innovative research and academic programs was initiated, placing the Center at the forefront of new thinking and practice in the fields of crisis analysis and humanitarian action. Some of these programs created alternative, more holistic and pragmatic approaches and methods for problem analysis in crisis situations. They also field-tested new ways of working and used applied research with marginalized communities to drive policy change in national and international agencies.

The impact of these Center programs is apparent from the new disciplines, approaches and methods that have rapidly evolved from novel and sometimes radical ideas. In key areas of humanitarian action and political intervention, alternative approaches pioneered or championed by the Center are becoming the normal way of doing business.





For example, we are witnessing the emergence of public nutrition as a broad-based analytical approach to malnutrition in complex emergencies. Public nutrition combines population-based

analysis of nutritional risk and vulnerability with action-oriented strategies, including policies, programs and capacity development to address these vulnerabilities.

**Dr Ahmadu Babagana,
Director for Rural Economy and Agriculture,
African Union:**

The Famine Center has a wealth of practical experience, research findings and innovative ideas to support their approach to policy development and institutional change. We look forward to strengthening our partnership – which began in 1996 – for we share a vision of a world where the suffering of people is not tolerated and in which we work together to support the millions of Africans striving for a better future for themselves and their children.

and political processes that affect their lives, in order to move humanitarian action toward strategies that not only save lives, but also protect and enhance livelihoods.

We are observing the emergence of forced migration as a key concept in understanding the plight of refugees, those displaced within their own country, illegally trafficked labor and slavery.

There is a growing use of gender and generational approaches to better address rights violations during armed conflict and offer improved forms of protection, and to inform disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs for former combatants, including young boys and girls.

And increasingly, research findings are being linked back to state, commercial and aid bodies that drive change in the systems, policies and practices which adversely affect vulnerable communities. This approach is broadly known as institutional change.

Other areas of the Center’s work are still at the testing stage or have recently identified good field practices which need to be scaled-up. An example here is our research on micro-credit systems for refugee populations in Africa.

A third strand of the Center’s work comprises research on humanitarian policies and trends at a global level with a focus on conflict-related crises. These “here and now” analyses track and map the dynamics between humanitarian actors, from international donors to communities, and their responses to emergencies.

Since its inception, the Center has been committed to teaching graduate students – training the future leaders of organizations and institutions within the humanitarian system – and to the promotion of professionalism and research in this field. Four graduate academic programs have been created at Tufts: the Master of Arts in Humanitarian Assistance (MAHA); the Humanitarian Specialization of the Master of Science in Nutrition; Food Policy and Applied Nutrition (MSc. FPAN-HA); and the Certificate in Human Security and the inter-university Certificate in Humanitarian Skills and Field Practice (HSI). The Center contributes to all of these programs. In addition, the Center runs short courses and a visiting practitioner program to upgrade the skills and knowledge of field-level professionals and policy makers, and provide space for reflection and dissemination of experiences.



Drivers of Change

The innovative mix of research, teaching and policy change activities described above has established the Center as the only place of its kind – a place where academic programs, applied research and hands-on field practice influence policy and institutional reform across the broad agenda of complex political emergencies and humanitarian crises. Despite our successes, we recognize the need to increase our impact. This recognition is driven by four broad processes of reflection, learning and experience within the

Our analysis of the global political enterprise points to policies and interventions that are rapidly becoming less neutral and ethical, and more politicized and militarized.

Center and confirmed in discussions with our partners in aid agencies, local communities and sister academic institutions, as well as donor governments and institutions.

First, our analysis of the global political enterprise in 2005 points to policies and interventions



Disasters, the journal of disaster studies, policy and management, is the leading peer-reviewed journal in the field and has just released its count of the most frequently downloaded articles in 2004. In 2004, Famine Center staff and students authored five of the most popular 15 downloads, four of these in the top ten and two in the top five (positions two and three).

that are rapidly becoming less neutral and ethical, and more politicized and militarized. This trend must be reversed. Ultimately, humanitarian action needs to shift from being misperceived as a set of issues on the periphery of political thought, to a position where attempts to predict, prevent and respond to crises are prioritized, needs-based and accountable, both to donors and beneficiaries.

