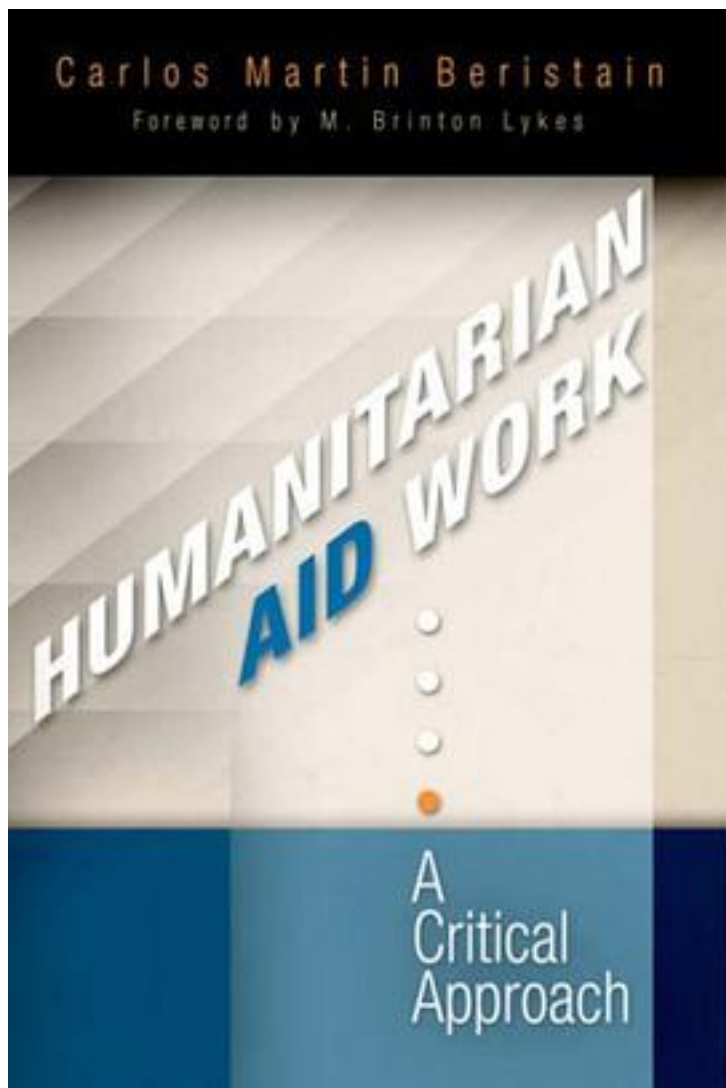


Humanitarian Aid Work



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"Drawing on over a decade of field experiences in Latin America as well as a burgeoning literature about the psychological and social effects of war and disasters, Martin Beristain developed this volume at the interface of theory and practice as one response to these complex social and political realities. Humanitarian Aid Work offers an excellent introduction to those seeking to respond to the complex social, political, cultural, and linguistic diversities within any humanitarian crisis."-from the Foreword

Throughout the world, there is a rising need for humanitarian aid. Enormous resources are being devoted to it; more organizations carry out cooperative projects; and emergency actions have grown to unprecedented levels. However, such expansion has not always meant that relief has been more adequately provided to victims, nor has it always had positive effects in reconstructing the social fabric. This book helps us to understand how people respond to traumatic experiences in extraordinary circumstances and to appreciate the social and cultural context in which these responses occur. Carlos Martin Beristain offers a psychosocial approach that advocates a cultural sensitivity for humanitarian action and the work of collaboration, assistance, and accompaniment. He suggests alternative ideas for social reconstruction in such areas as prevention, care of victims, collective memory, respect for human rights, and help to the helpers. Humanitarian Aid Work offers a constructive approach to the problems of groups affected by violence, catastrophe, or emergency situations. It is intended as a critical manual for aid workers. Academic research in psychology and the social sciences-as well as the author's experience in Central and South America-has been summarized to yield clear, action-oriented guidance. Research results from Europe, Africa, and Asia are also incorporated.

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