

Faro air disaster surveys; Survivors and (surviving) relatives speak By: Menno van Duin, Werner Overdijk and Vina Wijkhuijs

Foreword

In this part of the book we present the findings of two surveys that in 1995 and 1998 we sent to survivors and (surviving) relatives of casualties of the Faro air disaster. The objective of the surveys was to provide insight into the non-psychological problems of the survivors of the Faro air disaster. The surveys show that not just Cor and Yvonne but also many other survivors and (surviving) relatives of the Faro air disaster were confronted with social, legal and economic problems in the aftermath of the disaster and are possibly living with these problems even today.

This contribution consists of three sections. In the first section we describe the initial contacts with a few survivors of the Faro air disaster and the organizational problems we encountered during our investigation. In the second section we offer a short narrative summary of the conclusions that emerged from the two surveys. The third section follows with concluding remarks regarding a number of themes distilled from the two surveys. In the annexes of this contribution you can find the results of both surveys.

We owe many thanks to the respondents of the surveys. Despite the difficulty of again being confronted with the negative effects of the disaster, they nevertheless had the courage to complete the extensive lists of questions and send them to us. We also owe them many thanks for the patience they had to endure while waiting for the results to be put on paper. We especially thank Cor and other survivors and (surviving) relatives for conversations about and insights into this disaster.

The research process

More or less by coincidence, we came into contact with survivors of the disaster and the research process began to unfold. In two rounds, with a little under three years between them, survivors and (surviving) relatives were asked about their experiences. The first survey, nearly three years after the disaster (October 1995), contained no less than 87 questions.

In April 1998 we presented the results of the first survey during an information session in one of the buildings of the University of Leiden. Some 20 people were present. During that gathering we raised the possibility of sending out a second survey. A number of issues, including in particular the legal questions, had not yet been resolved at the time of the first survey and the results of the first survey might already have been somewhat outdated. The situation might have changed in the meantime. We assumed that 5 or 6 years after the disaster the legal and financial questions would have been settled.

The second survey was sent out in May 1998 and contained 68 questions, a large number of which were completely or nearly identical to questions from the first survey. Along with this second survey, we sent the results of the first survey. After processing and analyzing the results of the second survey we made the report available to the ARF [*Martinair/Faro crash passengers and family members foundation*] board. The nineteenth edition of the *Faro-newsletter* (October 1999) devoted a great deal of attention to the results of the second survey.

Representativeness

Once we compiled the results of the first survey, we were somewhat surprised. There seemed to be a rather large group of people with various problems which raised some doubts about the representativeness of the research. Because the response rate was not very high, we tried to obtain the complete passenger list through the Public Prosecutor in Haarlem. This way we hoped to avoid a skewed selection of the research population. After all, it was not clear to what extent the ARF address list provided a representative sample of all survivors and (surviving) relatives. Although the Public Prosecutor thought the survey was worthwhile, we ultimately did not receive access to the passenger list due to concerns over privacy, and we had to rely on the ARF address list.

After our request to the Public Prosecutor was denied, we attempted to obtain permission to use the address list of the ANWB. According to some survivors the ANWB did have a complete list of the occupants of the crashed plane. However, also this attempt was unsuccessful.

In a conversation with us, a representative of the ANWB did express her doubt about the representativeness of the address list of the ARF. In her opinion, that list contained a group of “embittered victims” who would certainly complete the questionnaire to express their dissatisfaction with the resolution of financial issues. We believe that in this sense bias is an issue. Among the respondents to both surveys there was a large number of occupants that were (seriously) injured in the disaster, and for this reason were struggling with various problems. However, this does not take away the fact that this research indicates that physical problems and long-term medical complaints play an important role in the many problems confronting survivors in the phase after the disaster. The analysis of both surveys reveals that “the extent of injury” is a key influence on social and financial-economic consequences experienced by survivors, and on the degree of satisfaction with the legal settlement and psychological processing of the disaster.

However, now that we had to rely exclusively on the ARF address list, we do not know to what extent the results of the two surveys are representative and therefore we cannot guarantee that the results count for all the survivors of the Faro air disaster. On the one hand there are reasons to assume the results will not diverge much from the experiences of other survivors. Various respondents indicated in the survey(s) that they completed only one questionnaire, and that their partner and/or children did not complete an additional questionnaire. We also know that a few returned the questionnaire uncompleted, stating that they “could not face this yet.” On the other hand a few responded with the reaction that “this is so far behind us, we no longer deal with this.” To the extent that bias is a factor, this seems to be the result of a relatively large number of (seriously) injured among the respondents.

Conclusions from the first survey

Disasters are drastic events

The first survey already revealed that the Faro air disaster, as a disaster, is a very drastic event that has dramatically influenced the lives of many. The drastic nature of the event is difficult to grasp. First and foremost this has to do with the disaster situation itself and the way in which the survivors experience it. For the relatives of deceased passengers the disaster meant the abrupt loss of a beloved one. But the impact of the disaster goes deeper. After the disaster life goes on. However, for different reasons related to issues such as physical and mental well-being, work and finances, the damage settlement, and the linkages to psychological recovery, it can be difficult for survivors and (surviving) relatives to pick up the thread after a disaster.

Physical and mental well-being

A majority of the respondents of the first survey turned out to be injured in the airplane accident. More than a quarter of the occupants (26%) was heavily injured; 17% reported being injured, and 27% lightly injured.¹ In addition, almost all occupants and three out of every four (surviving) relatives struggled with psychological problems after the disaster. A large number of psychological problems were named, such as anxieties, loss of concentration and depression. More than three out of every four occupants had themselves medically examined for physical and mental complaints, which in itself placed a heavy burden on the daily lives of those involved. This burden often amounted to 20 medical visits. Occupants (and surviving relatives) received the most support from their own family doctor.

Work and finances

The survivors appeared to be unable to physically function as they did before the disaster. For 57% of those questioned the Faro air disaster meant a clear deterioration in their employment situation, which more often than not led to a deterioration of their financial situation. For many respondents the physical (and mental) problems led to full or partial employment disability: 30% of the occupants became totally unemployed as a result of the disaster. Others had to reduce their working hours.

Role of the media

The opinion of the respondents (especially the survivors) about the role of the media changed negatively over the period of time following the disaster. In the period immediately following the disaster, the majority of the respondents followed the press coverage about the cause of the disaster closely, and although they did not appreciate the notorious sensationalism of the media, a positive opinion did dominate. The positive opinion was the result of, among other things, the need among respondents to tell their story in the media. For various reasons, the respondents' opinion was more negative about the later phase following the disaster. Respondents indicated that due to the press coverage they were too frequently confronted with the disaster. Others believed that the media paid too little attention to the recovery process.

¹ Unless noted otherwise, we always mean those surveyed when we discuss occupants, survivors, victims, etc.

Respondents also believed that the media did not ask the Martinair airline company enough challenging questions about the cause of the disaster. In interactions with their communities (family, friends, and acquaintances), survivors and (surviving) relatives continually had to correct inaccurate media reporting on the amount of the damage settlement. *“Acquaintances stated that we as survivors gained financially from the disaster.” “That new bicycle or trailer must have been bought with money from Martin Schröder.” “Ahhhh there’s the millionaire family.”*

Damage settlement

Occupants and (surviving) relatives appeared dissatisfied with how the damage settlement was conducted. The legal process in which nearly every occupant and most (surviving) relatives became embroiled did not only cost the requisite energy, but also caused notable frustration. This did not benefit the recovery process of the victims. In particular, the lengthy amount of time and the aftercare provided by Martinair emerged as issues. Quite negative perspectives also emerged regarding the involvement of insurance companies. More than two years after the disaster the damage settlement was still not resolved for many. One of the reasons that people ultimately agreed to a settlement was “to get it over with.”

