

A Short History of MapAction:

1994 to 2010 with a focus on the early years.

By Rupert Douglas-Bate

MapAction is a charity that relieves suffering in countries facing a sudden disaster by creating a visual means of assessing the needs that humanitarian decision makers can act upon, to make better informed decisions to enhance and save lives.

- The work of MapAction is supported by GIS-skilled volunteers.
- Using GIS (Geographic Information Systems) MapAction teams create accurate, dedicated, real-time maps which are essential following a disaster, that “give eyes” to aid agencies and donors, and are essential to its mission.
- MapAction maps are informed, shaped and driven by humanitarian disaster requirements. The aid agencies and donors alone, drive the demand.

Earthquakes, tsunamis, mudslides, and floods invariably strike without warning—and the consequences can be devastating. Lives are lost, families torn apart and economies destroyed. Survivors then face immeasurable hardship. International aid organizations respond to these tragedies. However, their work is often hindered by a lack of knowledge about the region they are working in. When a disaster occurs, the geographic and social landscapes change, sometimes beyond recognition. Villages, roads, and railways may be destroyed; entire hillsides may slip into valleys; and people displaced. MapAction is a UK based charitable organisation which addresses this challenge and creates and distributes real-time maps of a disaster zone, to help governments and relief agencies coordinate aid and therefore improve the relief of human suffering.

This is a short history about the early years of MapAction and was written by Rupert Douglas-Bate a humanitarian aid worker and a businessman. Originally the charity was called AidforAid, which in this document is synonymous with MapAction. It was registered at a charity in the UK on 14th June 1999, however after a democratic consultative process, involving membership and board, it officially changed its name to MapAction on February 21st 2007.

Why write such a history ?

There are perhaps several reasons: it was asked for, the truth is valuable, what happened is interesting and relevant to the future and finally gratitude towards those who helped is important.

Arguably we live in a “post truth world” where myth is reported as fact, or fact is simply ignored. It would be naïve, given the scandals and cover ups to have hit large well known humanitarian charities in recent years, to think the charity sector is immune to myth and therefore this account is a modest effort to state the facts about the early days and be held accountable. Therefore, any omissions or errors in this account are entirely the fault of Rupert Douglas-Bate who would be happy to be informed, so that it may be improved.

Another reason for writing this short history is a response to several requests from MapAction volunteers, including an American, at one or two Christmas dinners. It was written with the assistance of Rupert van der Horst and Nick Wyldebore-Smith and Abdurrahman Jafar. The latter two were Trustees at different stages during the foundational

years and the former was an aid worker (and is now a British barrister) who helped in Kosovo by partly subsidising our office rental bill. They all reviewed and provided feedback “with ruthless kindness” for which Rupert is grateful.

Yet also, another purpose for writing this is to acknowledge with gratitude, those funding and support organisations and people who have helped. These include ESRI, one of the world’s most successful GIS companies and DfID, the UK government donor. It is partners such as these, who helpfully supply both financial and technical support, who may like to know the facts, with reference to their future support. Gratitude is also owed to individuals, whose names are mentioned in this account, whose faith in the model appears now justified.

In a sense there is nothing new with this desirable concept to have easy to understand mapped information with which to successfully conduct a campaign. The military have understood this for many years. One of the greatest leaders of World War II was Field Marshall Lord Slim, who stated: “Time spent in reconnaissance is seldom wasted.” He never lost a major engagement and leading a multi-national force, essentially saved India from a major invasion.

However, the requirement for MapAction is to provide an international service in a world that currently spends at least US \$ 1.1 trillion on weapons but US \$126 billion on development aid, per year which is a ratio of 1 to 8.7¹. Additionally, humanitarian emergency assistance is a smaller subset of this global development aid, and it is the emergency assistance sector that MapAction seeks to serve. The world also faces the unprecedented problems of climate change and population growth, the latter estimated to grow from 7.6 billion today (in 2017) to 9 billion by 2050 according to the Austrian Academy of Sciences. These huge facts are all important when considering how the world should become a less rather than riskier place, or put another way, how it should become more sustainable. MapAction is about giving clear updated and on-the-ground maps to those who seek to help with limited resources so that they can help disasters from spiralling out of control. It does this by recycling the experiences and skills of mostly UK volunteers, from all walks of life, to create multi-layered maps, upon which humanitarian decision makers can act with better assurance. Map Action has achieved its aim is to become a collegiate mix of skilled people that listen to, respect and help one another, but there is always room for improvement.

A Need for Greater Coordination

The idea for MapAction first occurred to Rupert in 1994: “I was leading a water and sanitation engineering team in war torn Bosnia with a budget of US\$ 1.25 millions of UNHCR and George Soros funding. There were 20 village water supply projects being built when I arrived in Tuzla and afterwards another 20 projects were added, plus a few bigger town projects. One of the key problems facing all the aid agencies was the lack of coordination and the duplication of our activities. I therefore hit on the idea of creating maps as tools that could promote operational effectiveness as well as help us avoid driving inadvertently into mine fields or into front lines, as occasionally our vehicles came home with shrapnel in them. This led to my decision to borrow some army maps from the Norwegian Army, which were photocopied, laminated and handed out to my aid worker friends.”

At the time MapAction was known as ‘Aid for Aid.’

¹ According to the OECD statistics of worldwide Official Development Aid (ODA) given by governments was US\$ 126 billion for 2010. (This figure could still go up and down a bit as it does not include private donations by civilians to NGO’s.) According to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the world now spends around US\$1.1 trillion per year on weapons.

See http://www.peace-of-art.co.uk/spending_priorities.html

On return to the UK in October 1994 Rupert continued to develop this idea, working closely with several friends, beginning with Steven Sherwin who at the time was studying for a post graduate Master's degree in electronic data communications at Kingston University London, in 1996. Stephen had been in the Royal Navy as an officer and electronic specialist and his skills and enthusiasm were much needed. He and his wife Rosie also supplied Rupert with office space and Steve helped design and build the first website. Without this encouragement, it is doubtful MapAction would ever have started.