Second, our review of the Center's research, teaching and institutional-change activities highlight several key opportunities for strengthening our work, for harnessing our collective expertise, and for improving the way we communicate our research to the policy makers and practitioners we seek to inform. Ultimately, we aim to combine the highest quality research and teaching with institutional change.

Third, since the Center's creation in 1996 we have supported a team of researchers and policy advisers based in Africa, working primarily with the Organization for African Unity – now the African Union – and local research institutions. As a membership organization of African states, the new African Union promises to become a far more effective policy player than its predecessor, and is seeking our continued technical support.

Fourth, we have always worked through collaboration and partnership with others, but now we see the possibility of creating a much more committed and effective global network of researchers, teachers, advocates, practitioners and policy makers working as a coalition for effective change.



In addition to these four main drivers of change within the Center, we also welcome the major strategic planning processes that are taking place within Tufts University as a whole and the FSNSP in particular. The strong international, multidis-

The humanity of those who strive against great odds to retain family life and hope for their children's future is the driving force of our work.

ciplinary, policy-related and social engagement facets of these emerging strategies provide clear incentives for the Center to build stronger linkages within the FSNSP and with other schools in Tufts, including the University College of Public Service and Citizenship.

Defining Our Vision, Refining Our Mission

To help us focus on the future and produce effective strategies for change we have recently developed our 10-year vision, our 'big goal'. This is the world we want to see in 2015.



Our vision

We have a vision of a future ten years from now in which famine, widespread violations of human rights, extreme suffering and crimes against humanity are held to be self-evidently unacceptable by states and their peoples. A vision in which nation states, and the international community, in all its manifestations, feel duty bound to act – and do act – to prevent and alleviate such abuses.

Our vision draws on the dignity and strength of those who resist such affronts to their humanity. Every day we see examples of this in our research and practice in complex emergencies and with marginalized people. The humanity of those who strive against great odds to retain family life and hope for their children's future is the driving force of our work.

Our mission

Our mission frames the scope of the Center's work and flags key strategies and principles, and in so doing enables us to work toward the realization of our vision. Our mission has been refined over the years, and we will continue to adapt it as we move forward.

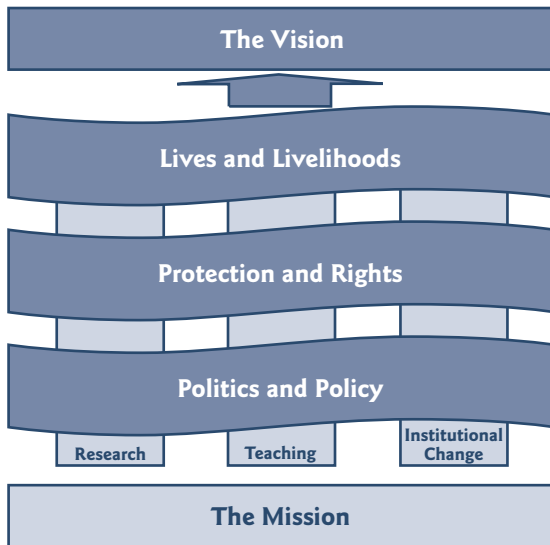
In our mission we promote operational and policy responses to protect and strengthen the lives and livelihoods of people living in crisis-affected and marginalized communities that are threatened by violence, malnutrition, loss of assets or forced migration.

We conduct research, education and institutional change activities in three areas, which broadly define our agenda.

Lives and Livelihoods: The promotion of sustainable livelihoods for groups recovering from crisis or vulnerable to violence, malnutrition, loss of assets, involuntary displacement and the effects of globalization.

Protection and Rights: Assistance to and protection of groups affected by conflict and extreme social, cultural and economic marginalization.