The links to psychological recovery

A majority of the respondents (61%) was of the opinion that good psychological recovery can only take place after all issues (legal aspects, financial effects, etc.) have been resolved. At the time of the first survey, three years after the disaster, many respondents had yet to reach a sense of resolution. Of the occupants, 43% even believed that the long wait for the disaster to be resolved in a definite sense led to greater a trauma than the experience of the flight disaster itself. The idea that time heals all wounds was rejected by many. “The long wait for (the investigation into) the cause of the disaster and the avoidance of the question of culpability have slowed the recovery process.”

From the reactions of the respondents it appears that various issues influence each other. The settlement of legal and financial issues after the disaster influences the psychological recovery process.

This led to a second survey, which was once again distributed through the ARF. At the same time that respondents received this second survey, they also received the results of the first survey, with the request that they read them only after completing the questionnaire. The results of the second survey became available at the end of 1998, and we analyzed them shortly afterwards. It turned out that more than half of the occupants that had completed the first questionnaire also did so the second time.

Conclusions from the second survey

Injured

A strikingly large number of the occupants that completed the second questionnaire (86%) were injured in the airplane accident. More than five years after the disaster, some four out of every ten occupants still had physical problems on a daily basis. More than half (55%) of the occupants visited a physician on account of these problems in the preceding years.

Psychological Problems

Two out of every three occupants have sought, and found, professional help in relation to psychological problems. In many cases contact with a caregiver would continue for three years or more. Three quarters of the occupants said that they recovered from the disaster reasonably well. More than one third of the occupants (37%) indicated that the disaster did not (also) influence their life in a positive way.

Work

Of the occupants, 40% experienced a (clear) deterioration in their employment situation. As a result, half of the survivors underwent a deterioration in their financial situation. Some fell into complete employment disability or had to work less.

Legal settlement

There was great dissatisfaction about the legal settlement of damage claims. Nearly two out of every three respondents was dissatisfied. It was striking that none of the (surviving) relatives (N=8) was satisfied with the damage compensation at all. Respondents found the compensation too low, wanted “to get over with too quickly” and/or had to wait too long. Possibly because of this, four out of every ten felt that the legal process has led to a greater trauma than the disaster itself. A majority of the respondents (53%) had yet to reach a sense of closure despite the long period of time spent seeking a settlement.

Opinions

The survivors and (surviving) relatives expressed negative opinions about the organizations and institutions that were involved in the aftermath of the disaster, such as the ANWB, Martinair, and the Dutch government. Survivors and (surviving) relatives clearly received more support from their own environment and from others who shared their experience.

Closing remarks and conclusions

The nature of the disaster: an airplane disaster in a foreign country in 1992

Although many commonalities can be recognized between various disasters, it must be realized that at the same time there are great differences too. In the context of the theme of this chapter (the aftercare and the period following the disaster), there are a number of relevant differences that have to do with the nature and location of the disaster. Differences that also have direct consequences for experience, the aftermath, and aftercare.

An airplane disaster

With many airplane disasters the occupants do not survive. In cases where there are survivors, the disaster in question happens during (emergency) landing or take-off. In situations with survivors, there often are (many) injured. Kegworth (1989) has attempted to identify a relationship between seat location and the nature of injuries in a crash. Other research (Malt et al, 1989a) shows that a clear relationship exists between physical injuries and psychosocial and psychiatric problems in the period following a disaster.

“In a three-year retrospective study of 551 patients who were admitted to a surgical ward of a general hospital due to accidental injury, reduced physical function was significantly correlated with worse bodily health, and worse psychological health (correlation 0.299 and 0.498 respectively).”²

Likewise, among the victims of the airplane disaster in Faro a connection can be discerned between physical injury and psychological well-being. Hence, a part of the explanation of the problems in the phase following the disaster lies in the nature of the disaster. If people are injured in a disaster, psychological problems can raise care issues, often in the first year, but also even five or six years after the disaster. The survey among victims of the Faro air disaster also shows that the handling of legal issues is connected to the psychological recovery from the disaster.

The nature of the disaster, an airplane or transportation disaster, also has consequences for the geographic background of the occupants. In such situations the victims usually do not know each other (apart from their own partner or family) and do not live in each others immediate vicinity. This makes a transportation disaster different from a factory explosion or a sudden natural disaster (earthquake or flood). In such cases (most of) the victims come from the immediately affected area. In contrast, a transportation disaster usually strikes a group of passengers “connected by fate.” In exceptional cases a distinct group from a particular place or association does become involved in a transportation disaster. This was the case, for example, when a Hercules airplane crashed at the airport in Eindhoven, the Netherlands (1996).

² Taken from U.F. Malt, Traumatic effects of accidents, in R.J. Ursano, B.G. McCaughey and C.S. Fullerton (eds.), *Individual and Community Responses to Trauma and Disaster: The Structure of Human Chaos*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 103-136.

Victims and (surviving) relatives knew each other well, because the passengers were all member of the same military brass band. However, in the Faro air disaster the survivors lived spread throughout the Netherlands.

As a consequence, there was no local authority that felt primarily responsible for the welfare of the survivors. In a country where responsibilities surrounding disaster response fall mainly at the municipal level, this can clearly have impacts.

Hodgkinson and Stewart (1991) researched the Herald of Free Enterprise disaster and observed that the survivors and (surviving) relatives each had to tell the story dozens of times in their own municipalities: to family doctors, care providers, and other institutions. Therefore, transportation-disasters demand much more substantial national involvement and centrally coordinated aftercare.³

Foreign country

The disaster took place in Portugal. This raised extra problems for the victims in the context of the phase following the disaster. Without being exhaustive, issues to consider include:

- longer period of uncertainty for all those involved in this disaster due to the geographical distance from the Netherlands;
- legal formalities and procedures had to be settled in Portugal;
- language difficulties for survivors (and (surviving) relatives);
- direct support from and reuniting with family and loved ones is difficult (geographical distance, closure of the airport, triage of injured);
- faulty communications between the Netherlands and Portugal;
- shielding survivors and injured from the media;
- repatriation of survivors (by plane or otherwise);
- quarantine measures in Dutch hospitals for injured after repatriation from Portugal;
- more difficult to return to the disaster site after a given amount of time.

In addition to the practical problems for survivors and (surviving) relatives, the disaster in Faro also meant a disaster that took place farther away, and as such farther away from Dutch attention and, related to this, the Dutch media. This meant that survivors and (surviving) relatives probably received less attention (from the government and the media) than they would have if they had been involved in a disaster on Dutch territory. Thus, this “foreign” disaster may be less imprinted on the collective memory than disasters that took place in the Netherlands.

1992

The disaster took place in 1992, a year that, in the Netherlands, has gone down the books as a “disaster year.” Earlier that year an earthquake took place in Limburg, a Southern district of the Netherlands, and a serious accident happened with an international intercity train near Hoofddorp. Furthermore, just over two months before the Faro air disaster, an EIAI airplane crashed into two apartment buildings in a residential district of Amsterdam (the Bijlmer). The attention given to the events in Faro paled in comparison to the collective stress surrounding the disaster in the Bijlmer.