Professor Graeme Wilkinson and Dr Ron Malyan were in charge of Steve's studies at Kingston. Professor Wilkinson and Rupert created two proposals known as 'Gravitas' which were submitted to the European Community for funding for the development and testing of a satellite and data communications technology for disaster zones. At that time the time the cost benefits of the project were not deemed good enough. However, with advance of technology and skills as well as the momentum of the charities first project in Kosovo and subsequent missions, the idea of MapAction is now considered, "a no brainer".

As part of his studies, Stephen contacted British Telecom (BT) Satellite Telecommunication Systems, based at Ipswich, and with the encouragement of Dr Mike Fitch and Brian Garstang and some others, BT donated some telecommunications equipment and 'human capital'. One weekend in the summer of 1995, a team of four or five volunteers, including Rupert, carried out the first experimental trial for MapAction, to see how a Base Team could interact with a Mobile Data Collection Team, using an early version of a webcam, that was connected by a satellite. The trial established a visual connection via satellite between two unconnected offices, which was quite revolutionary for the technology available, at the time.

In the summer of 1997 Rupert attended the first of several United Nations University conferences in Amman, Jordan, on the subject of multi-cultural leadership. This six week UN International Leadership programme was initiated by the late King Hussein of Jordan and his wife Queen Noor under the leadership of Professor Adel Safty from Egypt. It was aimed at training young leaders to better serve their countries, and build peace with other countries. A wide variety of speakers attended including Yitzak Rabin, Yasser Arafat, Jan Egeland, David Steel, Harlan Cleveland and Stanley Grysiewicz. The conference influenced Rupert in several ways, firstly to confirm that maps are vital for raising level of the debate to a more objective level, when it comes to negotiating towards peace. Rabin and Arafat used many maps supplied by Jan Egeland, when they debated their ideas in peace and quiet of Norway, which led to the Oslo Peace Accords during 1993. Secondly, the entire group of young leaders, about 150 in total, became listed as friends of Aid for Aid on the web site, thus adding more credibility.

In 1997 the original Aid for Aid website was built by Steve Sherwin under his new computer consultancy, Bathcomms Ltd. During those original years, Steve freely supplied a great deal of technical web support and personal encouragement, for which MapAction owes Bathcomms a debt of gratitude. It was only much later when the charity had enough money, the relationship was put on a commercial footing and the charity used Bathcomms extensively for website presentation of mapping.

As a result of a press article on Aid for Aid in 1995, Rupert was contacted by Air Marshall Sir John Curtiss, who was a friend of the late Leonard Cheshire VC. Sir John was in charge of a very small NGO called 'Pathfinders'² whose mission was to try and pave the way for

² Pathfinders has sadly ceased functioning, however there is still a space in the humanitarian response, for a similar organisation to fill the gap of rapid targeted air delivery of humanitarian aid.

delivery of material support in disasters, primarily by air through a system they wanted to design and deploy known as ‘Snowdrop’.

In order to assess the needs and interests from the emergency response community, Sir John kindly allowed Aid for Aid to hold several meetings and mini-conferences under the umbrella of Pathfinders, to help assess the requirements and interest from the humanitarian aid community in maps for humanitarian disaster response. There were held at the offices of Pathfinders that was based the Swire Group³ at Buckingham Gate, London.

Market research was carried out in the early years, for example in December 1996 one of the mini-conferences at Buckingham Gate, entailed several respondents being asked to supply written feedback to the following three questions:-

- Q.1** Firstly do you think the Aid for Aid package of technical and human resources, as applied to mapping in disaster zones, is relevant to the general need for better quality humanitarian information ?
- Q.2** Secondly, do you think your specific organisation might benefit from maps and information, supplied by Aid for Aid, in years to come ?
- Q.3** Thirdly, do you have any constructive advice, on anything to do with what we discussed at the presentations?

The feedback received is summarised in the following table:

Organisation	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Respondent
Oxford Brookes University Centre for Disaster Planning	Yes	Yes	Yes	Hugo Slim, Director
Cranfield (University) Disaster Planning Centre	Yes	Yes	Yes	Colonel Mike Evans, Deputy Director
Health and Nutritional Status Advisory Unit, ROWETT Research Institute	Yes	Yes	Yes	Professor CF Mills, Coordinator
Save the Children	Yes	Yes	Yes	John Seamen, Director
MERLIN	Yes	Yes	Yes	Alistair Troupe, Operations Director
International Care and Relief	Yes	Yes	Yes	Rudi van Hurk, Executive Director
CAFOD	Maybe	No	No	Tony Hardiment, Director
Tear Fund	Yes	Yes	Yes	Andrew Dipper, Technical Director
Plan International	Yes	Maybe	Yes	AW Jabry, Senior Researcher
Hazards Forum	Maybe	Maybe	Yes	Dr IJ Lawrence, Secretary
Council for World Mission	Yes	Yes	Yes	Dr A Morton, Director of Communications
Private Individuals:-				
Major Mike Gilson	Yes	Yes	Yes	ex-NATO map maker in Bosnia
Professor Emeritus Peter Wolf	Yes	No	Yes	Committee Member of UK International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction
Mr Kenneth Peake	Yes	Yes	Yes	Spatial Graphics Ltd, Chairman
Total Yes	12	10	13	
Total No	0	2	1	
Total Possibly	2	2	0	
Overall Total	14	14	14	

³ Swire Group in the context of Cathay Pacific airline which they owned.

This research was greatly assisted by the advice of Yvan Boyjoo an ESRI GIS consultant with Sycare Geomatique from Canada whom Rupert had met in Bosnia. Yvan provided some useful conceptual maps to show to respondents.

One of these respondents, Hugo Slim⁴ stated: “Yes, I do think Aid for Aid mapping technology has a useful contribution to make - particularly if it is fast, easily adapted and able to be put together as part of initial assessments.” At the time Hugo was Head of Centre for Development & Emergency Planning (CENDEP), Oxford Brookes University.

During these early days two comprehensive proposals were submitted to the National Lottery Fund, one a year for 1998 and 1997 but both were turned down. Several other proposals were also submitted to corporations and governments, without success.

During this time Rupert worked in several more disaster zones, including Congo, Nagorno Karabagh and Kosovo, where he refined his ideas by collecting end user survey evidence, which were later incorporated into a business plan successfully submitted to the Vodafone Foundation.

