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Chapter 1

Caring in crisis and the crisis of caring: Towards a new agenda

Bruna Seu and Shani Orgad

The contemporary **global public sphere** is full of information about the **suffering** of **distant others**. Information about **humanitarian disasters**, wars and **human rights violations** are often transmitted within moments of unfolding. Yet, while people know about humanitarian disasters and **distant suffering**, they do not always act on their **knowledge**. **The public** are said to suffer from '**compassion fatigue**' and '**information overload**', yet little is known about what the public actually think and feel in relation to these **messages** and **images**.

This book examines what knowledge about humanitarian issues gained from media and in particular from **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)** communications, which we call '**mediated humanitarian knowledge**', does to us, as **symbolic bystanders**, what we do with it, and what blocks this **knowledge** from being translated into **action**. The book provides an evidence-based account of why and how people respond or do not respond to **humanitarian communications**.

Different scholarly disciplines have attempted to investigate these phenomena, in particular **Social Psychology**, **Media and Communication**, and **non-profit sector marketing research**. All three bodies of research look at the relationship between suffering, **audiences/bystanders**, and the **messengers**: that is, those who inform the public about the suffering and intervene in aid of the sufferers.

Psychological research has been primarily concerned with the relationship between **messages** about **suffering** and **audiences' active or passive responses** to them. This literature is sparse and, with some notable exceptions,¹ mostly quantitative and laboratory-based. The factors argued for as crucial in increasing **responsiveness** to humanitarian communications include (a) '**identifiable victim effect**' (Kogut and Ritov, 2005; Small and Loewenstein, 2003); (b) **donors'** ability to identify with the **beneficiaries' social category** (rather than through **geographical proximity** or **emotional reaction**) (Levine and Thompson, 2004); (c) donors' trust in the **charity** and **commitment** to **giving** (Sargeant and Lee, 2004); (d) donors' **decision-making styles** (Burgoyne *et al.*, 2005); and (e) perception of the **victims as innocent** rather than deserving of blame for their misfortune (Campbell *et al.*, 2001) – for example, in the case of **natural rather than human-made disasters** (Zagekfa *et al.*, 2011).

Studies of factors that deter people from responding to humanitarian and human rights appeals have identified: (a) '**psychophysical numbing**' – inability to act or react emotionally to mass human tragedy, based on incapacity to comprehend large numbers of losses and sufferers (Slovic, 2007); (b) **disconnection** between emotional and normative appreciation of the appeal, leading to strong but **short-lived emotional reactions**, not followed by action (Epstein, 1994); and (c) **empathy avoidance**, resulting from people's awareness of the potential cost of helping (Shaw *et al.*, 1994). The vividness, proximity and vicariousness of suffering increase **sympathy** and the likelihood of a **proactive response** (Loewenstein and Small, 2007), but these factors in excess can have the opposite effect. Others argue that similar psychosocial processes promoting the behavior of perpetrators – '**societal tilt**', '**just world thinking**', **moral equilibration**, and the exclusion of victims from the moral realm –

influence **bystanders'** likelihood of intervening, remaining passive or becoming perpetrators themselves (Staub, 2003). These psychological studies were carried out under controlled conditions in laboratory settings, which insulate participants from real-life complexity and isolate individual receivers of mediated messages from their historical, biographical and ideological everyday contexts. Thus, this research offers limited insight into how audiences make sense of humanitarian communication.

Media and Communication studies have focused on how **suffering** is represented in the media and NGO communications, drawing almost exclusively on **textual and visual analyses**. They critique media coverage of suffering for producing **'compassion fatigue'** – overload in the media of information on suffering (Moeller, 1998; Tester, 2001), and explain audiences' lack of response and engagement as due to patterns of media coverage, such as **repetition**, **routinization**, **naturalization**, **fetishization and commodification of suffering**, **de-humanization of sufferers**, and emphasis on certain emergencies while underrepresenting others (Benthall, 1993; Boltanski, 1999; Moeller, 1998; Chouliaraki, 2006, 2013; Tester 2001).

