

## Supporting Livelihood in Disaster Recovery

### 1.1. Concept of Livelihood Recovery

#### *Sustainable Livelihood Approach<sup>1</sup>*

Sustainable livelihoods are achieved through access to a range of livelihood resources (natural, economic, human and social capitals) which are combined in the pursuit of different livelihood strategies (agricultural intensification or intensification, livelihood diversification and migration). Central to the framework is the analysis of the range of formal and informal organizational and institutional factors that influence sustainable livelihood outcomes. The basis for Disaster Resistant Sustainable Livelihood lies in developing the crucial asset base of every community - this includes financial resources, livelihood infrastructure, social networks, natural resources (land, water, forests) and governance structures order to lift communities out of poverty and heightened disaster risk. At every stage, disaster proofing takes precedence. The aim is to reach across social strata down to the most marginalized (and therefore most at-risk) and address issues of gender, inequity and other social conflicts along the way. [Duryog Nivaran and Practical Action 2005 2005]

#### *Poverty Focused Livelihood Recover (Nivaran Duryog, 2009)*

Poverty reduction as means to reduce disaster would imply that governments would incorporate disaster risk reduction into the plans and policies that emanate from their departments of national planning, treasury, and state/provincial planning arms and would monitor the 'level of mainstreaming' by incorporating relevant indicators. This would mean poverty reduction, rural development; infrastructure development, and physical planning documents, policy paper and implementation strategies would have considered disaster risk reduction in the many of them not take into consideration environmental and ecological aspects. Basically these plans should be 'disaster proof'; incorporating risk reduction has an essential building block that forms the foundation of the plan/ policy. Plans should seek to minimize risk – economically, socially and geographically- and importantly not create conditions for further risk.

Being a highly disaster prone country, Bangladesh government has a necessarily proactive approach to DRR which involves redefining and managing the risk environment and responding to immediate threats. The government's five year programme for Reducing Disaster Risks of the Poorest through Sustainable Livelihood Development seeks to address disaster risk reduction in a development context with the emphasis on building disaster-resilient livelihood opportunities for the very poor and vulnerable communities.

In its global report (2004)<sup>2</sup> the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) of UNDP highlighted that win-win policies could help more people to be free of preventable disaster losses while meeting human development aspirations as spelt out in goals 1,3,6 and 7. These goals relate to reducing extreme poverty, promoting gender equality, reducing child mortality, combating diseases and environmental sustainability.

### 1.2. Principles of Sustainable Livelihood Recovery

Core to livelihoods approaches are a set of principles that underpin best practice in any development intervention. The following principles underpin Department for International Development's, and others, livelihoods approaches:

- a. **People-centered:** focusing on poor people's priorities, understanding the differences between groups of people and working with them in a way that is appropriate to their current livelihood strategies,

<sup>1</sup> [What are livelihoods approaches? ELDIS]

<sup>2</sup> Reducing Disaster Risk: A challenge for development. A Global Report. UNDP, BCPR 2004

social environment and ability to adapt At a practical level, this means that the approach:

- Starts with an analysis of people’s livelihoods and how these have been changing over time;
  - Fully involves people and respects their views;
  - Focuses on the impact of different policy and institutional arrangements upon people/households and upon the dimensions of poverty they define (rather than on resources or overall output per se);
  - Stresses the importance of influencing these policies and institutional arrangements so they promote the agenda of the poor (a key step is political participation by poor people themselves);
  - Works to support people to achieve their own livelihood goals
- b. **Responsive and participatory**: listening and responding to the livelihoods priorities identified by poor people themselves
- c. **Multi-level**: working at different levels to reduce poverty- ensuring that micro level reality informs development of policy and an effective enabling environment, and macro level structures support people to build on their own strengths
- d. **Conducted in partnership**: with the public and private sector
- e. **Sustainable**: balancing economic, institutional, social and environmental sustainability
- f. **Dynamic**: recognizing the dynamic nature of livelihood strategies and responding flexibly to people’s changing situations.
- g. **Building on strengths**: working to develop poor people’s strengths - their skills, knowledge and resources, rather than focusing solely on their needs
- h. **Holistic**: understanding the complex reality of poor people’s livelihoods rather than taking a purely technical or sectoral approach. The livelihoods framework helps to ‘organize’ the various factors which constrain or provide opportunities and to show how these relate to each other. It is not intended to be an exact model of the way the world is, nor does it mean to suggest that stakeholders themselves necessarily adopt a systemic approach to problem solving. Rather, it aspires to provide a way of thinking about livelihoods that is manageable and that helps improve development effectiveness.
- It is non-sectoral and applicable across geographical areas and social groups.
  - It recognizes multiple influences on people, and seeks to understand the relationships between these influences and their joint impact upon livelihoods.
  - It recognizes multiple actors (from the private sector to national level ministries, from community based organizations to newly emerging decentralized government bodies).
  - It acknowledges the multiple livelihood strategies that people adopt to secure their livelihoods.
  - It seeks to achieve multiple livelihood outcomes, to be determined and negotiated by people themselves.