Politics and Policy: The politics, policy and practice of humanitarian activities at the international, national, local and community levels.



This diagram illustrates how our core themes and functions interlink, and how they are mutually supported by our mission to achieve our vision.

We will make a significant difference to the future of conflict and disaster victims.

The Center and its collaborative network will work toward its mission through a combination of innovative research, academic excellence and policy development. We will generate, disseminate and use field-derived knowledge to better understand the impact that crises, and the global responses to them, have on the lives of those at highest risk. This understanding will be applied in our teaching, in our change agenda with the aid system, and in our real-time field studies of major crises. We will make a significant difference to the future of conflict and disaster victims.

We will work globally as a network of committed individuals, and in partnership with national and international organizations, to bring about

institutional and policy changes that enhance effective policy reform and promote best practice.

We will support this vibrant community so that it values reflection and evidence-driven policy research, leading to practical advice, tools and ultimately change for the good. We will foster innovative thinking and practice in a manner conducive to the development of new knowledge, and ensure that knowledge is widely disseminated and used.

We value the dignity and humanity of all, creating a working and collaborative environment that is respectful, challenging and balanced.

The Center ten years from now

The future Center will be at the hub of a dynamic and committed network of academics, practitioners and policy makers who share the Center’s vision. This network includes the FSNSP and other schools at Tufts University, but also reaches out across the globe to encompass all those committed to working with us toward our vision. The Center will be a place where people at the forefront of new thinking on crisis response, humanitarian action and policy will wish to work, conduct research, reflect and share ideas with faculty and students.

The Center will build on its successes, and will be recognized as *the Center* in the US for research and education on crises and their humanitarian consequences. It will be respected

UNICEF: *There is a strong endorsement and vote of confidence on the part of UNICEF field staff around the world for the [Famine Center] health and nutrition course. The impetus for continuing this training has come particularly from Regional Emergency Officers and EMOPS (New York-based Office of Emergency Programs). The current head of EMOPS has become a particular champion for this training. Through the [Famine Center] Health and Nutrition course, UNICEF has developed a ‘co-facilitation’ approach that can be used as a model for other UNICEF training programmes.*



internationally for its multidisciplinary and creative approaches, and for promoting strong linkages between community-based research and policy reform at the highest levels. We foresee the Center becoming a key resource for a diverse set of users, from local civil society institutions to senior UN officials.

Making Change Happen

At present the Center comprises a small team of academics, practitioners and support staff who share a deep personal commitment to improving and professionalizing interventions to assist people in crisis and those affected by armed conflict. We recognize our strengths and achievements over the last ten years, but also realize that at times we have been stretched and overworked. This has stifled our ambitions to work collectively on cross-cutting issues. It has also limited our capacity to share our work and make best use of advances in communication. Consequently, our vision requires the Center to change and grow in six key interrelated areas (described in detail in our three-year Strategic Plan). Our desire to grow does not relate to dramatic increases in people or 'hardware', but more to a need to do business differently and more effectively.

People to teams, programs to themes: A new approach to research

We will reshape our programs and enable more multidisciplinary and reflective approaches to research that optimize the Center's and Tufts' collective experience. In common with the emerging strategies of Tufts, we see innovation arising in the spaces between disciplines. We have identified three main themes to capture the scope of the Center's current and future research, teaching and change agenda. Described in detail in the Strategic Plan, the three themes are *Lives and Livelihoods*, *Protection and Rights*, and *Politics and Policy*. We will retain and further strengthen our ability to carry out real-time research in crisis situations – a practice which has become a hallmark of the Center.

Institutional change: An integral component of all our work

Our analysis of the Center's impact on institutions demonstrates that impact is most dramatic and sustained when institutional and policy change processes are an integral part of research projects. Research designed jointly with multiple stakeholders, from communities to senior policy makers, helps to ensure that findings are trusted, understood and acted upon. We also understand the importance of professional norms and attitudes in shaping the formal and informal rules of institutions. Influencing future policy makers through research and education will be part of a long-term institutional change agenda.

