

AID AGENTS NEED BETTER PR

HUMANITARIAN aid agencies are not receiving proper media coverage because of a lack of training in press relations, a survey has revealed.

The report, by the Fritz Institute and Reuters' AlertNet, *Toward New Understandings: Journalists & Humanitarian Relief Coverage*, found that non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are also not taking advantage of the internet to generate interest.

The survey interviewed 290 international journalists and 54 NGO press officers. It concluded that while journalists were frustrated by the lack of aid organisations' media understanding, NGOs in turn were concerned at media representatives' lack of specialist background knowledge.

The shortcoming in media training among NGOs may be because of the desire to spend funds on relief work. "But diverting a relatively small proportion of funds to training could reap dividends in terms of press coverage and ultimately, donations," Mark Jones, the editor of AlertNet, says in *Third Sector* (March 3).

The report also found that relief agencies' websites did not provide sufficiently detailed information for reporters unable to travel to crisis areas. It concludes that a single organisation should be set up to assist journalists.

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