These studies highlight the way particular choices of how to depict suffering are inscribed in and, in turn, reproduce the power relations and injustices that they seek to redress. However, notwithstanding these studies' important contributions (see Orgad and Seu, 2014), a fundamental problem is that they often fail to draw or sustain the distinction between *representations* of suffering and audiences' *reception* of them. For example, based on critiques of media coverage of suffering, claims are made about audiences' lack of engagement or response, or about the ways in which certain types of coverage and

depiction of sufferers successfully (or otherwise) elicit **compassion**, cultivate **moral sensibilities** and **mobilize people to act** (see Orgad and Seu, 2014).

Studies of humanitarian organizations' communications rely primarily on textual and visual analyses of **campaigns** and **appeals**, arguing for the need to challenge the **dehumanization**, **stereotyping** and **commodification** of sufferers and to challenge **depictions of sufferers as passive, hopeless victims** (Arnold, 1988; Lissner, 1981; Chouliaraki, 2013; Dogra, 2013; Rajaram, 2002; Richey and Ponte, 2011; Vestergaard, 2008). With the exception of some older studies such as Lidchi's (1993) study of Oxfam and Cottle and Nolan's (2007) study of NGO professionals, the goals, intentions and frameworks guiding aid organizations in their communication of humanitarian messages have been largely ignored. Furthermore, while some studies of media and humanitarian organizations' representations discuss the implications for media and **NGO policy and practice**, rarely do they make specific recommendations, nor do they engage with humanitarian organizations and/or the media directly.

Marketing research in the **non-profit sector** is primarily concerned with the relationship between the messengers (NGOs) and their public, and how this relation affects **monetary donations** to **charitable causes**. Particular attention has been paid to **trust**, argued as the key factor in maintaining the public goodwill necessary to promote both donating and **volunteering** (Sargeant and Lee, 2004). According to a survey conducted by the UK's Charity Commission, public trust in 2015 was lower than that recorded in the previous year, with 57% of voters agreeing that charities are trustworthy and act in the public interest. A recent report by the UK's Charities Aid Foundation (2015) warns that public trust in charities is

under threat, a warning whose validity many NGOs have acknowledged (see Crompton, 2010; Darnton and Kirk, 2011; Orgad and Vella, 2012; Seu and Orgad, 2014). In particular, it has been argued that the increasing focus in **news stories** on NGOs becoming business-like has contributed to a decline in **public trust** in UK voluntary organizations (Ishkanian, 2015). In sum, the vast majority of marketing research in the non-profit sector is primarily concerned with enhancing public trust in humanitarian and charitable organizations *in order to* increase donations (e.g. Sargeant *et al.*, 2006). This narrow and **transactional** focus is manifest in the way marketing research views the public as current and potential **donors** (e.g. Venable *et al.*, 2005).

These three bodies of research construct and understand the problem of **public (un)responsiveness** to humanitarian messages quite differently, and there is little dialogue and cross-fertilization across their respective disciplines. Importantly, none of these studies consider the complex connections between audiences' immediate and routine responses to humanitarian messages and people's **everyday morality**, the broader **moral scripts** informing their attitudes and actions, their **vocabulary of justifications and excuses**, and the **biographical and emotional factors** that might facilitate or discourage moral action. Nor do they connect findings from audience research to analysis of NGOs' communication practices.

To help fill these gaps, the Leverhulme Trust funded a psychosocial investigation of public responses to humanitarian communications. The three-year study, *'Mediated Humanitarian Knowledge; Audiences' Reactions and Moral Actions'*, led by this book's authors, Bruna Seu and Shani Orgad, was launched in 2011. The study sought to investigate the UK public's

understandings of and reactions to humanitarian and international development issues and communications, and to explore how NGOs plan and think about their communications.

More specifically, the study was designed to address the following questions:

- What are the moral responses and reactions evoked in audiences by humanitarian communications?
- What socio-cultural scripts do people use to make sense of humanitarian communications and what are the ideological, emotional and biographical underpinnings of these responses?