³ P.E. Hodgkinson & M. Stewart, *Coping with Catastrophe: A handbook of Disaster Management*, Routledge, London, 1991.

Combined with the aforementioned factors (nature of the disaster, place of the disaster) this meant that the disaster as well as the victims did not receive the attention and support that they turned out to need.

In addition, 1992 cannot be compared to, for example, 2004. Lessons from past disasters, for example the disaster that took place in the Bijlmer (1992), in Enschede (2000) and Volendam (2001) have contributed to a different way of viewing social-psychological aftercare as well as broader issues such as financial support. It is not likely that today the survivors and (surviving) relatives of casualties of a disaster would have as negative an opinion about the government as is the case with the Faro air disaster, although only long-term research can confirm this.

The effects of the disaster: a combination of factors

Physical and mental well-being

A significant part of the problems in the phase after the Faro air disaster can be explained by the physical condition of the survivors. Much is attributable to the fact that the occupants were injured in the airplane disaster and many years later still carry the physical effects of the disaster daily. There appears to be a clear linkage between physical and mental well-being on the one hand and changes in work situation and (dissatisfaction with) resolution of legal issues on the other.

Work and finances

The most shocking findings from the survey research are probably those relating to the employment situation and the related financial effects. Changes in employment were one of the (foremost) reasons why the respondents experienced a change in their financial situation. Therefore, this disaster appears to be not only an emotional and stressful incident, but also an event that had great effects on the social environment of the survivors and their working conditions. Closer analysis suggests that in particular those occupants who were injured experienced a change (i.e. deterioration) in their working situation and, as a consequence, found themselves in worse financial circumstances. By and large, the greater the injuries, the greater the (negative) effects.

Resolution of legal issues

The surveys revealed dwindling satisfaction with the resolution of legal issues after the disaster: It took a long time before legal issues were settled, the non-material damage was not adequately covered, and there were indications of a growing number of people who signed at first and then later regretted doing so.⁴ Many endorsed the proposition that “the crisis after the disaster” in a definite sense led to greater trauma than the disaster itself. There appears to be a direct linkage between the quality of the legal and material (after)care and psychological recovery from the disaster. Legal resolution that proceeds smoothly and leads to satisfaction can contribute to recovery, while many material setbacks, uncertainty about the cause of the disaster, and a difficult damage settlement process can create extra obstacles to psychological recovery. The importance of non-psychological effects appears to have been underestimated.

⁴ With non-material damage we mean all damage that resulted from physical and/or psychosocial problems. With material damage we mean all damage that results from damage to goods and property or loss of income.

The cause of the disaster

Disasters that are attributable to a non-natural cause (man-made disaster) often result in much concern about the cause and investigation into the cause. Moreover, at present greater importance is attached to investigation reports than before. Disasters are no longer accepted as an “act of God,” a fatal confluence of circumstances. The people involved no longer allow themselves to be given the runaround. Many more questions, often initiated by the media, are asked about how and why, and who is primarily responsible.

Therefore, many survivors, (surviving) relatives, and others who are directly involved follow the developments surrounding the investigation with great interest. In addition, those who survived the disaster want to tell their story, partly because they want to contribute to the investigation. After all, they were there. The survivors have their impressions and observations of the final minutes and seconds before the disaster took place. They sometimes have ideas about the course of the events.

The investigation into the cause of the Faro air disaster led to some confusion among the victims. The investigation report of the Portuguese authorities placed particular emphasis on the responsibility of the captain. Both surveys indicate frustration among the survivors about the entire investigation process after the disaster. People strongly doubted the objectivity of the findings and believed that the stories told by the survivors have been ignored.

The first chairperson of the ARF, Mr. Sötemann, put much energy into an analysis of the investigation report. Two years later, when he passed the position of chairperson to Mr. Batenburg, he had written a thick report: “The second account.” With this report he hoped to accomplish the initiation of an independent investigation into the cause of the Faro air disaster. He concluded, consistent with the Portuguese report, that the accident had been avoidable and that the pilot, given the weather conditions, should never have been allowed to land at Faro airport. Commercial pressure turned (t)his holiday flight into a disaster flight.

His successor, Mr. Batenburg, would also regularly devote attention in the *Faro-newsletter* to issues surrounding the investigation into the cause. Nevertheless, all these efforts of the ARF would not lead to a follow-up investigation. The Dutch Transport Safety Board has never delved into the many ambiguities surrounding this disaster. This is in contrast to the Hercules-air disaster, which the Board did investigate. Why the Board did investigate this disaster and not the one in Faro, is strange to say the least. After all, both resulted in commotion. Given this background, it is not surprising that the respondents named “discovering the cause” as the most important task of the Anthony Ruys Foundation.

Martinair and the ANWB

[ANWB: *Royal Dutch Touring Club. Provided free legal assistance for passengers and family members*]

The two most commonly mentioned organizations named in connection with the Faro air disaster are: Martinair and the ANWB. Obviously Martinair, as the operator of the airplane that made the fatal landing at Faro. The ANWB, because a few days after the crash they took on the role of protecting the collective interests of the victims of the crash. We conducted discussions with representatives of both organizations in the context of this survey.

After the disaster, the founder and then director of Martinair, Mr. Martin Schröder, spoke encouraging words to the survivors and (surviving) relatives of the casualties of the disaster during a memorial service on December 30, 1992. He offered “a hand on the shoulder, for as long as it was needed.” It is undeniably true that Martinair undertook various activities in the direction of survivors and (surviving) relatives. A contact team was formed, injured passengers were visited, an advance of approximately €4,500 was issued to all passengers and (surviving) relatives, a few rounds of visits and telephone calls took place, and Martinair established the Faro support fund (1.4 million Euros).

However, the two surveys among survivors and (surviving) relatives show that, over time, the opinion of Martinair has clearly become more negative. At first, some respondents were satisfied with the initial support from Martinair. More than 40% indicated that the initial support (the home visits, a telephone survey, providing transportation to hospitals, and escorts on plane travel) was good. On the other hand, a similar percentage was less satisfied. Respondents were particularly critical of Martinair’s 24-hour telephone number. Of those who tried to call this number, a few reported doing so in vain, or receiving no or barely adequate response.

At the end of 1995, only one out of every seven respondents was satisfied about the way in which Martinair settled the damages. Nearly two thirds was, often greatly, dissatisfied. Martinair clearly did not live up to the promise of “a hand on the shoulder,” according to a large majority of the respondents (74%). They believed that “the hand on the shoulder” was more of a platitude for the television cameras than something actually made concrete by the management.

This negative spiral continued in the second survey. The average opinion about Martinair is expressed as a grade of 3.2 (on a grading scale with “0” as extremely bad and “10” as extremely good). Four out of every ten respondents indicated that their opinion of Martinair changed for the worse between 1995 and 1998. What is the basis of this strong negative opinion? Although this question was not asked directly, several factors appear to play a role.