On June 14th 1999, Rupert paid for the charitable registration of ‘Aid for Aid’ which later changed its name to MapAction on 21st February 2007. Rupert was designated Founder (see Annex 1), whilst the Founder Trustees were:-

Hugh Beveridge – Chairman
Andrew Douglas-Bate⁵
Johnette Guthrie⁶
Amanda Paton
Gregory Wolcough
Mike Mills

Hugh Beveridge whose abilities were well known to Andrew, was asked to become Chairman in view of his huge international business experience which the organisation needed in order to take it from the ‘start-up’ stage to a more professional level.

Not long after this, Rupert van der Horst kindly volunteered to help the team, to market and develop the charity, acting as a sort of independent consultant. And later, together with Nick Wyldebore-Smith, he became a most helpful Trustee.

Development in Kosovo

The first mapping mission that the new charity accomplished was in Kosovo in 2000, where Rupert was deployed, in a voluntary capacity, as Operations Director. Prior to that, during the winter of 1999 Rupert had been preparing the ground in Kosovo and in the UK. It was a time when the charity had no money. “We have no money; therefore, we must think” a favourite quote of Lord Rutherford comes to mind. The board and the team did a lot of that !

The goal of Aid for Aid in Kosovo was to build a ‘local NGO business model’ where locals would be trained and equipped to carry out longer term humanitarian mapping in their own country, to help themselves rather than have foreigners carry it out. Locals will always have greater insight to their surroundings and ideally in longer term situations are the ones who would need the greatest resources, training and investment, although it is true that in

⁴ Interestingly, Hugo Slim is a direct descendent of Lord Slim.

⁵ Andrew Douglas-Bate is Rupert Douglas-Bate’s father. Rupert owes him a debt of gratitude for helping to start what is now MapAction.

⁶ Interestingly, Johnette Guthrie was a close associate of the singer Bob Marley’s family, in London.

emergencies, where time is of the essence, this is seldom possible. Of course, in most cases it seems the best results occur as a result of happy partnerships between local and international staff.

This first deployment was most generously funded by Ozannes, a Jersey based lawyers practise, who had kindly donated £50,000 to Aid for Aid, of which about £30,000 was spent on Kosovo. The mission, which began in the spring of 2000 was based at a two bedroom flat, rented in Pristine, the capital, which doubled as both an office and humanitarian mapping training school. It also had a kitchen, bathroom and a small hallway. One bedroom was the office and the other bedroom was for sleeping and later became the class room. To make means go further, the flat was co-rented, with a British barrister Abdurahman Jafar who previously had been an aid worker for Islamic Relief and was interested in setting up a local telecommunications business. He kindly paid about 50% of the rent - and put up with the endless coming and going of the team. The room where the office was located, also doubled as a bedroom, to help save costs. The office-flat-training school was situated near the centre of the city, in a grim Soviet era housing block. There were frequent power outages which made internet and phone communications with the UK very difficult. Added to these problems there were wildly fluctuating day and night temperatures during the winter months. On one occasion a flat adjacent to the Aid for Aid residence was subjected to a rocket propelled grenade attack which made a huge racket and shook up the doors and windows. On another occasion the car was stolen, which was a setback.

In the summer of 2000, MapInfo which like ESRI is a GIS company, sent two skilled volunteers to from the United States on a three-week training mission. They brought a great deal of useful and free software and a three week GIS class was held at the flat to train 25 Kosovars. Later this class expanded to include other subjects that would help the team to execute effective data collection and mapping and a Kosovar named Dr Florim Isufi⁷, a GIS expert, took over the training. At this stage training on ESRI software was also incorporated.

The subjects taught included cartography, geographic information systems and English language as well as practical exercises in data collection and mapping. The Serbs who had previously been in power had denied the majority Kosovar population, any proper educational facilities. Their exit from Kosovo left an educational vacuum, which needed to be filled, therefore the Aid for Aid class was very heavily over-subscribed and the starting class was pruned to a group of about 25 students.

Altogether, over a period of 18 months there were classes in other subjects alongside GIS that began to produce an excellent group of trained individuals with the capacity to act on their initiative. Rupert's approach was to try and thrust as much responsibility upon the Kosovars as possible, so that they took leadership away from him, this is crucial to long-term sustainability. Having lived under the Serb dictatorship, Kosovar people were habitually inclined to 'creep round the corners' and 'play the grey man or grey woman' and never volunteer an innovation or a piece of information, unless kindly pressed.

Gradually the training class became a local NGO in its own right and officially registered with the United Nations Mission in Kosovo as "Aid for Aid Kosovo". In the end, by about 2003, this small local NGO failed, for lack of funding, but not before DfID and various UN and NGO groups were approached - and asked for help which was not forthcoming.

However, in the initial days, some small scale maps of the entire Kosovo region were made, illustrating the various activities of NGOs in a variety of humanitarian activities, which

⁷ Now at the University of Prishtina, Faculty of Mathematical and Natural Science, Department of Geography.