- How do people come to think and behave the way they do in terms of their **biography** and their own **history of engagement** with humanitarian issues?

- What **emotions** are evoked by humanitarian issues and their communications and how do people **manage** these emotions?

- How do audiences' responses to humanitarian communications relate to those intended by humanitarian NGOs? What assumptions and what conceptions of **lay normativity** direct NGOs' communications?

This book presents some of the findings from the '*Mediated Humanitarian Knowledge*' research project. It offers a multi-disciplinary account – informed by Psychosocial Studies, Media and Communications, Social Psychology and Sociology – of a complex data corpus. Data from **focus groups** and **individual interviews** with **members of the public** provide insight into how people understand humanitarian issues, how they respond to humanitarian communication, and what enables them to respond proactively or prevents them from doing so. The discussion of the **public's responses** is complemented by an account of the intentions and goals of **international humanitarian NGOs** appealing to the public to respond to distant suffering. Additionally, by comparing these two bodies of data, the book highlights the relationships between what the public want, think and feel about humanitarian communication and humanitarianism more generally, and what humanitarian NGOs intend and hope to gain from their communications.

We acknowledge the absence of **beneficiaries'** voice in this project, an issue discussed in Chapters 9 and 10. While their voices would have clearly complemented our findings, their exploration was beyond the scope of our study. We hope further research will address this gap.

The book's structure is **dialogical**: it presents chapters that open up a discussion between academics and NGOs in order to generate a 'debate in print' in which the research findings are explained, discussed and interpreted from various academic and NGO practitioners' perspectives. In what follows we present the design of the study on which the book reports and the book's intellectual framing and structure.

Project phases and data collection

The study on which this book is based consisted of three phases of data collection, ongoing **Action Research** meetings with collaborating NGOs, and three knowledge exchange events.

Preparation Meetings

Ten NGOs were invited to participate in the study and asked to provide each two pieces of communication that their communications practitioners felt best represented their organizations' ethos. The selected communications materials, which included appeals, newsletters, posters and campaigns, were used in subsequent focus group and individual interviews with members of the UK public (as explained below). The participating NGOs included: **ActionAid, Amnesty International, Care International, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), Concern Worldwide, Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), Oxfam, Save the Children, Plan UK, and UNICEF.**

Phase 1: Gathering views from the UK Public

Twenty focus groups were conducted with 182 participants in total. The focus group meetings were held in neutral settings, with members of the public recruited through a market research company. The focus groups represented an even spread across three groupings: **socio-economic** (A, B, C1, C2, D, E), age (18-24, 25-65, 65+) and family formation (single, non-cohabiting relationship, cohabiting/married, with children, without children), across same-sex and heterosexual categories, and geographically diverse, urban and rural areas of the UK (London and the South East, North East and North West, Midlands, Wales and Scotland) (see Appendix A for demographic details).

Insert: Figure 1.1: Location of focus groups and individual interviews with members of the UK public

During this first phase, participants were shown the communications selected by the humanitarian organizations.ⁱⁱ Following this, they were asked about previous exposure to similar communications and consequent actions they took, the content and perceived message, thoughts and emotions in reaction to the appeal, sense of personal responsibility and ability to help, and motivations for responding positively, e.g. donating money.ⁱⁱⁱ All focus groups were recorded, transcribed and anonymized. Bruna Seu facilitated the focus groups with the support of research assistant Frances Flanagan.

Phase 2: Gathering views from humanitarian NGOs

Seventeen individual interviews were conducted in nine UK-based NGOs representing emergency and international development organizations: ActionAid, Amnesty UK, Care,

Concern, DEC, MSF, Oxfam, Plan UK, and Save the Children. The methodological details of these interviews are presented in detail in Chapter 6. Interviewees included practitioners engaged in **planning, designing and producing** humanitarian and international development communications, across three key clusters of NGO departments: (1) **Advocacy and Campaigns**, (2) **Communications, Branding, Media, and Public engagement**, and (3) **Fundraising, Marketing, and Individual Giving**. The goal of the interviews was to explore how professionals in these NGOs think about their practice and experience of planning, designing, production and dissemination of communications about humanitarian and international development causes. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and anonymized. Interviewees were assured of confidentiality and anonymity; thus, in Chapter 6, where this data corpus is discussed, observations are sometimes generalized, and details of specific campaigns and communications that might identify speakers and/or NGOs have been removed. The interviews were carried out by Shani Orgad.