First, the victims of the disaster see Martinair as “the guilty party.” It was a Martinair airplane with a Martinair pilot. It is extremely difficult, indeed impossible, for “the guilty party” to do right after the disaster in the eyes of those directly involved. Whatever you do, there will always be criticism, justified or not. Second, the investigation into the cause plays a role. Stories about the interpretation of all the facts surrounding the crash strengthened the notion that there was “something fishy” about the disaster. This of course puts Martinair directly in the picture. Third, the limited involvement of the government (due in part to the nature of the disaster) plays a role. Because the government limited its involvement, Martinair played a larger role and people expected more of Martinair. Fourth, and this probably justifies a part of the criticism, Mr. Schröder (i.e., Martinair) also raised high expectations, which were not met for everyone. Some individuals accomplished much, but others appealed to Martinair in vain for a long time. Finally, the heavily legalized process surrounding the damage settlement and determination of fault plays an important role. From the beginning, the interests of Martinair were to a significant extent contrary to the interests of the victims. Martinair and victims increasingly found themselves in opposition to each other in a judicial process. Investigators and judges had to issue rulings on fault and responsibility. Lawyers handled the interests of the involved parties. This results in a process about which Erikson critically comments:

“Most of the time – so often in fact that we can almost think of it as a natural reflex – the company draws into its own interior spaces and posts lawyers around its borders like a ring of pickets. Nothing unexpected in that, surely. Anyone who reads newspapers knows that reflex works.”⁵

The second organization that played a prominent role in the phase after the Faro air disaster is the ANWB. After the disaster the ANWB was already directly involved in the repatriation and as of the first few hours the ANWB emergency call center played a role in information provision. Given that many occupants were members of the ANWB, and that the ANWB offered its members free legal assistance in cases of accidents abroad (not caused by automobiles), it was not surprising that the ANWB offered to provide legal assistance to all occupants. This was also publicly announced. Ultimately, the ANWB represented the interests of some 285 “seats.” Later, a portion of this group would seek their own lawyers.

In the early months of 1993 the ANWB organized a few information sessions where those present were informed about the legal processes. Personnel of the Victim Support Association were also present at these sessions, as well as a few lawyers from a firm that the ANWB had retained to provide legal assistance to the victims. After these sessions the ANWB legal advisers were each assigned to a group of some 40 to 50 individuals. They offered legal assistance related to material damages, loss of income, expenses, physical damages, and psychological damages. At a later stage the ANWB organized further sessions in collaboration with the Netherlands Victim Support Association.

⁵ K. Erikson, *A New Species of Trouble: Explorations in Disaster, Trauma, and Community*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1994, p. 238.

Shortly after the disaster it already became clear to the ANWB that the psychological damage from the Faro air disaster was greater than would be expected based on similar situations (e.g. car accidents). To provide a basis for objectively quantifying the psychological damage, the ANWB drew up a list of questions in consultation with some psychiatrists from Amsterdam.

A higher amount was demanded in proportion to the greater psychological need that was determined. The financial claims ranged between 4,500 and 22,500 Euro. This amount was added to the total material damage (including loss of income). The ultimate pay-outs of material and non-material damages varied, with a maximum up to € 115,000. Some of the (surviving) relatives received money from the Faro Support Fund established by Martinair on May 1, 1993. This support fund was intended to financially assist victims in cases where the existing provisions fell short or certain matters were not covered by insurance (such as a re-training course, for example).

In the negotiations between victims and lawyers over the damage compensation, the settlement agreement specified that survivors and (surviving) relatives were not allowed to communicate about the determined amount of money to be paid. However, the ANWB did not lend this agreement much weight. In a conversation with us they indicated that this legal provision did not mean much anyway (freedom of expression, under what penalties?). It only served to prevent a “grapevine” from which it would emerge that one person received €100,000, and another “only” €20,000.

In hindsight, a large number of the respondents was not very satisfied with the ANWB. In the course of time, the initial enthusiasm about an independent organization that sought to serve the collective interests of the survivors and (surviving) relatives came under much pressure. The ARF newsletter raised the issue of possible conflicts of interest with some regularity. It stated, for example, that the ANWB would make a lot of money from their legal support activities, and, more importantly, that the ANWB had such a good and solid business relationship with Martinair that it would never put this relationship at risk. After all, the many flights arranged every year by the ANWB to return injured holiday skiers home were operated by Martinair. On a regular basis the ANWB advertised holiday packages that included flights with the Martinair airline company.

During the years after the disaster the satisfaction with the ANWB clearly drops. While initially a large majority was satisfied with the ANWB as a representative of the collective interests, subsequently this enthusiasm waned.

Self-help organizations

Self-help organizations after disasters are a relatively new phenomenon. In the past, such organizations did not exist. Not until the middle of the 1980s, when England was “ravaged” by disasters, did these organizations take on a clear role, and set an example. For example, the Herald Family Association fought for many years on several fronts for the interests of the survivors of this shipping disaster. The Association tried to prosecute the management of Townsend Thoresen for “corporate manslaughter,” taking the case all the way to the Old Bailey.⁶ Indeed, the independent investigating judge Sir Justice Sheen earlier had concluded that not only a few individuals, but also the management of Townsend Thoresen was “infected with a disease of sloppiness.” Nevertheless, the judge would find the claim of “corporate manslaughter” one step too far.

In the second survey we asked respondents a few questions about the ARF [*Martinair/Faro crash passengers and family members foundation*]. It appeared that most were quite satisfied with the ARF. The most striking response followed the question as to what function the ARF is supposed to fulfill. Nearly three out of every four respondents cited “determining the cause of the disaster” as the most important goal. In addition, supporting interaction, promoting air transportation safety, and pursuing collective interests were mentioned.

This brings us to a significant problem of self-help organizations. As is often the case, the ARF serves to pursue highly disparate objectives that are not always readily combined. Some associated members leave because the focus remains on “investigation into the cause” while the role of “facilitating contacts between survivors” is neglected. Others see it the other way around. Furthermore, after a period of time some survivors have “had enough” of the disaster and have recovered in whole or in part, while for others there can never be enough attention to the event and to interactions with other survivors. This means that it is almost impossible for self-help organizations to satisfy everyone. Indeed, some survivors will experience “abandoning” the group as an important personal victory.

⁶ The management of the Townsend Thoresen company was held responsible for the death of the people on board the Herald of Free Enterprise.

The government

The (Dutch) government did not play an all too positive role with respect to the Faro air disaster. It already began with a press conference during which then Minister of Transportation, Mrs. Maij-Weggen, stood immediately next to Mr. Schröder. This created the impression that the government endorsed Mr. Schröder's story (about wind shear as cause of the disaster).

In 1993 the then Assistant Secretary of Health, Mr. Simons, promised that aftercare following this kind of disaster would be improved.⁷ This has amounted to very little. The government remained relatively far removed. The surveys reflect that the survivors had very little confidence in the government. The criticism focused on two issues in particular.

First, according to the respondents the government has completely failed to play a role regarding the investigation into the cause of disaster. Occupants in particular had the impression that no use was made of their experiences and perspectives. We can say that the respondents do have a point here. The government could have shown more initiative on this particular aspect.

Second, the government undertook too few activities in the area of aftercare and left the survivors out in the cold. No central coordination by the government took place. Criticism, expressed by the commission that examined the air disaster in the Bijlmer, concerning the limited aftercare to victims and the absence of government coordination is even more applicable to the aftercare of victims of the Faro air disaster.