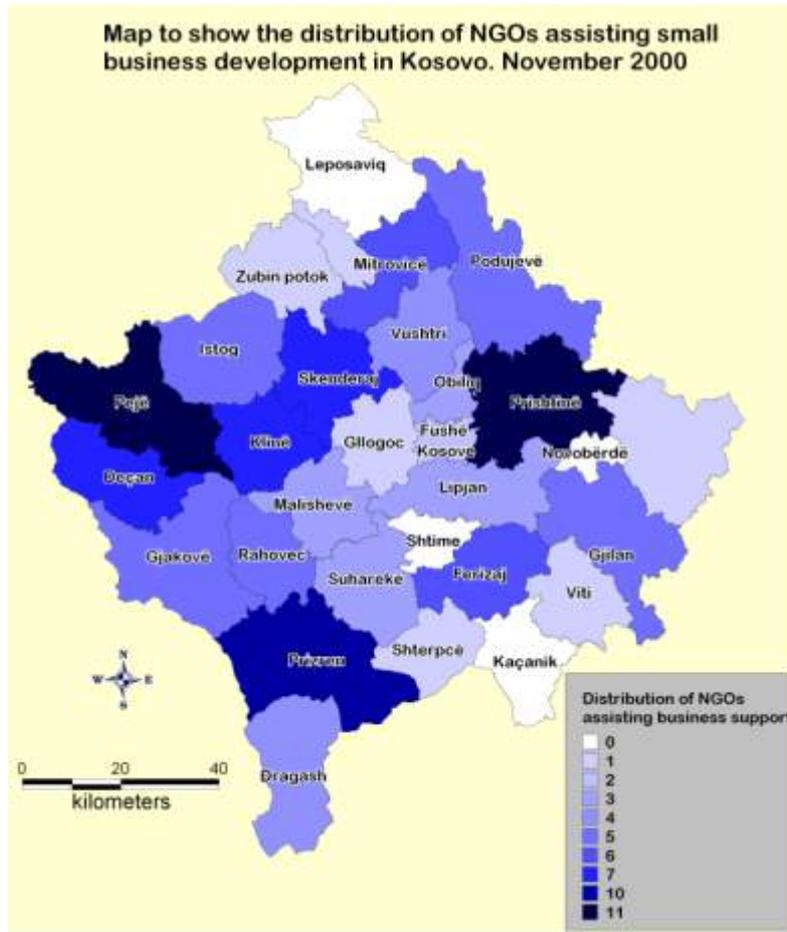


Figure 2: Map to show to distribution of NGOs assisting small business development in Kosovo. November 2000. (Source: Aid for Aid, Kosovo.)

Notes on the Kosovo maps

In Kosovo (and incidentally Bosnia) the multi-agency humanitarian intervention vigorously took into account jobs, including those for the young and in addition to that, the NGO's appreciated that 'job creation' had something to do with sustainability, to do with small time family based capitalism. The new jobs were frequently based upon local skills and market demands from before the war, rather than being altogether new. All that was new were the small amounts of family investment capital.

Figures 1 and 2 show the number of NGOs doing sustainable job creation projects in defined regions of Kosovo. The darker a region is shaded indicates the more activity, whilst the lighter shaded regions indicate that not much, if anything, is happening.

Figure 1, made in April 2000, was shown to about thirty aid agencies and donors working in sustainable job creation. Darker areas mean more NGO's. Just seven months later the new 'map cut,' Figure 2, showed that a significant number of the blank areas had been filled in. This second map was then re-distributed to the same agencies, to give them another reflective tool. No direct verbal pressure was ever applied to make the agencies fill in the gaps; the maps became a form of self-fulfilling prophecy, a tool for vision, and the donors nudging the aid agencies and everyone falling in to line without a squeak.

Late in 2000 Rupert had to leave Kosovo and Aid for Aid Kosovo was handed over to local staff but as mentioned, unfortunately over the next few months, leading up to 2002, the organisation gradually disintegrated, due to lack of funds, despite several funding proposals and requests being made to large well established donors and NGOs. It was an irony that later, in 2002 the 'UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) sent an email to Rupert requesting Aid for Aid to make some more maps, but unfortunately funding was unavailable from UNMIK and we simply could not fulfil their important request.

The possibility of grafting Aid for Aid Kosovo into a local university in Prishtina, the capital of Kosovo, was raised at one point during early 2000, but this was turned down. In retrospect this could have been a missed opportunity since 'building on strength' by grafting Aid for Aid Kosovo into the local university system, that was just beginning to develop, would possibly have done two things a) put the Aid for Aid into the heart of the new Kosovo, with potential for funding b) built on local strengths. On the other side of the coin, the local professor who suggested this was rather a belligerent and loud mouthed individual who did not endear himself to many, including his students and Aid for Aid Kosovo. It is possible he was suffering PTSD, which at the time none of us understood, could have been the reason for his strange temper.

In spring 2000 in Kosovo, the Aid for Aid team in Kosovo continued market research by making a survey of 47 widely varying international aid agencies and aid workers who were asked their opinions on the communications and information situation after the war ended in July 1999. In addition, the assessment also aimed to discover if an 'action centred conference' entitled 'HUMAID' linked to Kingston University in London, would be useful.

QUESTION		RESULTS SUMMARY (47 respondents)				
		Yes	No	Maybe	None	Other
1	In humanitarian disasters, there is often not enough humanitarian information at the right time. Do you agree ?	41	4	1	1	
2	In humanitarian disasters there is sometimes confusion and there is no clear map or picture of what is happening in large areas. In your experience is this true ?	40	3	4		
3	Do you think improved maps, improved satellite telephones, improved radio systems, and more available Internet, would help this situation ?	42	2	2	1	
4	We want to bring together aid workers like you and the manufacturers of technology like: radios, computers, computer map technology, and satellite phones. I mentioned HUMAID in my introduction as being this conference. Do you think would be a helpful idea ?	42	2	3		
5	If your organisation was able to come to this conference do you think it would be interested to write proposals with manufacturers of technology, for submission to the European Union ?	20	14	12	1	
6	If your organisation was able to come to this conference would it be able to prepare in advance, by writing down some histories of past problems with communications technologies ?	28	10	8	1	
7	If we have any more questions can we email you ?	41			1	5
TOTALS:		254	35	30	5	5

One of these respondents, Tamara Madenwald, an aid worker with the International Red Cross stated: "In addressing the emergency and crisis, good communication was rare. And if communications were clearer and more reliable, the international rescue agencies and other NGOs would have been able to better do their work."

A key finding that developed from these interactions that was underscored by Rupert's personal experience was the need for data collection to be systematic, so that nobody in need was left out. Too often the lack of humanitarian coordination was deemed to have left geographic gaps, with no data and little or inadequate humanitarian response. Any humanitarian mapping had to be as wide as the zone of the disaster.

Development in the UK

During 1999 and onwards, Rupert closely understudied Mike Mills, a management consultant with many years of experience, who was most instrumental in helping the charity to write a solid and easy to read business plan, which was subsequently presented to donors with considerable success, including the Vodafone Foundation, to whom the charity owes a debt of gratitude. Mike was also a 'dab hand' at creating and organising mail shots, which were useful when it came to inviting potential supporters.

In 2000 and 2001 the organisation began to be influenced and in many ways reinvigorated by an experienced businessman, Barry de Morgan. At this stage Rupert van der Horst began easing out of the role of being an independent consultant and instead became a Trustee.

