

MICHAEL D. COOPER, Esq.



Engaged in the human rights and humanitarian relief field for more than two decades, Michael Cooper spent six years with Mercy Corps, a global leader in emergency response and sustainable development. Michael began his tenure with Mercy Corps in 2003 when—as Director of Humanitarian Programs—he helped to launch and lead the agency’s \$38 million USAID/OFDA relief effort in war-torn Iraq. Later, as Director-at-Large, Michael partnered with world-renowned designer Edwin Schlossberg to conceive and build Mercy Corps’ *Action Center to End World Hunger* near ground zero in Manhattan, with a permanent home for the Action Center later established in Portland, Oregon. A licensed attorney, Mr. Cooper has worked for several other leading international agencies as well, including Médecins du Monde, the International Rescue Committee, and Human Rights Watch.

During NATO’s Kosovo intervention, Michael served with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees as a Protection Officer, working closely with KFOR troops and international agencies to provide legal and physical protection for refugees, returnees, and internally displaced persons from all ethnic groups. Along with Iraq and Kosovo, Michael’s work has taken him to such diverse places as Chiapas, Albania, Mongolia, China, and Iran. As Director of the Human Rights Office for the Roosevelt Institute, Mr. Cooper conceived and led the *In Your Hands* campaign, a national initiative to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Joining Michael at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, Hillary Clinton helped to launch the year-long education and advocacy campaign, which culminated in 50 Human Rights Town Hall Meetings across America and a White House ceremony hosted by President Clinton.

Michael is managing director of The Ploughshare Group, LLC. He has raised tens of millions of dollars for human rights and humanitarian causes—from individuals, corporations, foundations, international organizations, and governments. In New York, he directed the *Human Rights Watch Council*, launched the *Human Rights Watch Young Advocates*, and served on HRW’s international advocacy team. He worked in the first Obama Administration as Special Assistant in the Office of the Solicitor at the U.S. Department of Labor where he advised senior department officials on legal issues related to terrorism and the protection of federal facilities. On behalf of the Center for Global Development, Michael recently published a comprehensive MacArthur-funded study of the European legal regime governing persons displaced by natural disaster. With a German publisher, he is expanding this paper for publication as an academic book in 2015.

Michael’s work has been featured by the New York Times, Daily News, Huffington Post, Associated Press, PBS, and others. He currently serves as a Director with the Friends of the World Federation of United Nations Associations and on the U.N. Committee of the New York City Bar Association, as well as the Association’s Immigration and Nationality Law Committee, and Climate Change Task Force. He worked in Ohio for both the Kerry and Obama Campaigns.

Michael studied in Norway at the Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO) and has a Masters in Global Policy and Conflict Resolution from New York University. He is a Public Interest Law Scholar at Georgetown University Law Center, from which he received his J.D. along with a Certificate in Refugees and Humanitarian Emergencies. Mr. Cooper is admitted to practice in the State of New York and the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York.

MICHAEL D. COOPER, Esq.

MANAGING DIRECTOR

THE PLOUGHSHARE GROUP, LLC

NEW YORK, WASHINGTON, OTTAWA & BRUSSELS

2010 TO PRESENT

- Currently under contract with the U.N. to create multi-stakeholder partnerships for relief and development.
- Served on plaintiff's team in pioneering apartheid class action appeal—*Balintulo v. Daimler AG* (2nd Cir.).
- Published 40,000 word MacArthur-funded study on natural disaster and European migration/asylum law.
- Served as senior advisor to *SunSpots*—a disaster preparedness and clean energy civic infrastructure project.
- Managed reconstruction and rehabilitation of disaster-affected real property in New York State.
- Authored personal memoir under contract with Hyperion, publishing arm of the Walt Disney Company.

SPECIAL ASSISTANT (OFFICE OF THE SOLICITOR)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

WASHINGTON & OTTAWA

2009

- Discovered and alerted leadership to a highly consequential legal issue regarding delegation of authority.
- Developed expertise and briefed senior leaders on legal regime governing protection of federal facilities.
- Researched a range of legal issues regarding terrorism, national security, and infrastructure protection.
- Drafted intra-agency legal agreements along with other legal memoranda and correspondence.
- Completed extensive three-day training on compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

DIRECTOR OF HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMS & DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE

MERCY CORPS

IRAQ, NEW YORK, ET AL.

