

Ben Mountfield

I am a committed humanitarian professional with extensive field experience in needs assessment, programme design, management, coordination and evaluation.

I have worked at every level from local community to international institution: in volunteer, governance, project management and representation roles, and in NGOs, international organisations and for government.

I have experience from long-term development contexts, in sudden-onset disasters and complex chronic crises, and have a particular strength in early recovery: I am a member of the UNDP roster of early recovery specialists, and I designed and facilitated the early recovery training and emergency cash training for IFRC. I am also a member of the IFRC's surge capacity FACT roster and the DFID roster of Humanitarian Advisors.

My analytical, synthesis and communication skills are strong: I produce high quality documentation and make powerful and convincing presentations that have influenced decision-making and policy. For four years I have been a guest lecturer at the University of Copenhagen's Master in Disaster Management course, where I also co-supervise student theses.

My programmatic experience covers a variety of sectors, in often volatile and sensitive environments. I enjoy developing strategy, building and working with teams, and take real pleasure in providing a framework in which people can deliver results.

I am available for short-term deployments globally, especially in emergency assessment and management, and roles requiring sensitivity, leadership and complex analysis.

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Highlights of consultancy work

Needs assessment and programme design

Suriname, Early Recovery Advisor, UNDP
Design of 2 food security voucher programmes, Zimbabwe
Haiti earthquake, Recovery Assessment Team, IFRC
Pakistan monsoon floods, Recovery Coordinator, IFRC
Haiti, Relief/Recovery Assessment and Strategy Review, IFRC
Gaza, Market Assessment and HEA, ICRC
Managua, Nicaragua, Urban DRR programme design, ADRA
Integrated rural DRR programme, Grand North of Haiti
Nepal Earthquake Recovery Adviser, IFRC

Specialist training, facilitation and production of guidance

Early Recovery Surge Team Training, for the IFRC
Guidance for IFRC ER surge post Haiti and Pakistan
Household Economic Security training for British Red Cross,
Emergency cash transfer training for IFRC; guidance on
internal advocacy and strengthening preparedness for CTP.
Pakistan and Nepal Flooding Simulation Exercises
Guest lecturer in Early Recovery, University of Copenhagen
Sphere Project guidance on M&E, Urban and MDMA's
Framing the Sphere Revision 2017-18

Evaluation, review and research

Multi-agency response to Cyclone Nargis, Myanmar
Palestinian RC response to Operation Cast Lead, Gaza
Tsunami recovery programme, Sri Lanka, Spanish RC
Unconditional Cash and Voucher Projects, Gaza, Oxfam
Gaza, CTP response capacity and preparedness, various
Mekong Floods Operation, Viet Nam, IFRC/VNRC
Pakistan floods relief and recovery, IFRC, 2010-2013
Horn of Africa Early Warning Early Action Research, 2014
WFP Philippines DRR / CCA evaluation, 2011-2017

Employment timeline

Freelance Consultant
Emergency and early recovery
Risk reduction and resilience
Analysis and programme design
Specialist training and facilitation
Review, research and evaluation

Country Coordinator
BRCS Sri Lanka
Tsunami Recovery

Head of Delegation
IFRC Zimbabwe

Project Leader, BRCS DP and Logs
Erzurum, Turkey

Desk Officer, Horn of Africa
British Red Cross

National Youth Officer
British Red Cross

Coordinator, VSU Youth in Action
Tonbridge UK

Volunteer, Oxfam and VSO

Science Resource Officer
Curriculum Development Unit
Ministry of Education, Zimbabwe

Head of Science Department
St. Charles Sec. School, Sanyati
Zimbabwe

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Innovation

In 1990 I wrote my first ever project proposal, and simultaneously created a job for myself providing in-service training for unqualified teachers in post-Independence Zimbabwe, who were teaching science with limited materials in remote rural schools.

To analyse the complex impact of the blockade of Gaza for ICRC, I built a practical, visual tool from the DFID sustainable livelihood framework and a political economy model, and used it to explore three market systems from a number of different perspectives.

