



Community participation in rebuilding in the Maldives



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The International Federation's Global Agenda (2006–2010)

Over the next five years, the collective focus of the Federation will be on achieving the following goals and priorities:

Our goals

Goal 1: Reduce the number of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.

Goal 2: Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.

Goal 3: Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.

Goal 4: Promote respect for diversity and human dignity, and reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion.

Our priorities

Improving our local, regional and international capacity to respond to disasters and public health emergencies.

Scaling up our actions with vulnerable communities in health promotion, disease prevention and disaster risk reduction.

Increasing significantly our HIV/AIDS programming and advocacy.

Renewing our advocacy on priority humanitarian issues, especially fighting intolerance, stigma and discrimination, and promoting disaster risk reduction.

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Summary

The Indian Ocean tsunami of 26 December 2004 caused widespread destruction and left thousands of people homeless in the small island nation of the Maldives. The emergency response was swift, and the government immediately set about determining how best to rebuild the devastated country.

People left without adequate shelter were exposed to the greatest hardship. Many were relocated to islands considered better protected from natural hazards. There, they were provided with temporary shelters or housed with host families while plans for rebuilding their homes were drawn up by the government and its development partners. Some of the islands had been so badly destroyed that the government offered the inhabitants a choice of permanent relocation to other, safer islands that had also been identified for development as future economic growth centres.

It was in this context that the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation) undertook a challenging relocation and construction programme for people displaced by the tsunami. The aim of one project was to build some 600 houses and accompanying services on a previously uninhabited island, Dhuvaafaru in the Raa Atoll, for up to 4,000 people from the Kandholhudhoo community, whose own island home had been completely destroyed. The project was to be carried out in a direct partnership with the government of the Maldives, as the country did not as yet have a National Society.

During the early stages of the project's implementation, it became evident that beneficiary participation was inadequate. The members of the affected community had not received clear information about the project, and even though they had been able to influence the design of the houses, they had not been adequately consulted about the new settlement being built for them. The resulting confusion, conjecture and frustration had led to tensions between the displaced community and the nearby communities hosting them, as well as misunderstandings between both these communities, the International Federation and the government bodies concerned.

In light of this, the International Federation sought ways to stimulate greater community participation in the project. A Community Involvement Plan was developed together with the government to promote better two-way communication between the communities concerned, including the island authorities, and the International Federation and to provide opportunities for meaningful and active community involvement in the project. The plan introduced a variety of simple and practical initiatives to address community concerns and questions about the housing project as it evolved, while cementing budding relationships among all those involved in the project.

The context

On the morning of 26 December 2004, the lives and livelihoods of the people of the Maldives were shattered by a massive tsunami-triggered sea surge that engulfed the island nation. Caused by one of the most powerful earthquakes of the last half-century, the tsunami travelled from its point of origin off the coast of Indonesia, at speeds of up to 800 km per hour. It reached the coast of Aceh within 30 minutes, Sri Lanka within two hours and the Maldives within approximately three and a half hours. Despite the time lag, the absence of an early warning system meant that the Maldives had little or no idea of the catastrophe heading its way.

For the low-lying islands of the Maldives¹, the tsunami represented the worst natural disaster in the country's history. All but 9 of the 199 inhabited islands in the archipelago were either partially or wholly flooded, 53 suffered extensive damage and around 20 were totally destroyed.

Though there was less loss of life in the Maldives than in some other tsunami-affected countries, the relative impact on the economy and the population was much greater. About 100,000 people – more than one-third of the population – were severely affected. Total damage was estimated at around 62 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product. Nearly 80 islands were left without safe drinking water and over 5,000 buildings were damaged. A large number of schools, health facilities and government offices needed to be rehabilitated and repaired.

The government of the Maldives swiftly mounted a major relief and rehabilitation operation with the support of the international community. Following a multi-agency needs assessment, a Government National Recovery and Reconstruction Plan was developed. The plan identified actions to rehabilitate those sectors where losses were heaviest, housing and water and sanitation being the highest priorities, followed by education, tourism, fishing and transport.

The challenges of reconstruction

In some respects, the relief effort that followed the disaster was the easiest part of the tsunami response. As the relief operation moved on to recovery and reconstruction, the true scale of the challenges facing the Maldives began to emerge. One of the greatest of these was how to deal with the large numbers of internally displaced people (IDPs) who had to leave their homes and were living in temporary shelters or with host families. A total of 12,000 people had been displaced across 18 atolls, of whom 58 percent had to take refuge on islands other than their own. Providing shelter for such a large population required a rapid and massive mobilization of resources.

Before the tsunami, each island had a distinct character that had evolved over generations of communal living. By displacing entire communities and destroying infrastructure on many islands, the tsunami brought a long-running development debate to the forefront of reconstruction planning. Should the government rebuild islands that had been inhabited for centuries but were clearly highly vulnerable to future hazards? Or should it devote reconstruction funds and efforts to relocating communities to islands with fewer environmental hazards and where public services could be provided to larger numbers at a lower cost?

¹ The average elevation of the islands is 1.8 metres above sea level.



In all, 5,215 houses needed repair and another 2,879 needed rebuilding. As the highly porous soils of the tsunami-affected islands subsided in the months following the disaster, previously unharmed buildings started to show signs of damage, putting further pressure on housing needs. The government took a decision, to rebuild a number of the destroyed islands, including raising the overall elevation and reclaiming land. It also decided to build new homes on previously uninhabited larger islands that were considered safer and economically more sustainable.