Phase 3: Deeper investigation of individual responses and attitudes

Thirty-nine individual in-depth interviews were conducted with 16 members of the public selected from the focus groups. These deeper interviews aimed to contextualize participants' responses within their **biographies** and **personal histories of caring and being cared for**. Participants were interviewed twice.^{iv} The first interview followed the **Biographical Narrative Interviewing Method (BNIM)** and asked for the story of the participant's life in terms of caring for people near and afar, from the first instance they could recall to the present time. The second interview, informed by the **biographical data** gathered in the first interview and focus group, followed a semi-structured interview schedule to explore further individual participants' pro-social behavior and attitudes

towards humanitarian and international development causes. It also investigated the way individuals' attitudes and patterns of behaviors had developed through their lives.

Participants were encouraged to speak freely about their understanding and experience of responding to others' and personal suffering, responsibility towards others, helping and being helped, and about any topic they felt was relevant to the discussion^v. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and anonymized. The individual interviews were carried out by Bruna Seu with the support of a research assistant.

Analysis

Several methods of analysis were applied to the data corpus:

1. Thematic analysis was used to map the themes that emerged from focus groups with members of the public and interviews with humanitarian organizations;
2. Discursive analyses were applied to audience data to create typologies of discursive, ideologically laden repertoires and moral scripts informing responses from members of the public;
3. Biographical Narrative analysis and a psychoanalytically informed data analysis were applied to the individual interviews with members of the public to explore the relationship between individuals' emotional reactions and their biographies;
4. A comparative thematic analysis was carried out to compare data from focus groups and individual interviews with members of the public, and data from interviews with NGO professionals.

The *Caring in Crisis* book reports primarily on findings derived from the thematic analyses of data from the focus groups (1), individual interviews with members of the public (3) and interviews with NGOs (1), and the comparison between the two (4).

Intellectual framing

Using a **psychosocial approach** to public responses implies an interest in **factors** that come from both 'outside' (**socio-cultural** and **political**) and 'inside' (emotional responses, biographies and **psychodynamics**), and in how these psychosocial factors affect and shape how members of the public **understand**, **respond** and **act** in relation to humanitarian, international development issues and their communications. We found it useful to think about how people receive information from NGOs and other **media** through the **metaphor** of a **psychosocial prism**. The prism filters and contextualizes the information and makes it meaningful.

Insert: Figure 1.2: The Psychosocial Prism

The psychosocial prism is a **metaphorical representation** of the spectrum of understandings through which information reaches the public. The prism is made of **beliefs** and **attitudes** originating from various sources – **global-geopolitical factors**, national and local realities, **personal biographies**, emotional and **moral scripts** – through which the public understand and respond to information about humanitarian crises and international development issues. It is the complexity of the **relationship** between the public and the information they consume that we seek to engage with.

Just as a prism refracts white light into its component colors, here we use the psychosocial prism to identify and strategically isolate the socio-cultural, emotional, psychodynamic and biographical components of public understandings and responses. In real life, of course, this distinction is fictitious as these factors organically intertwine and interact. Indeed, a psychosocial and multidisciplinary framework aims to question and overcome such artificial divisions. However, the prism is a helpful analytical tool in dealing with a large body of data and allows us to strategically pay attention to each psychosocial ‘refraction’ in isolation.

The impact of humanitarian communication

In this research, we were not exclusively interested in whether and how NGO communications cause people to donate money to humanitarian causes. Rather, our aim was to map out and understand the broader landscape of thoughts and feelings evoked by humanitarian communications and how they relate to the routine thinking and actions that constitute audiences’ everyday morality. We were particularly interested in identifying factors that foster or interfere with connectedness between the public and the distant sufferer.

