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Prior to his current assignments with Sida and CCCD, Dr Schaar led the operation after the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster launched by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Geneva, including major recovery and reconstruction efforts in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Thailand. Between 2000 and 2005 he was head of the Division for Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Management at Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Stockholm. During this time he was engaged in developing the Swedish Government humanitarian policy and in the launch of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative. He has a background in the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, including assignments in South, East and South East Asia, and holds a doctorate from the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.

Dr Schaar has published extensively in the areas of food science, agriculture, development and humanitarian affairs.