At the same time, in 2004 we can see that on both of these points important developments have taken place in the event of a new disaster. Investigation into the cause of a crash as initiated in 1992, will never proceed in the same way again. Experiences after the disasters in the Dutch cities Enschede and Volendam and lessons from the past have led to a strong institutionalization of disaster response. Soon the Dutch government will install a Council for Safety that should conduct independent and professional investigations of calamities. To some degree the government also has learned its lessons with respect to aftercare. Although the results are not yet available, it appears that the coordination of aftercare following the disasters in Enschede and Volendam has greatly improved, in comparison to 1992.

⁷ *Volkskrant*, December 22, 1993.

Conclusion

With this expanded report on the two surveys, the added remarks, and the full survey results in annexes 1 and 2 we have tried to illuminate the phase following the Faro air disaster and the context in which it took place.

Although the representativeness of the sample can be debated, we see that in any case a large group of survivors of a disaster suffered many kinds of problems for a long time. The extent of physical injuries due to the crash probably plays a significant role. It can be posited that the surveys clearly show that Cor Ten Hove's story is not an exception; It is representative of a large group of survivors of the Faro air disaster that were (seriously) injured during the crash.

As a result of the time, the place, and the nature of the accident this group of victims has long remained anonymous. It has remained strikingly unknown that such a large group of survivors of the Faro air disaster experienced and continues to experience relatively many chronic problems. The observation by the ANWB, soon after the disaster, that the crash in Portugal had caused more psychological damage than expected should – obviously speaking with hindsight – have led to greater alertness sooner. Now a relatively slow process has evolved in which individual survivors each had to find their own way and learn everything the hard way. In this case, where everyone (the government, Martinair, the ANWB, and others) wanted or could accept as little responsibility as possible, some form of centrally guided coordination would have made a great difference.

Annex 1. The first survey (1995)

Introduction

Survey design

When designing the questionnaire we chose to address a large number of aspects and themes that could offer insight into the broader social effects for the victims of a disaster. The survey comprised a total of 87 questions and propositions, divided into the following themes: cause and media, mental and physical well-being, financial-economic aspects, and legal aspects. For each theme a number of both (partially) closed as well as open-ended questions were posed. At the end of each theme room was left for additional remarks. The majority of respondents made extensive use of this opportunity.

The response

In the fall of 1995 the survey was sent by way of the Anthony Ruys Foundation (ARF) to the survivors and (surviving) relatives known to the ARF. Six months later 120 surveys were returned. Of the 120 returned questionnaires, 4 survey forms were only completed in summary fashion, and 1 questionnaire was completed by a crew member. These were omitted from the analysis. In calculating the response we used the data of Table 1:8

Occupants

Among the remaining 115 respondents, 88 were passengers who experienced the accident of the Anthony Ruys as occupants. This means that 39% of the passengers who survived the airplane disaster completed the questionnaire.

The disaster flight

The Martinair flight of December 21, 1992, was a typical vacation flight. On board were 340 occupants (327 passengers and 13 crew members). The Anthony Ruys, a Martinair DC-10, crashed while landing at the Faro Airport in Portugal. The accident cost the lives of 56 occupants. The passengers included many households and even entire families. Most households sat together. As many as 70% of the surveyed passengers were traveling with a partner, and a quarter of those surveyed had one or more children on board. Twelve occupants lost one or more people they knew due to the disaster. When compared to the total of 56 people that perished, this may seem like only a few, but this is probably explained by the fact that seat location on the airplane largely determined who survived the disaster. Entire households perished in the airplane disaster, while other households were (partially) spared.

(Surviving) relatives

The other 27 questionnaires were completed by individuals who were confronted with the airplane disaster as a relative or were otherwise close to one or more passengers, or felt affected by the disaster for other reasons. This group included 13 individuals who lost someone they knew – often a relative – as a result of the disaster.

⁸ Interim-report, The Faro disaster: survivors and (surviving) relatives speak, January 1998.

TABLE 1: Total number of respondents in relation to total number of occupants	
<i>Passengers and crew Faro air disaster December 21, 1992</i>	
Number of registered passengers	318
Number of children under age 2 (without own seat)	9
Total number of passengers (of which at least 56 people under age 16)	327
Total number of crew members	13
Total occupants	340
Number of deceased passengers (of which probably at least 10 people under age 16)	54
Number of deceased crew members	2
Total number of survivors	284
- crew members	11
- passengers under age 16	46
Total sample of potential respondents: passengers over age 16	227

Characteristics of respondents

The average age of the respondents was 43 years. The largest group was between 29 and 55 years of age. The numbers of men and women were evenly balanced.

Physical and mental well-being

Physical well-being

Three quarters of the surveyed occupants were injured in the airplane accident. The degree to which they were injured varied from “heavily injured” (37%), “lightly injured” (39%), to outpatient treatment (24%). The nature of the injuries varied from abrasions and lacerations to whiplash.

In addition to injuries, other, so-called psychosomatic complaints emerged. More than three out of every four occupants (77%) reported changes in their physical well-being after the disaster. (Surviving) relatives also appear to experience this type of ailments. Occupants as well as (surviving) relatives named the following physical ailments (see Table 2):

TABLE 2: Physical ailments among survivors and (surviving) relatives after the Faro air disaster (n=63, multiple answers possible)			
		<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent age</i>
<i>Physical</i>	Pain in or poor functioning of a finger, ankle, shoulder, arm, or leg	22	35
	Back problems	19	30
	Neck problems/whiplash	12	19
	Painful burn injuries	5	8
<i>Psychosomatic</i>	Fatigue	12	19
	(Persistent) headache	7	11
	Tense muscles	3	5
	Stomachache	2	3
	Nausea	2	3
	Colds	2	3
	Heart palpitations	1	2

Some 70% of the occupants and 20% of the (surviving) relatives have sought medical help to have these (physical) ailments examined.

Mental well-being

A large majority of the occupants (88%) and more than half of the (surviving) relatives (54%) believed that their mental well-being (also) went through changes. When asked what problems they came to suffer, more than three out of every four respondents replied, giving myriad answers. Their replies varied from fear of flying to depression (see Table 3).

TABLE 3:
Psychological problems among survivors and (surviving) relatives after the Faro air disaster
(n=68, multiple answers possible)

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent age</i>
Insecurity/anxieties/fright reactions	25	37
Concentration problems/forgetfulness	23	34
Fear of flying (and other forms of transport: bus/train/automobile)	20	29
Re-experience/nightmares	14	21
Depression	14	21
Sadness/grief	13	19
Easily irritated/aggressive	12	18
Fear of fire, poor weather situations and/or loud noises	12	18
Sleeplessness	10	15
Loss of trust in people/institutions	9	13
Apathy	6	9
Fatigue	3	4

More than half of the surveyed occupants (56%) sought help for their psychological ailments. More than one third (35%) received treatment for long-term recovery problems, known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Medical visits

The respondents were also asked from which people and/or institutions they received medical support, how often they visited the person/institution in question, and their opinion of the help received. Table 4 provides an overview of the responses from the occupants.