The term connectedness alludes to the psychosocial idea of individuals being component parts of ‘the same thing’. It highlights continuities, rather than separateness, and the inextricability with which one is always geopolitically, socially, and psychologically interconnected to others. It also refers to an ongoing capacity for bearing the other in mind, which overcomes physical distance and separation. We explain the term at length in Chapter 2.

Intellectual positioning

As implied by the study's psychosocial framing, our work is **constructivist**, rather than realist. Our research did not aim to establish truths or question the truthfulness of what the people we interviewed (audiences and NGO professionals) said. Rather, we treat what they said discursively, as statements articulating people's **lifeworlds**, **moral frameworks**, hopes, and frustrations. For example, when we say in Chapter 2 that the UK public are generous, we recognize how people express generosity (and/or hospitality, connectedness and **compassion**) in their relation to far-away others and in response to humanitarian communications, whilst at the same time we critically ask what might be blocking their generosity, as demonstrated in the recent dramatic decline in engagement and giving to charities. If people do care, or at least want to care, why do we see such a decline in engagement with humanitarian issues? This puzzle, a fundamental **bystander dilemma**, is the crucial backdrop to our investigation. A psychosocial framework enables us to engage with such contradictions and tensions as potential openings for better practice and communication (see Seu, 2013, for a fuller discussion of these principles).

Working definitions

Throughout the book we make repeated use of certain terms. Aware that some are multifaceted, controversial and sometimes even disputed, here we provide a list of working terms we will be employing, with short definitions indicating how we use them. Importantly, our approach is constructivist; we are not concerned with technical definitions of these terms, but rather with how they operate as constructs – shaped by communications (produced by the NGO and the media) and by personal, everyday stories and experiences.

- Humanitarian vs international development issues: We use the term ‘humanitarian’ as shorthand for both humanitarian *and* international development issues, actions, practices, and interventions. Equally, for the sake of brevity, we use the general term ‘NGOs’ to refer to both emergency-focused and international development branches of humanitarian NGOs (see Barnett 2011 for a discussion of this distinction). In Chapter 6, which looks at the data from interviews with NGO professionals, some distinctions between the types of humanitarian NGOs are discussed.
- Participation: By participation we refer to people’s engagement with humanitarian issues and messages. We introduce a distinction between deeper and sustained versus lighter and fleeting participation (a distinction that we discuss later in the book), to capture differences in temporal dimensions and depth of connection in the public’s engagement.
- Sufferers versus beneficiaries: How to name the subjects of humanitarian communication is a question charged with complex ideological meanings. To call them ‘sufferers’ invokes an emotional discourse that recognizes their pain as human beings, but at the same time potentially implies pity and lack of agency. It is also problematic in the context of our study, since the term ‘sufferers’ does not apply to human rights communications, which frame their subjects as deprived of their rights, rather than as sufferers. On the other hand, the term ‘beneficiaries’, despite its etymology,^{vi} in common parlance carries instrumental and/or commercial undertones, which confine the relationship between members of the public and

those they want to help to one of primarily **material transactions**, while also implying indebtedness of the **beneficiary** to the **benefactor**. We found that, while the NGO professionals we interviewed mostly used the term ‘beneficiaries’ – as reported in Chapter 6 – this was not a suitable term to use in discussing the imagined relationship of members of the public with faraway others, a connection which they wished to be mutual and relational. Thus in Chapter 2, which discusses the data from the public, we refer to ‘sufferers’ to stress that for the public what is exchanged in their encounter with mediated faraway others is not simply or primarily financial, but relational (a **psychosocial connectedness**), emotional (empathy, compassion, solidarity), and cognitive (understanding). Beyond a wish to respect the language used by the different research participants (members of the public and NGO professionals), this difference in terminology also speaks to how the two groups differ in their thinking about the subjects of humanitarian communications.