We believe that proximity to vulnerable communities and humanitarian contexts is crucial for accurate analysis and meaningful partnerships.

The Center already tracks and analyzes the political economy of aid and the interplay between the domestic, foreign and security policies of western and other governments. We will complement this real-time research with structured and systematic change processes that affect the key actors in the institutions that impact crisis.

Teaching and education: Consolidating gains and working with African universities

We will strengthen our teaching within Tufts University and build the capacity of our academic partners in Africa and the US to offer quality and affordable courses in humanitarian-related issues. Part of this process includes improving our understanding of alternative teaching formats such as distance learning and self-taught courses, and providing long-term support to our Africa team.

Staying close to the action: Securing our day-to-day presence in Africa

We believe that proximity to vulnerable communities and humanitarian contexts is crucial for accurate analysis and effective partnerships. We will secure the future of our Africa-based team, and therefore enhance our capacity both for long term relationships with local partners and for validating our research with crisis-affected communities. The Horn of Africa region is home to many of the most marginalized and conflict-affected people on the planet. By establishing a new office in Ethiopia, we aim to be strategically positioned in the region and well placed to further develop our linkages with African partners. These partners range from community based groups to the African Union and UN agencies. Once our Africa office is fully linked and operational we will consider opening a second office in central Asia.

Effective communication: Disseminating the knowledge

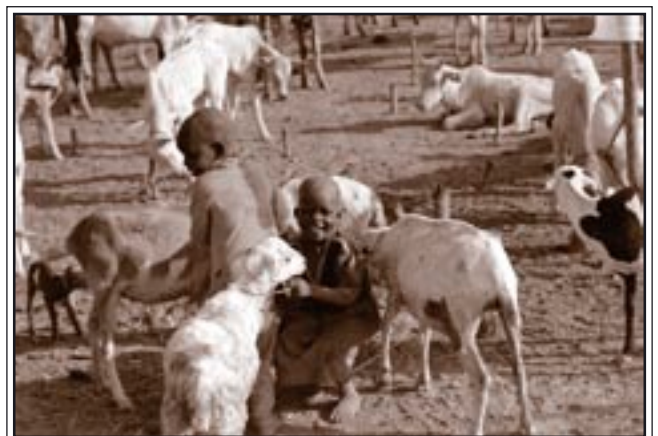
There is a clear need for the Center to develop a modern, collaborative communication strategy which uses the growing power of the Internet and global networks. We will seek specialist help in devising our communication strategy and ensure that we make appropriate use of new technologies and systems for sharing and shaping ideas and information.

Networking: Building a global humanitarian coalition

We will work strategically to create a global network of individuals and organizations who share the Center's vision – we see the Center as the hub of an international and diverse group of actors who are committed to making a difference for the poorest and most marginalized. We will build open teams that generate open knowledge, to be shared and used by all.

In our three-year Strategic Plan, we detail the initial phase of turning our ideas into action, and starting the process of putting humanity center stage in the response to crises.

Carolyn Makinson, Senior Advisor, Andrew Mellon Foundation: *The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation made its first grant to the Center in 1997, immediately after the Center was established. At that time, the humanitarian field lacked academic centers that studied humanitarian practice, trained humanitarian workers, and offered much-needed advice to humanitarian agencies. The International Famine Center proposed to do precisely that – to house a research and training program with a strong emphasis on practice and field experience in a first-rate academic institution. The Center has lived up to its promise. Today it has a dedicated Master's degree for humanitarian workers, and a cutting-edge applied research program that has a direct impact on humanitarian crises. It conducts its programs through global partnerships with local NGOs in Africa, with the African Union, with researchers around the world and with respected NGOs and UN agencies.*



Further information on the Feinstein International Famine Center, as well as electronic versions of this report and the accompanying 3-year Strategic Plan, can be obtained at www.famine.tufts.edu

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