TABLE 4:
Extent and opinion of medical visits among survivors of the Faro air disaster
(n=88, multiple answers possible)

	<i>Percent of survivors that sought contact</i>	<i>Average number of contacts</i>		<i>Average evaluation</i>
		<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	
Family doctor	82	8	7	7.2
Specialist	51	10	7	7.1
RIAGG	36	15	17	6.7
Victim Support	18	8	1	5.8
Hospital-affiliated psychologist	18	4	9	6.1
Independent psychologist	13	7	16	6.5

From the table above it appears that a large majority of the occupants had fairly frequent contact with their family doctor after the disaster (82%). In addition, a large number visited a psychologist or psychiatrist (of the RIAGG, the Dutch Regional Institute for Mental Welfare or otherwise). Aside from the aforementioned institutions, a few occupants also sought aurahealing, massage and/or physio- or regression-therapy. For processing of their psychosocial problems respondents found the most support from family doctors; family, friends, acquaintances; specialists; and the RIAGG.

Support from own environment and fellow victims

Three quarters of the respondents said they received much support from their immediate environment: household, family, and close friends. Half of the occupants and one third of the (surviving) relatives sometimes felt that friends and acquaintances could not understand the event and the trauma. This probably explains why about half of the occupants (46%) reported to have received the most support from fellow victims after the disaster.

Financial-economic aspects

Change in employment and financial situation

For two thirds of the occupants and more than one third of the (surviving) relatives the disaster of the Anthony Ruys meant a change in their financial situation. Nearly half of the occupants (n=42) experienced a small to large deterioration in his or her financial situation as a result of the Faro air disaster.

One out of every three occupants said they experienced a clear deterioration in his or her employment situation. Due to loss of the partner, mental fatigue, lack of understanding at work, physical ailments or disabilities nearly half (47%) of the occupants found themselves forced to reduce work hours in whole or in part. A single case reprioritized work and for this reason decided to work less. In the case of (surviving) relatives, some 20% of respondents reduced their work hours.

Evaluations and examinations

Discussions with survivors revealed that a variety of examinations were required for various insurance policies and institutions. Of the surveyed occupants, 78% were subjected to an examination one or more times. The table below provides an overview of the different types of evaluations.

TABLE 5:
Evaluations for insurance with respect to survivors of the Faro air disaster
(n=69, multiple answers possible)

	<i>Regarding physical aspects</i>		<i>Regarding psychological aspects</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Health insurance	9	13	7	10
Accident insurance	22	32	9	13
Employer services	15	22	15	22
Social security institution	13	19	10	14
Employment disability	14	20	9	13
Second opinion evaluation	12	17	3	4
Other: ANWB, travel insurance	23	33	16	23

Legal aspects

Legal assistance

More than three quarters of the occupants and one third of the (surviving) relatives sought legal assistance after the Faro air disaster. A large number of the respondents (86 occupants and 8 (surviving) relatives) received legal assistance from the ANWB. Fourteen occupants (also) made use of other travel insurance. Nine occupants and three (surviving) relatives retained their own lawyer. Only a few approached Martinair, a legal assistance insurance policy, an employer or a union for their legal assistance.

The ANWB as legal representation

Most of the respondents received legal assistance from the ANWB because many of the occupants were members of the ANWB. This membership entitled the victims to free legal assistance. One week after the accident the ANWB offered to collectively represent all survivors and (surviving) relatives. Ultimately, the ANWB represented about 275 victims. The answers from the respondents showed that, three years after the disaster, the ANWB was still handling the cases of 52 (of the 94) respondents. This would mean that less than half of the cases handled by the ANWB had closed. This can be partially explained by the fact that victims and (their) lawyers did not want to move forward until seeing the conclusions of the Portuguese investigation into the cause of the disaster, the results of which were not released until November 1994.

Damage claims

The damage claims submitted by the occupants and (surviving) relatives concerned various forms of damages suffered. The majority of the respondents (n=71) were offered a settlement with respect to the damage suffered. Of them, 79% accepted this offer. This resolved (the largest part of) the damage claims for nearly two thirds of the occupants. Table 6 indicates to what degree various types of damages comprised the submitted damage claims and to what extent these damage claims were resolved, three years after the disaster.

TABLE 6: The nature and resolution of damage claims with respect to the survivors (n=88, multiple answers possible)			
<i>Nature of damages</i>	<i>Number of times included in damage claim</i>	<i>Considered resolved</i>	
		<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Material damage	71	51	72
Temporary physical injury	34	20	59
Permanent physical injury	40	15	38
Psychological damage	65	33	51
Temporary loss of income	33	13	39
Permanent loss of income	42	12	29
Employment	24	4	17
Other: supplements to social security, costs of medical help/therapy, etc.	18	8	44

Three years after the disaster more than half of the cases relating to material damages and temporary physical injury appear to have been resolved. However, of the damage claims relating to future loss of income and employment, less than one third were resolved.

Of the occupants for whom (parts of) the damage claims were resolved (n=59), 69% said they were satisfied. The satisfaction with the damage settlement reached appears to concern the material damages in particular. Great dissatisfaction existed among the respondents with respect to the resolution of non-material damages, as seen in the comments below.

“There is no end date for the psychological damage, you learn to live with it.” “With respect to material damages I am definitely satisfied, that is fully covered. With respect to the psychological damages there is no other choice in the Netherlands than: like it or lump it.” “Many expenses were not reimbursed because specialists said that these damages had nothing to do with the disaster.”

“After three years of visits to doctors, rest homes, and social service I wanted an end to it, I feel screwed over.” “Taking care of things related to the disaster brings out emotions; you want it over with so you just sign.”

“I feel like I’ve been bought off, I signed and was left with a very bad feeling, but nevertheless I am happy to be done with it after nearly three years.” “When I wanted to resolve the case at the time, I was satisfied with the settlement. However, the damage continued to accumulate for much longer than was foreseeable at the time. Very little attention has been paid to this.”

In hindsight, a majority of the respondents (57%) was not satisfied with the process of the damage settlement.

Role of Martinair

Three out of every four respondents appeared dissatisfied with the resolution of the damage settlement by Martinair. People were of the opinion that the “hand on the shoulder” was more of a line for the television cameras than something that the management actually realized. Neither the damage settlement nor the support led to satisfaction.

Role of the ANWB

Most respondents (62%) held a positive opinion about the ANWB as a collective legal representative. However, a not insignificant number of the respondents (20%) were dissatisfied with the resolution of the damage claims. It took a long time, the lawyer exerted great pressure on them to agree, various costs were not reimbursed, and the psychological damages were inadequately compensated. A number of respondents also suspected that the ANWB was in league with Martinair, or that conflict of interest was an issue. A large number of respondents said they ultimately agreed with the settlement proposal to get it over with. *“I feel like I’ve been bought off, but I am happy to be done with it.”*

Role of the media

More than two thirds of the occupants and some 40% of the (surviving) relatives were of the opinion that in their immediate surroundings an unjustified impression emerged that they gained financially from the damage compensation, which was by no means always the case. The reporting in the media contributed to this. Careless reporting about the size of the damage settlements created the misperception among people around the victims that survivors and (surviving) relatives were for the most part fully compensated. For many respondents, this contributed to irritation and a lack of understanding in their community. Acquaintances stated that they “gained” from the disaster. *“That new bicycle was probably purchased with Martin Schröder’s money.”*

Role of the [Dutch] government

Finally, the respondents were also asked whether and to what degree they have needed central support from the government. Two thirds of the occupants and one third of the (surviving) relatives were dissatisfied with the role of the Ministry of Health in the (coordination of) aftercare. Three quarters of the respondents were of the opinion that it would be good if the government played a much larger role in handling the aftermath of a disaster situation. Only 13% of the respondents were of the opinion that sufficient coordination takes place between the evaluating institutions. One respondent described the lack of aftercare as follows: *“Over the past years I have strongly missed someone who points you the way, so that you don’t hit a wall time and time again and are given a continual run-around.”*

2. The second survey (1998)

Introduction

In early May 1998, the second questionnaire was sent through the Anthony Ruys Foundation to the survivors and (surviving) relatives of casualties of the Faro air disaster. Some five months later, by the end of September 1998, 86 questionnaires were returned. However, ten of the returned questionnaires indicated that the person involved was not interested in participating in the research. Additionally, two questionnaires were completed too summarily to be included in the analysis. Therefore, the results of this second survey are based on answers from 74 respondents (see Table 7). The sample was split evenly between men and women. The age of the respondents ranged from 20 to 77. The average age of the respondents was 48.