The humanitarian triangle

Insert: Figure 1.3: The humanitarian triangle

Throughout the book we use the term ‘humanitarian triangle’, accompanied by the diagram above (Figure 1.3). It presents three key actors involved in the humanitarian communications relationship: beneficiaries (or sufferers), NGOs, and the UK public. Of course, many other actors are involved in the broader humanitarian context – for example, **governments**, militaries, perpetrators, and the international community. However, in this book, we focus on the key players involved in the representation, circulation, and reception

of and response to humanitarian communications. The triangle provides a helpful reference point for a nuanced engagement with the data from audience research and for comparison of these with the data from interviews with NGOs. In Chapter 2 we discuss the triangle with a focus on public understanding and responses, while in Chapter 6 we do so in the context of NGOs' communication practices. The commentary chapters throughout the book also refer to the triangle, in the context of the disciplinary specialism from which the author speaks.

Structure of the book

Following the current chapter (1), which introduces the book and the research on which it is based, sets the intellectual framework and provides a glossary of working terms, **Section 1, 'Public responses and the "3M" model'**, presents findings from focus groups and individual interviews with members of the UK public and introduces the **'3M' model**. In **Chapter 2**, Bruna Seu theorizes public responses to mediated humanitarian knowledge as complex, multi-layered and conflicted, and argues for the need for a more nuanced engagement with the complexities of audience responses in order to foster deeper and lasting public participation in humanitarian issues. Through a psychosocial analysis of focus group and individual biographical interview data, she attends to participants' 'big' stories: current socio-cultural scripts through which members of the public make sense of humanitarianism and their own responsibility for responding to humanitarian communications – and 'small' stories: biographically based factors that foster or prevent connectedness and engagement with humanitarian issues.

The fostering and blocking psychosocial factors are first identified through two case studies and further analyzed through the '3M' model which illustrates how people respond proactively to humanitarian knowledge when it is emotionally Manageable, cognitively Meaningful, and Morally significant to them. The chapter continues by showing how, conversely, the emotional, cognitive and moral channels of the '3M' model can become blocked and prevent responsiveness. Particular attention is paid to the blocks related to the troubled relationship between NGOs and their publics. Based on these analyses, Seu recommends a shift in the dynamics of the humanitarian triangle towards a relational rather than transactional model of participation in humanitarian issues.

In **Chapter 3**, Paul Hoggett reflects further on some of the issues discussed by Seu, in particular on the nature of engagement, indifference and denial in the relations between the public and the 'suffering other'. Hoggett uses examples from clinical practice and political activism around climate change to propose a vision of psychosocial connectedness to others' suffering, near and far, based on compassion and solidarity rather than pity, whilst also acknowledging the emotional cost of trying to maintain such connectedness and the sustaining role played by hope. He warns against false dichotomies between ethics of care versus ethics of justice, and argues for the importance of anger fueled by a wish for social justice in fighting denial and enabling public acknowledgement and active participation. In **Chapter 4**, Sonia Livingstone situates the book's project within scholarly traditions that focus on audience interpretations and NGO communications. Drawing parallels with her research on the mediation of 'public connection', Livingstone stresses the significance of explaining how people's negotiation of the meanings of texts depends on their world views, and how the latter, in turn, are shaped by their political commitments, social contexts and

personal biographies. The chapter concludes with a reminder of the complexity of publics (in the plural), arguing that the mediation of public connection opens up multiple forms of ethical response beyond direct action, including knowing and caring for others, and constructing oneself as an ethical individual. The concluding commentary of this section is offered in **Chapter 5** by Glen Tarman, former International Advocacy Director at *Action Against Hunger*, who contextualizes the findings from members of the public within the long history of NGOs' attempts to mobilize public support for international development and humanitarian causes. Tarman critically assesses the lessons for NGO practice from the '3M' model introduced in Chapter 2; reviews what has been addressed and what needs further and urgent attention in order to promote deeper public participation; and asserts the need for increased complexity in the way NGOs see their publics. He concludes by urging practitioners to rethink their role as mediators and further highlights the crucial importance of offering, in their communications, more meaningful actions the public can respond to.