Through his voluntary and more or less full time leadership of a campaign over about 18 months Barry helped to re-engineer how the charity would operate as well as how it would present itself at a show case conference at Imperial College, London on 24th October 2001. This event culminated in the Vodafone Foundation donating £50,000 to Aid for Aid, and it was this money that enabled the organisation to recruit and pay for David Spackman.

Barry also brought into this start-up journey, a computer consultancy known as ESYS, whose representative Oliver Greening proved most helpful, especially in terms of helping to design plans and presentations.

There were tensions in and reasoned arguments flying about within this team about how to make Aid for Aid sustainable. Oliver provided a calming presence.

Rupert made the point that a local team would be more sustainable in their context, however a British team might be easier to find the funds for, especially from UK sources. He suggested to Barry that just like the Territorial Army, a team of UK volunteers, training at the weekends might more easily attract funds to train, equip and deploy, than a local team, far away in Kosovo, or even other regional post-disaster zones.

Barry, who had begun to take a lead on the business planning began to agree with and then influence an organisational change towards the home grown business model, based upon British volunteers training in the UK with an agreed availability to go on short overseas missions to post-disaster zones, with all their mapping and printing equipment. Once there, they would create maps for the local and international NGO's. This departure from the localised model for training locals to create their own maps represented a loss of local sustainability, but at least it offered hope for more immediate funding being a model that Western donors have found easier to adopt and identify with. Over the years this has proved reasonably correct, "seeing is believing, is worth supporting".

This schematic below drawn up by Oliver, with inputs from Andrew and Rupert Douglas-Bate illustrates *when* Aid for Aid, now MapAction, would intervene.

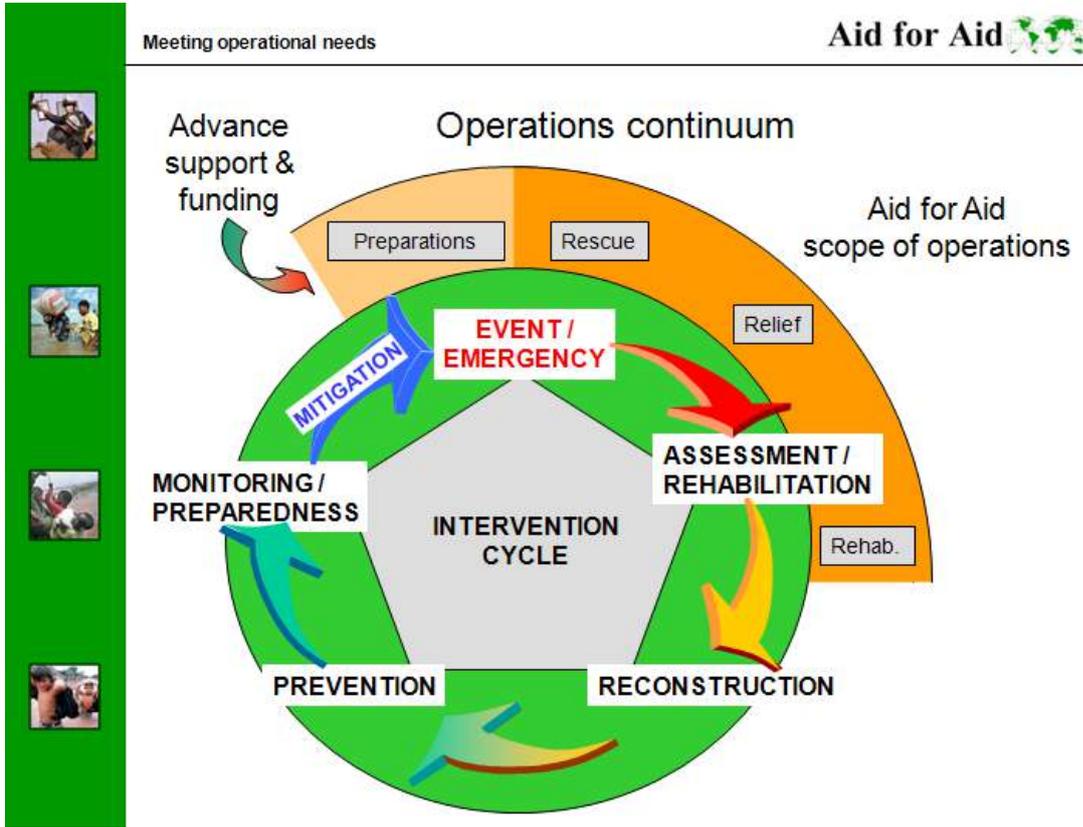


Figure 3: Schematic to show to *when* Aid for Aid would intervene.
(Source: Storyboard 4; 24th October 2001, Imperial College Conference Link, Charing Cross Campus, London)

And this schematic, by Stephen Sherwin from Bathcomms Ltd and Rupert illustrates *how* in terms of technology at least, the organisation would intervene:

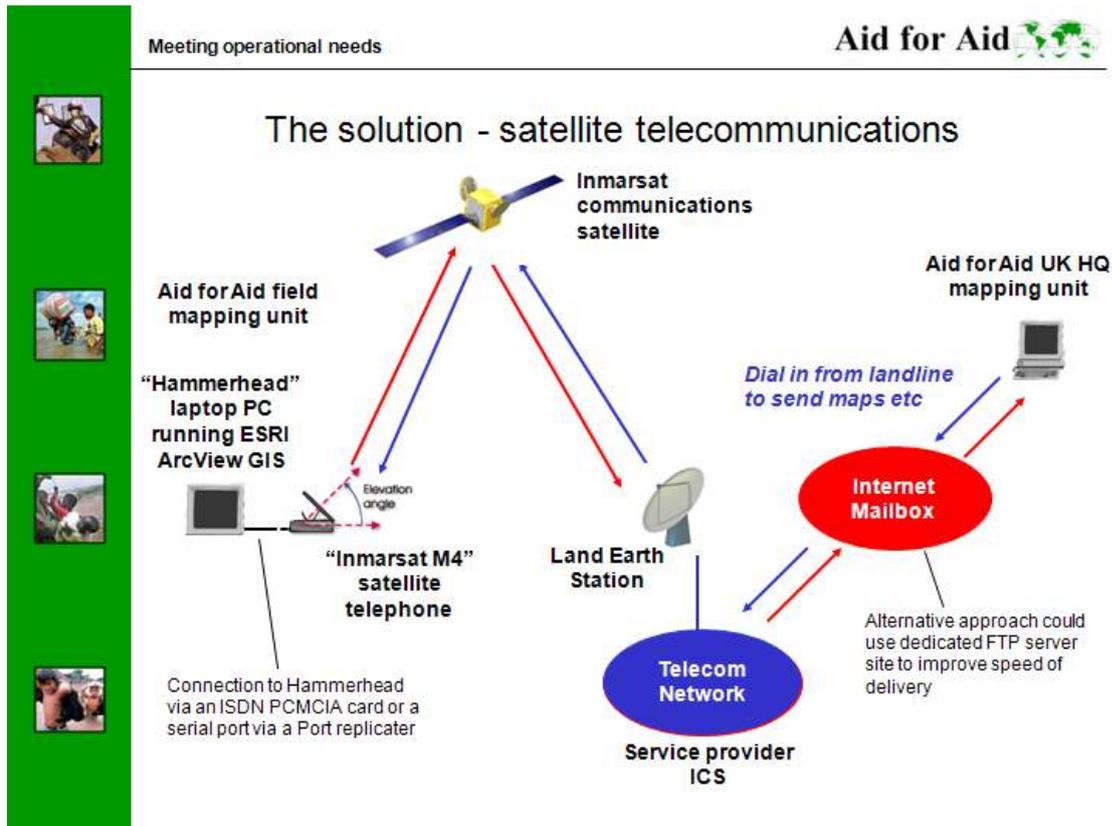


Figure 4: Schematic to show to *how* Aid for Aid would intervene at least in terms of technology.

(Source: Storyboard 4; 24th October 2001, Imperial College Conference Link, Charing Cross Campus, London)

This schematic helps illustrate *why* Aid for Aid was (and now as MapAction, is required.)

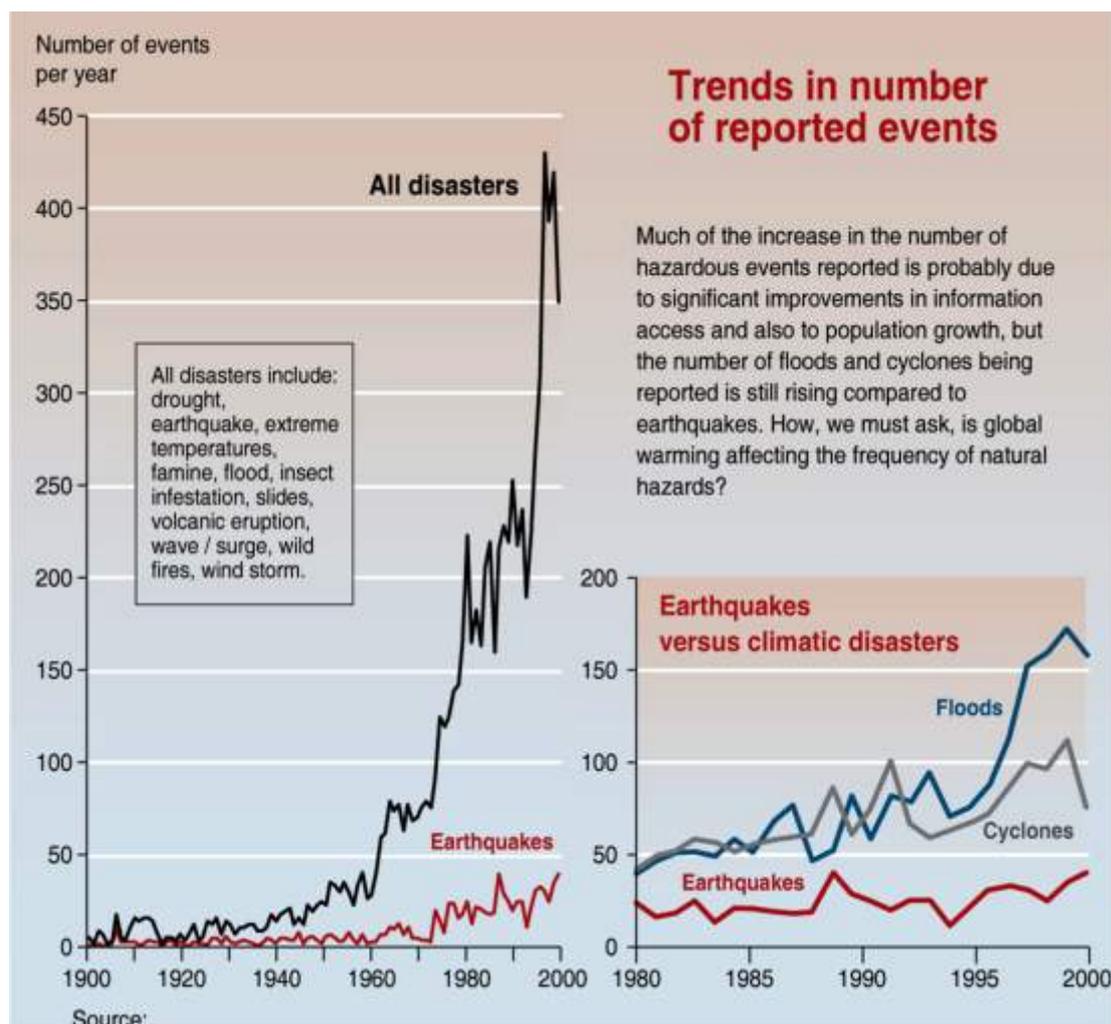


Figure 5: Schematic to show to *why* MapAction is required.

(Source: UNEP-GRID-Arendal <http://maps.grida.no/go/graphic/trends-in-natural-disasters>)

Barry de Morgan and together with the Trustees and Rupert, as a team, launched the event. In addition, Peter Beaumont from ESRI was most helpful in terms of advocacy, not least by adding his support to the presentation team, on behalf of ESRI, at the launch event. Later, Peter also became a helpful advisor to MapAction.