Working with a colleague from a different section, during a needs assessment process in 2011, we jointly created what was probably the first interactive SMS satisfaction survey of disaster response beneficiaries – in Haitian Creole - to investigate the impact of extended hygiene parcel distributions.

While reviewing training materials, I developed an interactive PDF tool for the Cash Learning Partnership which allows them to evaluate the impact of training over time at four levels.

Analysis

I enjoy detailed analysis of complex problems, finding connections and exploring various layers. Improved understanding of context and dynamics always leads to better programming, and reduces negative impacts.

For example, in Gaza for Oxfam GB, when looking at a food-based safety net, I built in analysis of gender dynamics, and the wider network of extended families while considering appropriateness and impact; and a consideration of food price variation, exchange rates and the contingency budget when considering the effectiveness.

When supervising the team undertaking the IFRC detailed assessment in Pakistan during the 2010 flooding, I led the development of a thorough multi-sectoral, multi-contextual analytical framework, that was used by each of the field teams and subsequently allowed effective sharing of observations and development of findings during the plenary discussions.

Words and pictures

I aim to produce well-structured reports written in clear English that meet or exceed the expectations of the terms of reference provided.

I believe that evaluation reports benefit from a clear distinction between validated observations (what we see, hear and read), the findings that result from these observations (what we think about the observations), and the subsequent recommendations (what we suggest should be done about them).

I can take large and complex datasets and mine them to identify patterns and trends, which I then explain in clear language. I design surveys, monitoring forms and research tools that generate robust data, which can then effectively tell the story of the process being investigated.

Because people learn and understand in different ways, I make a particular effort to communicate data and concepts using clear charts, histograms and infographics. I believe the quality of the presentation should complement the quality of the content.

Facilitation

I enjoy facilitating diverse groups of people, especially when they have a common goal but diverse perspectives, or when sensitive issues are at stake.

In East Asia, as part of an evaluation process following allegations of corruption, I worked with an international organisation, its politicised local partner and a major donor to overcome communication problems and restore constructive relationships.

In the Horn of Africa, I undertook research into past and present responses to drought, which had to pull together the diverse perspectives of several UN agencies, a number of international NGOs, several donors, the Red Cross and three national governments. While critical of the status quo and progress since 2010, the document also identifies new strategies to improve the quality of responses in the future.

Leadership

As country coordinator of the British Red Cross tsunami recovery programme for Sri Lanka, I created programme offices at the district level, each with a high degree of autonomy - and then guided them to learn from each other and deliver comparable programmes in different locations on the east coast.

I have frequently been selected as team leader for complex evaluations, and can quickly generate a good environment that gives people space to exercise their technical skill within a consistent and directed evaluation framework. I seek to create an opportunity for each to contribute their opinions and expertise, while I remain responsible for decision taking, and accountable for those decisions.

I have also demonstrated leadership within coordinated structures and peer groups, for example within the Red Cross Movement in Sri Lanka, as the elected chair of the partners' group, and when asked to represent Youth Action Agencies on a national panel in the UK.