Occupants

Of the 74 respondents, 63 survived the airplane disaster as passengers. According to the calculation of the total number of potential respondents (227 people above the age of 16)⁹, this means that 28% of the passengers who survived the airplane disaster participated in this second survey.

(Surviving) relatives

The other 11 respondents belong to the group of (surviving) relatives, of whom nine lost one or more family members or people they were close to because of the disaster. (Among the occupants, eight respondents lost a family member and/or someone they were close to).

Participation in first and second surveys

Three quarters of the respondents had also completed and returned the first survey. This group consisted of 49 occupants and 5 (surviving) relatives. This means that 56% of the occupants that participated in the first survey also participated in the second survey.

⁹ In this calculation survivors that were under 16 years of age at the time of the disaster (46 people) were not included. The number of potential respondents may be greater than the 227 reported here, since 6 years have passed in the meantime. Of the participants in the second survey, one respondent was under 16 years old at the time of the disaster. In addition, six respondents (all of whom were occupants) indicated that they also filled out the questionnaire on behalf of one or more people from their household.

TABLE 7: Overview of response to first and second surveys			
	<i>1st survey (1995)</i>	<i>2nd survey (1998)</i>	<i>Total potential respondents</i>
Occupants (passengers)	88	49	
		14	
Total	88	63	227
(surviving) relatives	27	5	
		6	
Total	27	11	
Total number of respondents	115	74	

Of the 20 respondents who did not participate in the first survey, half gave the reason that three years after the disaster they could not yet face answering the questions. The remaining respondents gave as an explanation that they did not receive the first questionnaire, or forgot to send it back.

Physical well-being

In the first survey we asked extensively about the physical effects of the disaster. Of the occupants that participated in the survey, one third were heavily injured. Many indicated that their physical well-being was negatively impacted by the crash. The results of the second survey reveal that occupants still experience physical problems as a result of the Faro air disaster.

The majority (85%) of the occupants who completed the second questionnaire were injured in the airplane crash. Of them one third was heavily injured, 37% were lightly injured, and 29% left the hospital after outpatient treatment.

The percentage of occupants who reported ongoing physical problems three to six years after the airplane accident (75%) was almost equal to the percentage of occupants experiencing physical problems at the time of the first survey, three years after the disaster (77%). Some seven out of every ten occupants (45 respondents) reported experiencing the following problems:

TABLE 8:
Physical ailments among survivors and (surviving) relatives after the Faro air disaster
(n=45, multiple answers possible)

		<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent age</i>
<i>Physical</i>	Pain in or poor functioning of a finger, ankle, shoulder, arm, or leg	27	60
	Back problems	20	44
	Neck problems/whiplash	18	40
	Respiratory problems	7	16
	Pain due to burn injuries	4	9
<i>Psychosomatic</i>	Fatigue	30	67
	(Persistent) headache	13	29
	Tense muscles	11	24
	Stomachache	7	16
	Other: dizziness, nausea, weakened immune system	7	16

Rather striking is the fact that, in comparison to the first survey, a smaller group of occupants reports a larger number of physical ailments (compare tables 1 and 8). This relative increase in the number of physical ailments possibly could be explained by the fact that the respondents in the second survey included a higher percentage of occupants that were injured in the crash (86% compared to 75% in the first survey).

Of the occupants who reported suffering from physical ailments in the second survey, more than half is suffering to the extent that they cannot function normally, need to limit their activities, or encounter limitations when working and/or engaged in sports. This group comprises 40% of the total number of surveyed occupants.

More than three quarters of the occupants with physical ailments (also) visited a physician or medical specialist in the period 1996-1998. This group comprises 55% of the total number of surveyed occupants. The number of visits made during this period varied from about two to eight visits per year.

Mental well-being

As revealed in the first survey, survivors as well as (surviving) relatives experienced a change in their mental well-being after the disaster. In the first survey 63% of the occupants had sought treatment for psychological problems. The results of the second survey show that 57% of occupants had sought attention from a psychologist, psychiatrist, or RIAGG in that same period (1993-1995). Ten occupants sought mental help for the first time in the period 1994-1998. Often contact with a specialist would last for more than a year.

TABLE 9:
Contact with mental health care by survivors of the Faro air disaster
(n=42)

<i>Year of first contact</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
In 1993	32	76
Between 1994 and 1998	10	24
Total	42	100

Just under 30% of the occupants received treatment for long-term recovery problems.¹⁰ Five and a half years after the disaster seven occupants (11%) continued to receive such treatment.

Three quarters of the occupants in the second survey (five and a half years after the disaster) indicated a fair to good recovery from the disaster. In comparison to the first survey a larger percentage of the occupants is of the opinion that the disaster has also had positive effects on their lives (44% versus 31% in the first survey).

Employment and financial-economic aspects

In comparison to the first survey, the second survey included an even larger group of occupants who indicated they experienced a change in employment situation (64% versus 48% in the first survey). This group of occupants (n=39) has a different job (16%), works fewer hours (10%), or no longer has a paying job (38%) as a consequence of the Faro air disaster.¹¹ Two thirds of them characterized the change in employment as a small (n=6) to large (n=20) deterioration. The remainder saw the change as a small to large improvement, or experienced no change. This implies that four out of every ten occupants experienced a deterioration in their employment situation after the Faro air disaster. For most, this change in employment situation took place in the first three years after the airplane disaster.

For more than half of the occupants (n=32) their financial situation (also) deteriorated after the disaster. Of this group, two thirds spoke of a large deterioration! Different respondents indicated that they entered employment disability, or worked less or not at all and thus had lower incomes as a consequence of the Faro air disaster. In addition, some incurred greater expenses, for example to deal with legal issues after the disaster. To the extent that any improvement in financial situation took place, this was primarily due to the damage compensation that was paid out.

Damage claims and legal settlements

At the time of the first survey, the damage claims for many respondents had yet to be settled.

This was the case in particular for non-material (psychological) damages and temporary loss of income. In general, people were satisfied with the settlement of material damages. People were less satisfied with the way in which the damage settlement was handled and the settlement of psychological damages (compensation for pain and suffering).

¹⁰ Among the respondents to the first survey this percentage was 35%.

¹¹ In the first survey these percentages were 5%, 13% and 30% respectively.

Five and a half years after the disaster it appears that for the majority of the occupants the legal processes surrounding the damage claims have been resolved (86%, compared to 58% in the first survey). However, nine occupants were still fighting legal battles to get compensation for material damages, temporary and/or permanent physical disability, psychological damages, and loss of income.

