Corruption in Humanitarian Assistance
Why focus on corruption in relief

• Large scale of relief spending

• Relief is delivered in difficult environments

• Funds for relief depend on public trust

• Literally – stealing from starving
Why is it ignored?

• Fears of alienating public support

• Good motives a sufficient guard

• Assumption that corruption is someone else’s problem
Context of Aid

• Aid providers are in a powerful position in providing relief due to the particular vulnerability of disaster affected populations

• Emergencies also have a set of features which may facilitate corruption – lots of money, pressure to do things quickly.

• Opaque, chaotic, alien, western
What are the key risks?

• Follow the money – procurement, transport, food aid, high value commodities

• Follow where power is exercised – targeting, registration, recruitment
Risks

• Procurement, transport – bribes during tendering, re-sale
• Targeting – bribes to get on list
• Partners – bribes to get the contract
• Recruitment – cronyism, bribes, ghosts, re-circulation of corrupt staff
Minimising Corruption Risks

- Breaking the silence

- Investment in capabilities to minimise risk – capacity for risk assessment, financial safeguards, policies and systems

- Tackling perceptions of aid agencies as outsiders and sometimes ‘rich and arrogant’

- Need for downwards accountability, transparency and participation
A beneficiary who knows what they are meant to receive, from which organisation and can complain to an independent body if they don’t get it
More information at:
http://www.odi.org.uk/hpg/corruption.html

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