2003 TO 2009

- Conceived, designed, and built the *Action Center to End World Hunger* near “ground zero” in New York.
 - Secured 60-year public amenity lease (valued at \$10-\$25M) and raised \$5+ million to support construction.
 - Catalyzed merger with like-minded agency, *NetAid*—attracting talent, real property, and \$3+ million cash.
 - Initiated agency's first-ever capital campaign, which met its target of \$37.5M including government funds.
 - Pressed architectural, construction, and design teams to achieve LEED Platinum certification.
 - Negotiated dozens of complex contracts, leases, and agreements with government and the private sector.
 - Drafted board resolutions, managed pro bono counsel relationships, and ensured legal compliance.
 - Engaged dozens of celebrities and political leaders with Mercy Corps—Caroline Kennedy to Tina Fey.
 - Launched *Action Center* web site which was honored as a 2009 Webby Award finalist for “Activism.”
 - Tackled a variety of agency matters on short-term assignments to Iran, Mongolia, China, and elsewhere.
 - Represented Mercy Corps at the United Nations with individual country Ambassadors and U.N. Agencies.
 - Raised millions to support field programs in Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, China, and elsewhere.
- As *Director of Humanitarian Programs* in Iraq co-led USAID/OFDA aid effort (\$38 million year-one budget).
- Directed \$8 million U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) water and sanitation program.
 - Assumed primary responsibility for the security of agency staff members in southern Iraq.
 - Managed operations (administration, logistics, procurement, communications, transportation fleet, etc.).
 - Secured and built out headquarters for country program with 30+ international and 165+ Iraqi staff.
 - Rehabilitated water treatment plant and reticulation systems in Al-Kut, a city of some 300,000 people.
 - Implemented dozens of large- and small-scale projects to provide clean water to thousands in rural villages.
 - Monitored status of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Wassit and Qadissiyah Governates.

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

DOCTORS OF THE WORLD

NEW YORK

2002

- Directed 8 FTEs in raising \$4+ million annually to support global health and human rights programs.
- Guided relationship with USAID and other institutional donors; revamped nascent annual campaign.
- Led conversion to *Raiser's Edge 7*, the world's premier donor records management database.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND OUTREACH**HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH**

NEW YORK

2000 TO 2001

- Managed staff of 17+ FTEs in department responsible for raising \$20 million annually.
- Directed *Human Rights Watch Council*—influential donors providing 25% of annual operating income.
- Served as International Advocacy Team leader on strategic engagement of Board and Council members.
- Assisted in successful campaign to urge President Clinton to sign the International Criminal Court treaty.
- Developed a Council Handbook to help members engage in advocacy, outreach, and fundraising initiatives.
- Maintained a pool of some 250 major gift (\$5K+) donors and prospects (research, cultivation, solicitation).
- Supported Executive Director's fundraising work (strategy, correspondence, cultivation, solicitation).
- Created public events with Geoffrey Robertson, Q.C., Justice Richard Goldstone, Samuel Berger, etc.
- Launched *Human Rights Watch Young Advocates* in New York to feed future supporters to the agency.
- Restructured a 40,000-record database and rationalized prospect, donor, and income tracking systems.

HUMAN RIGHTS PROTECTION OFFICER**UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES**

KOSOVO (AND ALBANIA)

1999

- Entered Kosovo alongside advancing KFOR troops after NATO's "peace agreement" with Yugoslavia.
- Supported launch of UNHCR's emergency response operation in southwestern Kosovo (Prizren area).
- Conducted initial assessments of devastated villages as first envoy of the international community on hand.
- Fought to protect human rights of heavily pressured minorities (Serb/Roma) and repatriating Albanians.
- Worked with UN and KFOR military officers to ensure physical and legal protection of beneficiaries.
- Coordinated protection with governmental, NGO, and international agencies (IOM, ICRC, OSCE).
- Organized KFOR military escorts and patrols, relocations, and emergency evacuations as needed.
- Executed what was, at the time, the largest "post-conflict" evacuation of Serbs from Kosovo.

As *Grants Coordinator* for the **INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE** in Albania during NATO offensive:

- Directed donor liaison, grant writing, reporting, and compliance for complex emergency relief effort.
- Administered and helped raise more than \$6 million to support refugee protection programs in Albania.
- Managed relationships with USAID, PRM/DART, UNHCR, DFID, Stichting Vluchteling and others.
- Conducted inspections and assessments of shelter and host family programs throughout Albania.

DIRECTOR, HUMAN RIGHTS OFFICE**THE ROOSEVELT INSTITUTE**

NEW YORK

1996 TO 1999

Convened an unprecedented coalition of more than 125 mainstream organizations (representing 100 million Americans) in a yearlong education and action campaign to mark the 50th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The *In Your Hands* campaign became a model program for other countries.