During Barry's tenure, Nigel Press Associates and in particular Nigel Press were approached and provided some excellent satellite photography that enabled the presentation to become more credible.

Sue Hill, a retired lady and friend of Hugh Beveridge provided most helpful administrative support, especially in terms of collating board minutes and organising board meetings. Further, she generously opened her home to host these meetings, and so too did Mike Mills and his wife Katty. Often these board meetings became lively, as ideas were threshed out !

Six months before the event 400 invitations were sent out by Rupert and well over 400 follow phone calls were made by him. Then two months before the event, Rupert repeated this process. 50 people came and one major donor, the Vodafone Foundation, was won over. They donated £50,000. It was enough to set the charity on the next stage. The original person who suggested the Vodafone Foundation be approached, was Johnette Gutherie, although it is

possible that others who have ever remained unseen, suggested to her that this would be a helpful move. What is very clear is *the emphasis* that Johnette *made at the time*, in her role as a Trustee, of asking Rupert to pursue the Vodafone Foundation by way of inviting them to the initial conference. The idea that in fundraising, “no stone be left unturned”, proved a fruitful maxim and indeed, Barry and Rupert visited the Vodafone Foundation and gave them a power point based presentation while also showing them the business plan that Mike Mills had helped to write.

The Trustees at this stage, consisted of Gregory Wolcough, Michael Mills, Andrew Douglas-Bate, Johnette Guthrie, and Rupert van der Horst, chaired by Hugh Beveridge. All of them provided a solid sounding board and great energy for the charity. Gregory, a business man, kept the accounts very well, which for a charity aiming to be professional is terrifically important. Johnette, whose background was in the social and sector and the Territorial Army also provided some excellent common sense advice and many useful connections.

At the time of writing these founder Trustees have now moved on and been replaced by an evolving new group, whose dedication and commitment deserve another complete article.

As noted, by late 2001, the charity had achieved sufficient funds, from the Vodafone Foundation to appoint a new operational leader, David Spackman, an ex-Army officer who over a number of years successfully strengthened MapAction especially in terms of vital standard operational procedures and overseas missions. In these tasks he was greatly assisted by Roger Wedge an ex-RAF officer who magnificently coordinated the UK end of overseas missions to which David attended in person.

In mid-2002 Rupert withdrew from active involvement in Aid for Aid and went to Stanford University in California, to carry out a Reuters Digital Vision Fellowship to design and build an electronic humanitarian data capture and mapping technology, for mapping in real time⁸. Whilst at Stanford he researched and co-authored a paper for the British National Space Centre on the subject of humanitarian communications requirements in disaster zones, as well as scrubbing floors and cleaning dishes to look after his family and keep ‘body and soul together’. At the end of his time at Stanford, Rupert shared the technology with MapAction and in particular Nick McWilliam and Chris Dowden, the former a GIS expert the latter a wireless and electronic communications expert.

He also asked his Stanford team what they felt the next best step should be. It boiled down to a choice of three questions:-

- a) Start a commercial technology company to build and market a developed model.
- b) Part ways and do nothing.
- c) Start a charity that would complement Aid for Aid (now MapAction).

In the event, the consensus from the team was that, in view of the dire state of the world, option c) was valid, but that a totally new NGO should complement and not compete with Aid for Aid.

After several months an American NGO was registered, called ‘Global MapAid’ which is now focused upon mapping long term poverty rather than emergencies and Desmond Tutu has become its Patron.

⁸ At the end of the fellowship the technology won a US \$5,000 prize from the Business Association of Stanford Engineering Students, which was ploughed in to the new charity ‘Global MapAid.’

Further, it operates a business model more closely aligned towards training locals, which is nearer to the original Aid for Aid business model. Global MapAid is therefore complementary towards MapAction's business case and is not a competitor and since 2003 it has completed a number of successful missions punching well above its weight, including an operation in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to help alleviate immediate poverty by creating 50,000 maps for locals, made from several template maps, with the help of locals.

Life Enhancing Service

From its early inception, the MapAction team knew that rapidly updatable electronic GIS mapping would play a crucial role in its work. After conducting some market research and discussion David Spackman selected ArcGIS Desktop solutions, which ESRI has been providing since 2003. MapAction uses GIS to collate diverse datasets, topography, and satellite imagery and to create dedicated, real-time maps of disaster areas.

Probably one of the greatest contributors to MapAction has been Andrew Douglas-Bate⁹, whose first-hand experience of the 1962 Tehran earthquake has lived with him:-

"The government put out an urgent plea for blankets for the displaced survivors, and the international aid community responded. Many countries sent blankets. The disaster area was soon inundated with them. However, the survivors had many other needs that weren't adequately met. Most of the available money and effort had been focused on sourcing and distributing blankets alone. That lack of international communication, thus the lack of coordination between aid agencies, has stayed with me."

Sadly, the first Chairman, Hugh Beveridge, died in 2004 leaving behind the solid legacy of a professional and well run organisation. As a founder Trustee, Andrew nobly took over and worked tirelessly to establish and promote the charity. Some of Andrew's great skills were his networking abilities and powers of persuasion, which are critical for establishing a new charity. He retired in this role on July 4th 2011, whereupon Roy Wood, formerly UK Director of Military Survey took over.

The ever need for funds also presented itself, and the Vodafone Foundation proved a loyal and invaluable partner to the organisation during the early years, responding with both kindness and imagination, to several requests for funding.

David led MapAction's major deployment to Sri Lanka following the tsunami that devastated the country in January 2004. A twelve person team stayed in the country for three weeks and created map after map, plotting everything from the locations of food stations to the areas where doctors and medical aid were most urgently required. Then president of Sri Lanka, Chandrika Kumaratunga visited the MapAction team to see ArcGIS in action and to personally show her appreciation for the work of the team.

By 2010, MapAction, often in close cooperation with the United Nations, had carried out more than 15 emergency and 55 disaster preparedness missions. In 2008, a typical year, the charity provided an invaluable service following three major disasters that together changed the lives of more than 4.3 million people. MapAction responded to extensive flooding in Bolivia, producing 76 maps in three weeks and distributing over 2,000 copies to government and relief workers. MapAction deployed a team to help deal with the consequences of Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar. It distributed over 3,000 maps and worked closely with the charity Save the Children to help track its relief aid program throughout the devastated

region. MapAction also deployed a team to Haiti where more than 900,000 people were affected by hurricanes and tropical storms. In these ways—and others—MapAction helps save lives.