### 1.3. Damage and Assessment

*“How to assess the damage? This is fundamental. Thousands of teams with engineers, revenue officers, teachers and local NGOs carried out the assessment. But many resurveys had to be done as the criteria that were used were not effective.” (International Workshop on Post Earthquake Reconstruction Experiences, 2009)*

The assessment to support livelihood recovery should include 4 aspects which are (1) Damage assessment, (2) Risk Assessment, (3) Capacity Mapping, and (4) Vulnerability Assessment [China 2008]<sup>3</sup>.

- **Damage Assessment**; Sustainable recovery and reconstruction plans and implementation approaches in these disaster responses were guided by certain knowledge about the damage, both tangible and intangible. The resulting damage estimations gave a basis for the projection of financial needs for

<sup>3</sup> UN in China and the Ministry of Commerce of the People Republic of China, *Workshop Synthesis: International Workshop on Post-Earthquake Reconstruction Experiences*, 2008,

<http://www.un.org.cn/public/resource/1ebcf0e9980429f519eeec9727152b9d.pdf>, October 10, 2009 accessed



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rebuilding and defining priorities and focus. As such, accurate damage assessments and a comprehensive plan of action in terms of minimum financial needs, necessary capacity, and priorities correlate to a high degree.

- **Risk Assessment;** the participation of the affected communities in the risk assessment is critical. It serves as an educational process for the communities to learn about imminent dangers and potential risks in their environment.
- **Capacity Mapping;** Rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction effected new or newly amended procedures, introduced new equipment, and required working with a multi-disciplinary team. Efficiency and effectiveness of past operations depended on the competency and ability of potential implementing agencies to carry out the work. The findings from the mapping exercise helped to determine a range of technical training needs, as well as supported appropriate resource allocation for capacity building.
- **Vulnerability Assessment** is used to create an understanding about social and economic vulnerabilities in terms of who, why, what, and how.

In **Japan**, the elderly were identified as a vulnerable group and they had specific needs for shelter. The government housing programme, while distributing housing grants, built collective homes for the elderly who lived alone.

In **Pakistan**, the recovery and reconstruction programmes prioritized seven vulnerable groups: widows without male children over 18 years; women with disabled husbands; divorced/abandoned women or unmarried women who have crossed their marriage age and depended on other people; physically or mentally disabled people; unaccompanied minors; unaccompanied elderly; and landless people. Specific interventions to address these populations' needs included a women's information center in rural Pakistan and livelihood grants.

In **Indonesia, Aceh**, Among the tsunami's victims (2004) there was also concern that some of the weakest children, especially the orphans, could be dragged into sexual exploitation. Shortly after the tsunami, the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) took steps to adapt to this unprecedented situation and decided to focus special attention on children between 15 and 17 years old, who are largely outside formal schooling but who may have no work opportunities and who often lack skills

### **How to ensure reconstruction efforts are able to target the social and economic sectors that need the most help?**

- Socio-cultural factors included in all assessment methodologies
- Equal representation and participation of ethnic minority communities in planning and implementation.
- Use of culture sensitive methodologies and materials; language, approach, choice of materials,
- Ensuring all agencies are sensitized on gender, culture and rights issues as per specific communities.

### **Concern points in livelihood assessment (ALNAP)<sup>4</sup>**

- A baseline analysis is important in understanding how people are vulnerable, the risks they face and how they cope (C-SAFE, 2007).
- Needs assessments should be coordinated, preferably multi-agency, and based on sound methodology using empirical evidence.
- Assessments must consider groups that have specific needs, and should draw attention to them when necessary.
- The impact of high food prices on livelihoods continues to be underestimated.

<sup>4</sup> [Hedlund 2007]



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- Acute malnutrition can be one of the most reliable indicators of severity of a crisis. However, if not properly understood, it can misinform a humanitarian response (Collins, 2001)

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