- Raised nearly \$650K from foundations (e.g. Ford, MacArthur), corporations, labor unions, and individuals.
- Negotiated a *National Human Rights Agenda* to mark the 50th anniversary and developed key resources to promote that agenda including a *National Human Rights Speakers Bureau* (with more than 300 human rights experts) and a 130-page *Community Action Guide* to mobilize communities across the nation.
- Developed an award-winning web site with historical information, interactive advocacy materials, sophisticated public databases, and on-line commercial transaction capacity. Logged over 1 million hits.
- Engaged Hillary Clinton's participation in the campaign launch at the U.S. Mission to the U.N., as well as President Carter's participation in a special segment of the *1998 Goodwill Games* closing ceremony.
- Secured campaign endorsement from President and Mrs. Clinton, including a White House ceremony in which President Clinton inaugurated the first *Eleanor Roosevelt Presidential Medal for Human Rights*.
- Organized 50 *Town Hall Meetings* in cities across the country to mark the 50th anniversary, and staged a major 1½ hour *National Town Hall Meeting*—broadcast live via satellite for down-link at local events.
- Contributed to realization of substantive campaign goals including establishment of an International Criminal Court, adoption of a *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Human Rights Defenders*, and signing of Presidential Executive Order on *Implementation of Human Rights Treaties* (E.O. 13107).

PRIOR POSITIONS

- **President, Ploughshare Productions, Inc.** (NY, 1993-96) Founded nonprofit to engage a new generation of advocates through programs highlighting the connection between human rights and American values.
- **Executive Director, The National Shakespeare Company** (NY, 1992-93) Directed operation of a 30-year-old nonprofit theatre company producing national tours of classical theatre for approximately 120 communities across the nation each year (\$400,000+ budget, 25 FTEs). Led facilities renovation planning.
- **Director of Information Services, NYU** (NY, 1988-92) Directed operation of public information center responding to 350,000+ inquiries annually (\$450,000+ budget, 20 FTEs). Chaired United Way campaign.
- **Staff Manager, AT&T Public Relations** (NY, 1986-88) Managed 35 FTEs at *InfoQuest*—an interactive public education center featuring state-of-the-art information and communications technology.

EDUCATION

- J.D. *Georgetown University Law Center*, May 2010 (Public Interest Law Scholar)
 - Certificate in Refugees and Humanitarian Emergencies *Georgetown University Law Center*, May 2010
- M.A. Global Policy and Conflict Resolution (Liberal Studies), *New York University*, May 1993
 - Certificate in Peace Research, *University of Oslo/Peace Research Institute of Oslo*, Norway, 1990
- B.F.A. with honors in Drama, *Tisch School of the Arts, New York University*, June 1986

SELECT PUBLICATIONS AND MEDIA WORK

- *We Must Honor the Rule of Law for Desperate Children at the U.S. Border*, with Lenni Benson and Farrin R. Anello. THE HUFFINGTON POST, July 31, 2014.
- *Unnatural Disasters: Rethinking the Distinction between Natural and Man-Made Catastrophe*, MONTHLY DEVELOPMENTS MAGAZINE, Vol. 31 No. 9, Sep. 2013.
- *The Conversation about Torture We Need to Have: Blaming ‘Zero Dark Thirty’ Misses the Point*, with Jennifer Trahan. N.Y. DAILY NEWS, Jan. 25, 2013.
- *Migration and Disaster-Induced Displacement: European Policy, Practice, and Perspective*, Center for Global Development, Working Paper 308, Oct. 2012 (funded by the MacArthur Foundation).
- *Three Nonprofit Groups Get a Manhattan Deal: \$1 a Year*, N.Y. TIMES, J. Alex Tarquinio, July 18, 2007.
- *Soldiers Pay*, featured in documentary by Academy Award nominated director David O. Russell, 2004.
- *Mercy Corps Reinvents Security in a Time of War*, A.P., Rukmini Callimachi, Dec. 9, 2003.
- *Iraq Humanitarian Efforts*, PBS, Religion and Ethics, Episode No. 715, Kate Seelye, Dec. 12, 2003.
- *Windfall*, Public Radio International, THIS AMERICAN LIFE with Ira Glass, Oct. 16, 1998.
- *The Birth of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, SOCIAL EDUCATION, Vol. 62 No. 5, Sep. 1998.

BAR ADMISSION, LICENSURE, PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP, BOARD AND COMMITTEE SERVICE

- Admitted to the practice of law in the State of New York (2012) and U.S. District Court, S.D.N.Y. (2013).
- Notary Public, State of New York (commission valid through January 14, 2017).
- American Society of International Law; Refugee Law & Disaster Law Interest Groups (since 2009).
- American Bar Association, Section of International Law (since 2007).
- Association of the Bar of the City of New York (since 2010).
 - Legal Issues of Climate Adaptation Task Force; U.N. Committee; Immigration & Nationality Law Committee (Co-Chair, Subcommittee on the Right to Counsel and Due Process for Migrants).
- Association of Fundraising Professionals (since 1999).
- Friends of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (since 2003).
- United Nations Association of the United States of America, New York Chapter (1999-2005).

LANGUAGES

- English (native); French (basic A1.3); limited study of Spanish, German, and American Sign Language.