



# JHU - CERTI UPDATE

The Johns Hopkins University (JHU), Center for Refugee and Disaster Studies  
Linking Complex Emergency Relief and Transition Initiative (CERTI)

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## ABOUT JHU-CERTI

The **Johns Hopkins University (JHU)** School of Public Health, Center for Refugee and Disaster Studies is a **CERTI** collaborating institution. **CERTI** is an acronym for the "Linking Complex Emergency Response and Transition Initiative," an interagency initiative funded in part by **USAID**. To learn more about **CERTI**, visit the **CERTI** web page at: <http://payson.tulane.edu/CERTI/default.htm> and visit the **Center for Refugee and Disaster Studies** web site: <http://www.jhsph.edu/refugee/default.html>

## TECHNICAL REVIEW OF RAP

A technical review meeting was held on 25 May 2000 to discuss how to improve the January 2000 draft of the document, **Rapid Assessment Procedures (RAP): A Guide to Understanding the Perceived Needs of Refugees and Internally Displaced Populations**. The RAP was developed as a tool for agencies working with transitional populations (displaced or returning) following a disaster or complex human emergency. The RAP allows these agencies to investigate the priority needs of a transitional population *from their own perspective*.

Six persons reviewed the RAP. Four of the six technical reviewers were representatives of US-based non-governmental organizations (PVOs) that carry out relief and development programs: **American Red Cross, CARE, Save the Children and World Vision**. The fifth reviewer was a representative of a the **Academy for Educational Development (AED)**, Center for Applied and Behavioral Evaluation Research. The sixth reviewer was a medical anthropologist from **Sociomedical Resource Associates**.

Four of the six reviewers were able to attend the review meeting. At the meeting reviewers presented their comments. Then, the reviewers and the others attending the meeting discussed

the comments and identified priorities for modification of the RAP Guide.

After the meeting, the recommendations for improvement were categorized into three major themes: design of the RAP study, format of the RAP guide, and methods used in the RAP guide. The priorities for improvement of the RAP, by theme, are as follows:

- **Design** - shift the emphasis of the RAP from "leaning toward being more extractive" to being much more participatory, streamline the RAP to focus on problem solving, give much more emphasis to action by 'community' members and with existing resources;
- **Methods** - re-design the methods to better ensure the marginalized or those most affected by priority problems are given a voice in the action planning;
- **Format** - re-format the RAP Guide to include a justification of participatory needs assessments, guidelines regarding raising expectations and sensitive issues, and make the Guide more "field-friendly."

**JHU-CERTI** will field-test the RAP this summer, incorporating the technical review comments. A specific site to field-test the RAP is being investigated. Following the field-test, **JHU-CERTI** will produce a 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the RAP by the end of September 2000. The current edition of the RAP can be found at the following website: <http://www.jhsph.edu/refugee/resources.html>

## MEASURING & ADDRESSING THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL NEEDS OF DISPLACED POPULATIONS

**JHU-CERTI** is working with **World Vision** to organize a meeting on improving the quality of NGO psychosocial programs. The meeting will have two purposes:

1. Review the November 1999 Rwanda field trial of a **methodology**

**for cross-cultural assessment of the burden of community psychosocial problems**. The methodology—field-tested by **World Vision** and **JHU-CERTI**—is designed to allow PVOs & NGOs to quantitatively assess the burden of trauma at the population level across cultures.

This tool provides baseline information to help PVOs/NGOs decide if an intervention is needed and later to decide if the intervention has been effective. This new methodology does not require the involvement of a cross-cultural psychiatrist for validation as do existing methodologies.

2. Suggest approaches that NGOs could apply to assist persons with severe psychosocial problems, given common limitations of NGO programs and their settings.

The meeting will be in Washington, DC during the week of 24 - 28 July 2000. At this time, representatives of **JHU-CERTI, World Vision, Christian Children's Fund, American Red Cross, the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma, and Columbia University** are scheduled to participate. Contact **Paul Bolton** if you have questions at [pbolton@jhsph.edu](mailto:pbolton@jhsph.edu).

## WHITE PAPER: PVO NEEDS IN TRANSITION

**JHU-CERTI** has put the final touches on a paper reporting the main difficulties PVOs face when serving populations in transition. The analysis of this paper was summarized in the prior **JHU-CERTI Update** (12 May 2000), available on request.

The **JHU-CERTI UPDATE** is published by the JHU Center for Refugee and Disaster Studies. If you have questions or comments about this *Update*, please contact Bill Weiss at [bweiss@jhsph.edu](mailto:bweiss@jhsph.edu) or 1-410-614-6172.