Section 2, 'Mediating Care', turns the gaze onto NGOs as communicators. Building on the discussions in Section 1, in particular, concerning the troubled relationship of the public with NGOs, this section explores humanitarian communication by looking at the views and practices of NGO professionals engaged in its production, and by situating it within the broader field of humanitarianism. Drawing on interviews with NGO practitioners, **Chapter 6** explores how NGOs think about, plan, select, and produce appeals and campaigns. Shani Orgad discusses how NGO professionals account for their communication practices and how their understanding of their organizations' goals, structures, and values, and the political and economic conditions within which they operate, shape their decisions on how to communicate distant suffering and appeal to the public. Based on the analysis of interviews

with NGO professionals, Orgad identifies several strategies and trends that seem central to the planning and production of current NGO humanitarian communication: representing beneficiaries in ways that will create a sense of personal, one-to-one, seemingly unique and unmediated intimacy between them and the UK public; seeking to take the UK public on a 'journey', which emphasizes positive and non-threatening relations with NGOs; and relying on short-term, fleeting forms of emergency communication, which are seen as effective in terms of monetary donations. Orgad highlights some of the consequences of these strategies and trends, which are then returned to in Chapter 9, when recommendations for NGOs are presented. Responding to Orgad's chapter, in Chapter 7 Monika Krause situates the study within the broader context of the humanitarian field and the different actors involved. Krause argues that existing analysis of humanitarian communication has focused heavily on fundraising. She points to the need to re-contextualize this analysis by considering alternative models to the short-term fundraising employed by NGOs and recognizing that communication constitutes only a part of NGOs' work. Chapter 8 closes this section by bringing in a prominent voice from the NGO sector. Leigh Daynes, Executive Director of *Doctors of the World*, corroborates and reinforces the findings of the study. Confirming the arguments made in Chapter 6, he underscores 'the greatest lost narratives of our time' (p.), namely NGOs' role as moral entrepreneurs seeking social justice and the highest regard for human rights and dignity. Daynes calls on NGOs to listen to the study's findings in order to inform their efforts to re-earn public trust and to strengthen the means by which they seek to create sympathy for victims of conflict and other situations that do not easily fit the non-complex 'emergency model'.

Section 3, 'Moving the Debate and Practice Forward', pulls together the arguments of the book, presenting the findings discussed in sections 1 and 2 in dialogue. In **Chapter 9** Orgad and Seu examine the **connections** and **tensions** between how the public responds to humanitarian communication and what NGOs intend or try to achieve in their communication with the public. The discussion looks at four central aspects in which the public's voices, as expressed in the focus groups and individual interviews, appear to be in tension with NGOs' views and practices, as revealed by the interviews with practitioners: 1) the tension between the public's expectations of messages about suffering, and NGO communications' stress on **positive depictions** and the desire of some NGO professionals to make the public feel good; 2) NGOs' reliance on the **emergency model** vs. the public's desire to engage with sufferers **relationally** and on a **longer-term basis**; 3) the public's appetite for more direct and reciprocal relationships with NGOs and beneficiaries vs. NGOs' perception of their role as **gatekeepers** and **money-collectors**; and 4) the public's experience of a **crisis of trust** in NGOs vs. NGOs' partial admission of the existence of this crisis and the need to urgently address it. Informed by this discussion, we then outline specific recommendations for NGOs as to how they might rethink their communications approaches and their relations with the public more broadly.

In **Chapter 10**, which concludes the book, Director of Marketing and Communications at *GlobalGiving* Alison Carlman situates the study within an international context by comparing it to research conducted in the United States and in Official Donor Aid countries. Carlman addresses the causes of **disconnection** between NGOs and their public, provides examples of ways American NGOs are experimenting with some of the tactics described in the study, and outlines challenges facing NGOs practitioners. The chapter ends by calling for an

expanded view of the humanitarian triangle, one that incorporates the people whom both NGOs and the public intend to help and makes them more central to the conversation. Carlman stresses how 'sustainable connectedness' requires acknowledgement of the benefits that we all receive through relationship and urges us to look more closely at 'others', seeing them as complex individuals worthy of sustained, meaningful relationships based on care.