Consultancy contracts, 2008-2015

2017	VNG International Global	Sphere revision urban consultation <i>Urban perspectives on second draft of Sphere revision in The Hague</i>	2016	The Sphere Project Global	Framing the Next Revision Process <i>Critical path, risk analysis, and review of technological and management processes for the next revision of the Sphere Handbook starting in 2017</i>
	Norwegian Red Cross Global	Recovery Programming in the Red Cross – discussion paper <i>Including case studies from Nepal and Philippines</i>		Norwegian Red Cross, Global	Facilitation of IFRC's Disaster Management Working Group <i>As above - Luxembourg</i>
	Konterra, World Food Programme, Philippines	Philippines DRR/CCA Evaluation <i>Team leader for external evaluation of US\$20m 7-year risk reduction, climate change and disaster preparedness programme.</i>		The Sphere Project, Geneva ⇒	Guidance: Sphere in Urban Environments <i>Development of practical guidance on using sphere standards in urban settings, including field research</i>
	Finnish Red Cross Global	Facilitation of IFRC's Disaster Management Working Group <i>Planning for and facilitation of 3-day meeting for 30+ participants Helsinki, Finland</i>	2015	Oxfam GB Gaza	Programme Review <i>Detailed internal review of theory of change, underlying assumptions and monitoring processes for a food security project</i>
	Habitat for Humanity GB Global	Sphere revision urban consultation and symposium <i>Urban perspectives on Sphere revision first draft. Presentation at urban humanitarian response symposium at RIBA</i>		BRCS and IFRC, Nepal Earthquake	Deployment: Recovery Coordinator <i>Deployment immediately following the earthquake to support response option analysis and development of recovery plans</i>
	UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, Sindh Province, Pakistan	Pakistan HEA Outcome Analysis and Situation Response and Analysis Framework <i>Three-day training on outcome analysis using Pakistan HEA data, and five-day multi-stakeholder SRAF workshop for drought and flood affected districts</i>		IFRC, Geneva ⇒	Mainstreaming Cash Transfer Programming <i>Task: technical edit of draft text, aimed at RC National Societies, to develop preparedness to deliver emergency CTP at scale.</i>
	The Sphere Project Global	Sphere Handbook Introduction <i>First draft of the Introduction to the new Sphere Handbook</i>		Oxfam GB Gaza For the food sector	Research and technical support: Emergency Cash Transfers in Gaza <i>Mapping existing practice, researching beneficiary preferences and (in 2016) providing technical support to 4 INGOs.</i>
	BRCS for IFRC	Facilitation of Surge Meeting <i>Planning for and facilitating strategy meeting on global surge</i>		World Food Programme Rome	Applying Cash and Vouchers approaches to School Feeding <i>Focus: analysis of policy and practice, leading to the development of new guidance for school feeding safety nets. Extension in 2016</i>
2016	Swiss Red Cross, Global	Facilitation of IFRC's Disaster Management Working Group <i>As above – Thun, Switzerland</i>	2014	IFRC Geneva	Emergency Cash Transfer Training <i>Design a new advanced training curriculum for the Red Cross Movement. Deliver pilot training in Geneva (2014), Washington DC, and Kuala Lumpur (2015).</i>
	Danish Red Cross Nepal	National level simulation exercise <i>For government and Nepal Red Cross and partners, field SimEx to test new deployment and surge procedures.</i>		The Sphere Project, Geneva ⇒	Guidance: Sphere for Monitoring and Evaluation <i>Development of practical guidance on using sphere standards in evaluation, linking Sphere to DAC.</i>
	The Sphere Project ⇒	Sphere and NDMA <i>Output: review of content and structure, new case studies: guidance note on working with national disaster management agencies.</i>			
	World Food Programme, Rome/Global	Development of guidelines for Urban Programming for WFP <i>Output: agency specific guidance, both technical and operational, aligned with evolving WFP strategy</i>			