Among the occupants in the second survey, there is much dissatisfaction about how and the extent to which the damages suffered have been compensated. In comparison to the first survey, a markedly smaller percentage indicated satisfaction with the damage claim settlements (27% compared to 64% in the first survey). Of the occupants for whom the legal processes have been resolved, 63% indicated being dissatisfied with the damage settlement. The most important reasons for dissatisfaction were the amount of compensation and the fact that people “wanted it over with quickly.”

TABLE 10:
Reasons for dissatisfaction with damage compensation among survivors of the Faro air disaster (n=33, multiple answers possible)

<i>Reason for dissatisfaction</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Compensation was too low	21	64
Pressure to get it over with quickly	18	55
Had to wait too long	11	33

About one quarter of the occupants, in turn, was satisfied. They found the amount paid to be fair, were pleased to get it over with quickly, or reported “that psychological damage cannot be compensated anyway.”

Of the nine occupants for whom damage claims were still pending, seven occupants indicated dissatisfaction with the process of the damage claim resolution. To explain their dissatisfaction, they reported that they “experience the legal process as long-lasting torture, during which the ramifications for the future are not considered.”

In the second survey, four out of every ten respondents was of the opinion that the legal process definitely led to greater trauma than the crash of the plane itself.¹² Thirty percent of the respondents did not share this opinion. However, the majority of the respondents (53%) had yet to achieve peace of mind despite the long period of resolution.

Link to psychological recovery

Nearly two thirds (63%) of the respondents did not think that five years after the disaster they would still think about the disaster so often. For a similar share of the respondents (64%), psychological recovery can only take place when all – legal and financial – aspects of the disaster have been settled.

¹² In the first survey this percentage was slightly higher: 43%.

Organizations, fellow survivors, and surrounding community

Opinions about processes and organizations

In the second survey, respondents were asked a number of questions regarding handling of issues after the disaster and the organizations that were involved. When asked to express their opinion in a grade, the occupants gave the handling of legal issues an average grade of 4.2. (On a grading scale with "0" as extremely bad and "10" as extremely good)

The role of Martinair

The grade given to Martinair averaged 3.2. In response to the question of whether their opinion about the involvement of Martinair had changed since 1995, four out of every ten occupants reported a poorer opinion. For 38% of the occupants, the opinion remained unchanged; two occupants indicated that their opinion improved. When asked to provide further explanation for their opinion, comments of the respondents included the following:

"The accident is being covered up." "At first they promise you everything, but then you have to fight for every penny." "I never felt that hand on my shoulder." "After the settlement I've had no more contact." "I still receive VIP treatment when I fly with Martinair."

The role of the ANWB

The ANWB received an average grade of 4.6. Regarding the involvement of the ANWB in handling issues after the disaster, half of the occupants said their opinions became more negative after 1995; 28% of the occupants said their opinions remained the same. Regarding the involvement of the lawyers, 42% of the occupants reported that their opinion became more negative compared to 1995. (Twenty-eight percent of the occupants did not change their opinion, and 22% had no immediate opinion.) As further clarification, some occupants indicated that the needs of the victim were not a priority, that they received insufficient support from the lawyers, and that they felt that there was a conflict of interests.

The Faro Support Fund

The occupants gave the Faro Support Fund an average grade of 4.5. Nearly all survivors and (surviving) relatives (93%) were aware of the existence of this support fund. More than two thirds of the respondents were made aware of it by the institution or lawyer from whom they received legal assistance. Ultimately, 14 occupants and 7 (surviving) relatives submitted a request to the Faro support fund. The reason that they turned to the support fund was mostly to cover damages that were not otherwise covered. The respondents who did not submit requests to the Faro support fund believed the chances of success to be too low, or were of the opinion that they did not need the (extra) damage compensation from the fund. Nearly half of the occupants and all of the (surviving) relatives who submitted requests to the Faro support fund received all or part of the requested amounts. In 1998, eight occupants were still waiting for a reply.

The Anthony Ruys Foundation

The occupants rated the ARF relative positive with an average grade of 6.3. A majority of the occupants and (surviving) relatives were of the opinion that the ARF facilitated interactions between survivors and (surviving) relatives of the casualties of the disaster (57%), and applied itself to promoting safety in air transportation (53%). Half of the respondents felt that the ARF had represented the collective interests of the survivors and (surviving) relatives in dealings with third parties. More than one third of the respondents (36%) found that the ARF helped with the grieving process and psychological recovery after the disaster. A few respondents also indicated that the ARF helped them by providing information about developments surrounding the Faro air disaster. A small group (13%) was of the opinion that the ARF did not fulfill any of these functions.

A strikingly large number of the respondents gave the same answer to the question of what should be the most important function of the ARF. Nearly three quarters answered, "determining the cause of the crash." A majority of the respondents also saw a role for the ARF in supporting survivors and (surviving) relatives in their psychological recovery (58%), promoting air transportation safety (57%), and serving as representative of collective interests in dealings with third parties (55%). These functions were clarified by a few respondents in more concrete terms such as:

"The Anthony Ruys Foundation should serve as a social club where survivors and (surviving) relatives can get together." "The Anthony Ruys Foundation should collaborate in (the setting up of) an international pressure group on behalf of travelers."

The role of the government

As in the first survey, the government also received a negative evaluation in the second survey (an average grade of 3.0). In the first survey, three quarters of the respondents indicated that it would be good if the government had a much greater role in handling issues in the aftermath of a disaster. In the second survey one respondent remarked that "it is a duty of the government to comprehensively investigate the cause of the disaster."

Cause of the disaster

At the time of the first survey well over half of the respondents were very dissatisfied with the results of the investigations into the cause of the disaster. Many respondents felt that the accounts of the survivors were being ignored. Moreover, many respondents questioned the objectivity of the investigation. Five and a half years later the question of the cause of the airplane disaster appears to persist among the survivors and (surviving) relatives. The occupants gave the Portuguese investigation into the cause of the disaster a low grade, 5.6.

Fellow victims

The occupants rated the support received from fellow victims positively, with a grade of 7.2. A large majority (90%) of the occupants has been in contact with fellow victims since the Faro air disaster, although one third of these only in the first few years after the disaster. Five and a half years after the disaster, the group of occupants that no longer wants contact with fellow victims is almost as large as the group that does want such contact (43% versus 47%). More than half (53%) of the occupants indicated that they no longer felt a need for an annual memorial.

Surrounding community

Support received from their communities was viewed positively by the occupants, with an average score of 7.4. Nevertheless, four out of every ten occupants were of the opinion that others who did not experience the disaster show little to no understanding for their problems. In addition, 57% of the occupants agree with the proposition that people in their surrounding community believe, incorrectly, that they are “financially better off” because of the Faro air disaster. The contrast in the answers is best clarified by remarks from two respondents:

“My husband suffered burns on 56% of his body. Every day somebody asks how he is doing.” “The average Dutch person does not realize what traumas do to you.”

TABLE 11:
Opinions of survivors and (surviving) relatives about organizations, fellow victims and surrounding community.

	<i>Average grade from occupants</i>
Support from surrounding community	7.4
Support from fellow victims	7.2
The Anthony Ruys Foundation (ARF)	6.3
The Portuguese investigation into the cause of the disaster	5.6
Role of the media after the disaster	4.8
The ANWB	4.6
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