On one occasion, Kofi Annan, Head of the United Nations, turned up at a MapAction field station after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and requested all the maps available from the rather startled young volunteer, who immediately complied. It speaks for itself when the Head of the United Nations turns up and requests your entire service capability, on-the-spot.

On another occasion Colin Powell, the US Military Commander who was then in a civilian role, after looking at his MapAction packet of briefing maps, stated that he had “never been so well briefed on a disaster.” This too is welcome confirmation that what MapAction does is vitally needed and appreciated by those with the power to take massive decisions to help multitudes of people.

A Rapid Response to Disaster

Today MapAction trains its team members, who all volunteer their time and skills free of charge. The organization currently has over 70 volunteers, around 30 of whom are deployable at a moment's notice. In 2009 Prince Harry became Patron of the charity which was indeed a big encouragement.

The majority of volunteers have GIS skills, but others have complementary operational or medical capabilities. Most importantly, the volunteers all have the right personal attitude and character to cope in very traumatic and challenging circumstances. One of the primary goals of MapAction is to provide a quick response that is both coordinated and effective.

As an ESRI publication noted:

“The first few hours of any disaster are absolutely crucial; this is when lives can be saved” says Rupert Douglas-Bate. MapAction receives an alert about a major incident, usually within an hour of it occurring. The headquarters team immediately put volunteers on standby and begin to amass for the region as much GIS-based map data as possible. When the call to deploy comes, often from the United Nations, a team can usually be dispatched in a matter of hours.

On arrival in a disaster zone, MapAction volunteers, equipped with state-of-the-art GPS units, contextual map data, a satellite link and communications equipment, survey the area and mark the locations of accessible routes and bridges that are still standing, and other waypoint landmarks. They next collect situational information from any reliable source and plot it on accurate contextual maps of the area using ArcGIS Desktop software and laptop computers. As the crisis unfolds and new information becomes available, maps are updated in real time and distributed to other aid agencies both electronically and as hard copies. In the future, MapAction plans to make use of ArcGIS Server to increase the efficiency of rapid mapping and to facilitate interoperation with other GIS-equipped agencies in the humanitarian sector.

An Ambassador for Geographic Information Systems

As a charitable organization, MapAction has always been dependent on donations to enable it to provide its free-of-charge service to developing countries. The organization has received support in kind and cash from many sources: other charities, corporate sponsors, and members of the public, for which we will be ever grateful. We comprehend that it is a “stretch” to understand that funding maps before food for children or hospital reconstruction will help donors and NGOs to understand the gaps and more vitally the priorities for those gaps. In turn this hypothesis means better emergency aid delivery to this who need it most. To bring it right home, imagine not having a car map or a GPS in your car in the UK. Then consider that previous to MapAction, aid workers were expected to operate without maps, in a foreign language, caring for thousands of people, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars or pounds.

As Andrew Douglas-Bate once reported within an ESRI publication:

“When a crisis occurs, donations follow,” says Andrew Douglas-Bate, “but we need funds year-round so that we can train our volunteers, keep up-to-date with technology, and at all times be ready to deploy. David Spackman, our CEO, and Nigel Woof, our operations director, have brought to MapAction a strong organizational structure and clear processes that enable us to operate both effectively and cost efficiently. We have a small, lean headquarters; sophisticated storage and maintenance; and just two full-time and four part-time employees. As a result, MapAction is able to ensure that funding goes directly to where it is needed. Every financial gift really makes a difference to people in need.”

Between major humanitarian crises, MapAction offers its services to the humanitarian community, thus helping it to help itself, in the use of GIS. These skills-transfer projects allow MapAction to play an important secondary role in promoting the benefits of GIS worldwide. In the words of Rupert Douglas-Bate, “MapAction is a good ambassador for GIS at the bleeding edge of human need.”

The position at the end of 2011

At the 2011 annual general meeting, held on December 4th, the new Chief Executive Officer, Nigel Woof reported many good things, one of them being that over the year, 13 million needy people had benefitted from the mapping that had been supplied, by most of the 60 volunteers and small core team. During the year there had only been 3 weeks when there had not been a volunteer somewhere, doing something in terms of emergency mapping.

Annex 1: Founding of Aid for Aid, now MapAction.

AID FOR AID

DEDICATED TO PROVIDING MAPPING IN HUMANITARIAN ZONES

E-mail: aidforaid@aol.com

Web: www.aidforaid.com

British Registered Charity No. 1075977

United Nations Mission in Kosovo Registration No. 5300155-6

Rupert founded Aid for Aid on 14th June 1999. The legal date it changed its name to MapAction was 21st February 2007. See www.mapaction.org

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To Whom It May Concern:

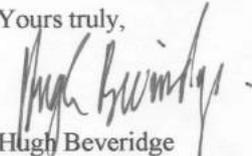
Rupert Douglas-Bate founded Aid for Aid.

It began in 1994 when he was leading a large team, responsible for a lot of money, under war-time conditions in Bosnia. He realised that the optimal effectiveness of relief efforts were not being realised. The lack of timely 'strategic knowledge' available to decision makers including himself, meant that aid was duplicated, missing and often late. The results of this were wasted money and needless suffering on the part of the refugees. There was a humanitarian and commercial imperative to act.

Rupert has struggled against huge odds. There have been numerous problems to solve. Nevertheless he has persevered for years and Aid for Aid now has a thriving field team based in Kosovo which is successfully fulfilling vital mapping contracts for the United Nations humanitarian mission.

In sum, Aid for Aid is prepared to provide 'eyes for the disaster relief community' thus saving lives and enabling money to be better targeted. Rupert's determination and leadership abilities are outstanding and I recommend him to any employer.

Yours truly,



Hugh Beveridge
Chairman Aid for Aid

COOPERATING WITH ASSOCIATES INCLUDING:

Map Info, ADC World Map, The Pathfinder NGOs, Kingston University School of Computer and Electronic Systems, Medical Emergency Relief International