2014	WFP, Global (Niger, Kenya Bangladesh)	Research: estimating beneficiary and user numbers for CFA/FFA projects <i>Output: methodology and guidelines for country offices and partners</i>	2013	American Red Cross Port-au-Prince Haiti	Detailed workplan for integrated urban resilience programme <i>Key outputs: integrated programme framework, integrated implementation plan, geographical methodology.</i>
	Oxfam GB, Gaza	Evaluation of ECHO funded unconditional cash transfers <i>Key issues: exploring the concept of a human over-ride to the PMTF used to target beneficiaries of the safety nets; inclusion and exclusion.</i>		IFRC / VNRC Viet Nam	Evaluation: Mekong floods emergency and early recovery operation Team Leader <i>Key questions: impact and lessons learned across emergency relief, cash grants and permanent shelter.</i>
	ICVA Geneva	Review of Partnership Guidelines <i>Outputs: analysis of UN-NGO partnership agreement and production of guidance.</i>	2012	Oxfam GB, Gaza ⇒	Evaluation: voucher programme for food insecurity <i>Key questions: food security, economic and social impacts and comparisons with food distributions</i>
	UNHCR Global	Evaluation of UNHCR relationship with UNV <i>Key Questions: what value can UNV add in emergency operations; what is the appropriate balance of UNV and UNOPS within the workforce?</i>		IFRC, Global: Viet Nam, Philippines ⇒	Cash Transfer Programming <i>Tasks: revision of online CTP training; training delivery; development of internal advocacy materials on CTP</i>
2013	IFRC, Oxfam, Save the Children, FAO, and WFP; Horn of Africa ⇒	Early Warning, Early Action Research: <i>How can drought warning be better linked to flexible finance, contingency plans and resilience building?</i>		American Red Cross NW, N and NE Haiti	Programme design: integrated rural DRR programme <i>Included detailed multi-sector options analysis and participatory workshop with HQ and field stakeholders to finalise proposal.</i>
	Pakistan Red Crescent, IFRC	Simulation Exercise: country-wide flooding <i>Tasks: Design of simulation materials, facilitation of 3 day event; lesson learning</i>		Oxfam GB, Gaza ⇒	Evaluation: unconditional cash grants project <i>Key questions: modality, impact, gender relations and sustainability</i>
	IFRC, Asia Pacific, Bangladesh ⇒	Evaluation: cash transfer projects <i>Detailed review of three linked cash transfer programme components - including facilitation of a learning review workshop for donors and implementers</i>		ADRA Nicaragua	Programme design: Urban DRR <i>Develop integrated DRR proposal in Managua District 3 for OFDA</i>
	CaLP and IFRC, global ⇒	Global Learning Event: Improving preparedness for CTP <i>Key questions: what can be done by humanitarian agencies to better plan for swift, large-scale cash transfer programmes?</i>	2011	IFRC South Asia	Regional Disaster Response Teams Skills Development Review <i>Key question: how can the training and development of RDRT members be made most effective?</i>
	IFRC, Pakistan ⇒	Monsoon Floods Evaluation <i>Substantial summative evaluation of relief and integrated recovery, drawing on multiple sectoral reviews, using innovative qualitative analytical tools</i>		IFRC, Malaysia ⇒*	FERST: facilitate training <i>Global training as below, with stronger emphasis on multi-sectoral, cash, markets and response option analysis.</i>
	The Sphere Project ⇒	Guidance: Sphere 4 Monitoring <i>Development of practical guidance in better use of Sphere Standards in monitoring humanitarian programmes.</i>		Cash Learning Partnership (CaLP)	Review: CTP training materials and monitoring tools <i>Key tasks: consult trainers and participants, review monitoring tools, recommend changes to approach, content and monitoring.</i>
				ICRC Geneva Pakistan, Kenya, Somali delegation	Review: the Economic Security training programme <i>Tasks: review the training programme, consider alignment with revised strategy, and recommend improvements.</i>

