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## Humanitarian Negotiations Revealed: The MSF Experience

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**From Hurst : Humanitarian Negotiations Revealed: The MSF Experience** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Humanitarian Negotiations Revealed: The MSF Experience:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. dry writing style  
By avid fan  
more of a report than a narrative. somewhat repetitive, i was better informed after reading this book. it offered some very interesting insights about providing humanitarian aid that are never covered in news stories.  
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. amazing volunteer organization  
By Sand pebbles  
Excellent read. The book is straight forward and shows the complexity of involvement of this organization in the places they go to help.  
1 of 2 people found the following review

helpful. Loved it  
By Betty ZI came across this book after watching the documentary "Triage" Excellent read for anyone interested in World health Care Crisis

From international NGOs to UN agencies, from donors to observers of humanitarianism, opinion is unanimous: in a context of the alleged "clash of civilizations", our "humanitarian space" is shrinking. Put another way, the freedom of action and of speech of humanitarians is being eroded due to the radicalisation of conflicts and the reaffirmation of state sovereignty over aid actors and policies. The purpose of this book is to challenge this assumption through an analysis of the events that have marked MSF's history since 2003 (when MSF published its first general work on humanitarian action and its relationships with governments). It addresses the evolution of humanitarian goals, the resistance to these goals and the political arrangements that overcame this resistance (or that failed to do so). The contributors seek to analyse the political transactions and balances of power and interests that allow aid activities to move forward, but that are usually masked by the lofty rhetoric of "humanitarian principles". They focus on one key question: what is an acceptable compromise for MSF? This book seeks to puncture a number of the myths that have grown up over the forty years since MSF was founded and describes in detail how the ideals of humanitarian principles and "humanitarian space" operating in conflict zones are in reality illusory. How, in fact, it is the grubby negotiations with varying parties, each of whom have their own vested interests, that may allow organisations such as MSF to operate in a given crisis situation - or not.

These stories and reflections illustrate the tragic humanitarian paradox: to act morally, one can't always be principled. Neutrality and impartiality disappear into the pantheon of defunct ideals, as Médecins Sans Frontières defends a robust opportunism in the best sense of the word: reality-based situational ethics. (Dirk Salomons, director, Program for Humanitarian Affairs at the School of International Public Affairs, Columbia University) This collection represents a maturing of Médecins Sans Frontières's view of the world. There is now a nuanced pragmatic approach which keeps its eye firmly on the goal of alleviating suffering but understands the need to compromise and invent, choosing the best possible path to reach the goal. (Peter Walker, director, Feinstein International Center, Tufts University) A highly readable and challenging appraisal of what it means to be a humanitarian actor in today's rebalancing world. With refreshing honesty, it explores the thin line that humanitarian agencies tread between saving lives and supporting oppressors. This brave and informative book reconfirms Médecins Sans Frontières as an organization that thinks as well as acts. (Mark Duffield, director, Global Insecurities Centre, University of Bristol) The book brings out the perennial dangers of silence and stresses the continuing need to highlight the hidden victims of 'just wars.' It also exemplifies Médecins Sans Frontières's tradition of self-criticism and internal disagreement, traditions now more valuable than ever. (David Keen, London School of Economics and Political Science) the most detailed and self-critical inside account of the deals aid agencies are forced to negotiate, often with groups and regimes which abuse human rights, to continue their work. (Peter Beaumont Guardian) This is a very valuable book. It shows one of the world's great humanitarian organizations thinking aloud about the difficult choices it faces as it struggles to save and protect human life. The tone of Humanitarian Negotiations Revealed is exceptional for its frank and public self-scrutiny. In this respect, it breaks new ground and reveals a truly reflective humanitarian movement that is not afraid to learn in public. Its honesty and the insights into humanitarian history it offers make the book an important reference text in humanitarian studies, international relations, and organizational theory. And of course it will fascinate those who continue to be intrigued by the particular aura and mystique of Médecins Sans Frontières. (Hugo Slim, University of Oxford, author of Killing Civilians: Method, Madness, and Morality in War) About the Author Claire Magone spent several years working with Action contre la Faim/Action Against Hunger and Médecins Sans Frontières before coordinating Sidaction's international programs. Michael Neuman joined Médecins Sans Frontières in 1999. His work focuses on political analysis and issues of immigration and geopolitics. Fabrice Weissman has been working with Médecins Sans Frontières since 1995 and is the editor of In the Shadow of "Just Wars": Violence, Politics, and Humanitarian Action. All three editors are directors of studies at Médecins Sans Frontières's Centre de réflexion sur l'action et les savoirs humanitaires, Fondation Médecins Sans Frontières.