2011	CaLP	Technical support to cash transfer programming research projects <i>Key tasks: Selection and management of consultants for research projects into contingency planning and market assessment; review of toolkit materials.</i>	2009	BRCS Global event	Training: Household Economic Security. <i>Review existing training and revise to provide an environment where new skills could be practiced and tested.</i>
	ICRC Gaza	Market Assessment, Gaza - linked with parallel HEA process <i>Key Question: what is the impact of the 'easing' of the blockade on households and markets in Gaza?</i>		IFRC Uganda ⇒*	FERST: Facilitate training. <i>Federation Early Recovery Surge Team Training (See above and below)</i>
	IFRC Haiti	Relief assessment, feeding into the Federation's revised strategic plan for recovery in Haiti Team leader <i>Key Question: what is the correct balance of relief and recovery programming at this stage?</i>		PRCS, Gaza	Evaluation: Palestinian Red Crescent <i>Key question: Identify lessons learned during operation Cast Lead during January 2009.</i>
	IFRC Global ⇒□*	Research / analysis: developing recovery surge capacity <i>Objective: Build on experience from Pakistan and Haiti to develop recommendations for rapid deployment of technical recovery staff to emergency operations.</i>		Danish RC and partners, Zimbabwe	Programme design: urban and rural voucher projects <i>Key tasks: address food insecurity issues, including monitoring framework, ECHO proposal.</i>
2010	BRCS London	Training: Household Economic Security <i>Key tasks: Revise curriculum, and facilitate second round of training; produce full training pack.</i>	2008	UNDP Suriname	Deployment: Early Recovery Advisor <i>Objective: support the GoS in a multi-stakeholder process to reflect on the 2008 floods, including capacity analysis, hazard mapping, action plan, and strategic framework.</i>
	Spanish RC, Sri Lanka ⇒□	Evaluation: tsunami recovery programme <i>Main focus: Lesson learning from four livelihoods projects on the west coast of Sri Lanka.</i>		American Red Cross and IFRC Global, Wash. DC	Training: cash in emergencies <i>Key tasks: review existing CaLP materials, and design and co-facilitate a 4-day programme.</i>
	IFRC Pakistan	Deployment: Recovery Coordinator <i>Deployed into the emergency phase to design and oversee the recovery assessment process, develop the Recovery Framework, and revise the Plan of Action.</i>		ACT Alliance Myanmar	Evaluation: relief operations following cyclone Nargis. <i>Leading on: lessons learned; accountability, Sphere, Code of Conduct.</i>
	Netherlands RC Global Viet Nam, Indonesia, Kenya	Evaluation: MoFA funded NLRC 'delegates programme' <i>Key question: what was the impact on disaster response capacity of recipient organisations?</i>		Indian RC New Delhi	Strategic Plan for India Red Cross <i>Key task: Support the finalisation of the 5-year strategic development plan.</i>
	IFRC Geneva Haiti	Analysis: develop a business plan for recovery <i>For the IFRC to Haitian government and other key stakeholders.</i>		Private sub-contract	Training <i>Development of pilot syllabus to mainstream DRR and DRM within a regional development bank.</i>
	IFRC, Haiti	Recovery Assessment, Earthquake. <i>Sector team leader for Economic Recovery, Food Security and Livelihoods</i>		IFRC Global, Nepal ⇒*	FERST: Federation Early Recovery Surge Team Training <i>Key tasks: Design and facilitation of a new training course, including simulation and fieldwork, for senior recovery practitioners to be deployed in sudden onset emergencies.</i>

Consultancy contracts, 2008-2015

2008	UNDP India	Evaluation of UN supported Gol community based DRM programme Field visit to Maharashtra. State report and inputs to National report.	⇒ Link to webpage ⇒📄 Link to document ⇒* access control <i>Other documents may be available on request</i>
	BRCS	Development of 'Practitioner's Note' On early recovery programming working in conflict environments.	

Performance evaluation

Humanitarian consultants are generally fairly exempt from performance evaluation processes - although they are subject to market pressures on the basis of their performance. There are few opportunities for reflection on the quality of work, based on professional feedback, unless those opportunities are deliberately created.

For two years, as part of my developing professional practice I asked all those who contracted me as a consultant to complete an online performance evaluation. Questions covered the degree of complexity of the task, the quality of my approach, the degree to which the managers' expectations were met, the quality and utility of the outputs, a measure of efficiency, and whether or not the manager would recommend me to others or use my services again.

"Good interviews (I got positive feedback from respondents, who felt free to express themselves on sometimes sensitive issues); solid report with useful recommendations that we already started working on"

"The evaluation report is very well written, in easy to understand language and with a clear structure. The presentation to the back-donor was also highly appreciated."

"Constructive cooperation and a high level of flexibility"

"Ben is an excellent professional. Very analytical in his way of thinking, strategic and solution oriented. Quick to get a comprehensive overview and take action."

"Ben Mountfield has a talent for making respondents feel comfortable, which induces them to talk freely about sensitive issues. He upholds his independence as a consultant, insisting on telling also the more difficult stories, but always in a constructive way. That makes him a good evaluator."

"It was an enriching experience to work with Ben"

Ben Mountfield

Employment history, 1991-2008

British Red Cross (BRC) July 2005 to July 2008	Country Coordinator, Sri Lanka Tsunami Recovery Programme Representation, leadership, strategy and programme design for post-tsunami and post-conflict environments Rapid switch from recovery approach to emergency relief during the conflict and displacement in the east of the country Management of large diverse and dispersed team; security management Coordination and networking in complex partner environment Programming in livelihoods recovery, disaster risk reduction, shelter, and first aid training
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) July 2002 to July 2005	Head of Delegation, Zimbabwe Represent the Federation in Zimbabwe Situation analysis and strategy development Management of Federation relief and recovery programmes; fundraising Capacity building and support to Zimbabwe Red Cross Regional responsibility for security Act as HoRD during frequent absences and between post holders (see below)
IFRC June to September 2004	Acting Head of Regional Delegation, Southern Africa Leadership and management, including technical support, coordination, and strategy development to the 10 RC National Societies in Southern Africa, Lead the development of coordinated regional plans, appeals and budget 2005. Oversee a nine-country, multi-donor HIV & AIDS programme, and other operations
BRC July 2001 to July 2002	Project Leader, Erzurum Disaster Preparedness & Logistics Development Project Representation and leadership Manage warehouse construction and rehabilitation projects; Support the development of BRCS bilateral operational guidelines and policy.
BRC March 1998 to July 1991	Desk Officer, East Africa and Greater Horn (London) Develop and present BRCS' strategic plan for the region. Identify, support, monitor and evaluate programmes Build and maintain relationships with implementing partners
BRC Jan 1997 to March 1998	National Youth Officer, London Manage, monitor, evaluate and report on projects, often remotely. Develop grant and project management tool

VSU Youth in Action April 1994 to December 1996	Coordinator, Tonbridge, UK Design and run projects to enable young volunteers to deliver real services to the local community Create and lead effective teams of staff and volunteers
Oxfam and VSO April 1993 to March 1994	Volunteer Design and deliver education programmes for Oxfam in SE England Co-produce a book for VSO on returning to teaching in the UK.
MoE Zimbabwe March 1991 to March 93	Resource Officer, Curriculum Development Unit, Zimbabwe Production of teaching and learning materials Design and delivery of in-service training across 16 districts
MoE (Zim) Jan 88 – Jan 91	Head of Science Dept, St Charles Sec School Acting deputy head of school

Summary of education and professional training

2013	Hostile Environment Awareness Training, DFID, UK, 10 days
2012	Field Assessment Coordination Team (FACT) induction, IFRC, Liberia, 10 days
2009	Early Recovery Cluster Coordinator / Recovery Advisor (UNDP 1 week)
2007	IFRC Assessment Centre for Senior Field Managers Conflict Analysis and Programming (RTC, Birmingham UK; 5 days) Security Management (BRCS, Sri Lanka; 3 days)
2004	Finance for non-financial managers (IFRC, Zimbabwe; 1 week)
2000	Project Management (BRCS, London; 3 days)
1999	Logical Framework (1 day) Financial Management (INTRAC; 1 day)
1998	Developing Management Skills (BRCS; 4 days) Delegate's Basic Training Course (BRCS; 8 days)
1997	MS Project - project management software; (3 days)
1995	Appraisal Training for Managers (KCC; 3 days)
1986	BSc (Honours) Chemistry, Exeter University, UK
1983	Advanced Level Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics; Gravesend Grammar School
1981	Ordinary level in nine subjects including English, French and German