In one such case, the International Federation has been assisting the government in implementing a project to develop the uninhabited island of Dhuvaafaru in the Raa Atoll for up to 4,000 tsunami-displaced people. It is one of the most ambitious tsunami recovery projects undertaken by the International Federation in the Maldives, particularly as the country did not yet have a National Society with which to partner. Some 600 houses are being built, along with community infrastructure, including schools, an administrative centre, sports ground, health centre, and sewerage and electricity systems.

The new settlement is designed to improve living conditions and reduce risks. The 600 houses are intended to replace the original 440 on Kandholhudhoo to ease previous overcrowding. Some of the community buildings will also be two storeys high to serve as refuges from sea surges.

“The one thing an internally displaced person has to have in abundance is patience. There’s a lot of sitting around, a lot of waiting for news, but... not a lot of space, not much to be happy about.”

International Federation information delegate

Within the context of this broader community resettlement project, the International Federation has undertaken housing construction, along with the provision of water supply, sewerage and waste management systems. While waiting for their permanent homes to be built, the people of Kandholhudhoo have been living in Red Cross-funded temporary shelters spread across five neighbouring islands: Ungoofaaru, Alifushi, Hulhudhuffaaru, Maduvvaree and Meedhoo. The completion of the construction phase, including building of infrastructure, is difficult to anticipate with certainty. It is expected that beneficiaries will be able to relocate in the second quarter of 2008, but there is a need to understand that construction schedules cannot always be assured and some adjustment to timing may become necessary.

Community participation challenges

In addition to the technical complexities and time required to build a new settlement properly, a major recovery challenge in the Maldives emerged in the form of tensions that surfaced between host communities and the IDPs living nearby in temporary accommodation. Originally, government offices on each island were mandated to manage the needs of the displaced populations. The officials, mainly local chiefs and their assistants, had no prior experience of such a situation and had not received any special training in how to handle it. The lines of authority were also unclear between local officials and those who had been displaced from another island.

The result was insufficient attention to the specific needs of both communities, a lack of understanding and cultural sensitivity, and under-reporting of incidents of conflict between host and displaced communities.

There were many factors contributing to the tensions between the host and displaced communities. These included:

- **the frustration** felt by the IDPs living in temporary shelters who lacked sufficient information as to when permanent housing would be available;
- **no knowledge** of when the IDPs who did not want to move to new islands would be allowed to return to their islands of origin;
- **a lack of clarity** as to what entitlements the IDPs would have in their new houses and what criteria would be used to allocate the houses;
- **confusion** over the roles of the multiple stakeholders, including the government, in the construction of houses; and
- **the perception** among some members of the displaced communities that the International Federation did not want to change certain aspects of the housing designs to suit their preferences.

The lack of a strong tradition of local organization and participation in the development process at community level made effective communication and conflict resolution more difficult, with both the displaced and the host communities. As a result, both local and expatriate International Federation staff experienced real difficulties in involving the communities in project decision-making. Community members simply were not used to playing such an active role and had a tendency to expect the government to provide for them.

“A brain surgeon used to dealing with human heads cannot suddenly become a road engineer... and so, as a trained architect, I cannot be expected to be an expert in facilitating community involvement, although I would love to do it.”

Construction delegate

This was also uncharted territory for most of the technical and construction staff, who lacked sufficient orientation and skills in community development and in the application of a participatory approach. They had not envisaged that part of their tasks would involve listening to and responding to community members' concerns, other than those relating to the technical aspects of construction.

Lastly, key government officials at both national and local levels did not always fully understand the added value of providing clear information to the IDPs. Some misinterpreted “community participation” as having political overtones, intended to incite the communities against the government.

The International Federation recognized these challenges and explored ways to address them. The outcome was the Community Involvement Plan, developed by the government's IDP management programme with the support of the International Federation's IDP camp management and support team.



Establishing beneficiary selection criteria

In May 2006, an International Federation-led team was formed and started working with partner National Societies involved in the island relocation programme. Their aim was to come up with guidelines for the selection of beneficiaries of Red Cross-funded permanent housing from among the communities displaced by the tsunami. This work helped complement and increase the accuracy of an existing government list of beneficiaries. The list had been found to contain many inaccuracies and deficiencies, including double registration of some households, out-of-date information on family numbers, and lack of information on the vulnerabilities and special needs of some of the IDPs, including those with disabilities.

The team whose task it was to develop the beneficiary selection guidelines consisted of two Maldivian Federation staff, an International Federation IDP delegate and an advocacy adviser, as well as ten volunteers/enumerators (five men and five women) from the displaced community. To develop the draft guidelines, the team adopted a participatory methodology, which entailed conducting household surveys and informal interviews to collect data on family demographics (sex, age, numbers, special vulnerabilities, and changes in family size since they were first relocated). In order to ensure a smooth information flow and a constructive dialogue throughout the process, the team members enlisted the chief of the displaced community and his assistants to work alongside them. This was the first time this had been done in the Maldives. The chief and his assistants accompanied the team everywhere, provided guidance on government policy and procedures, answered community members' questions regarding the list of beneficiaries, and verified information supplied by the households.

While the team initially deemed the surveys to be purely a data collection exercise for the purposes of consolidating the beneficiary list, it turned out to be an enriching experience that led to the development of strong bonds of friendship and trust between the team and the displaced community. It ultimately became an avenue for the community members to ask questions and raise concerns about the housing project on Dhuvaafaru island and to learn more about the wider mission, values and work of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. The locally recruited enumerators facilitated this process by acting as a bridge between the community and the other team members.

Analysis of the questions, comments and concerns raised by the IDPs on the five islands surveyed indicated four basic factors that had contributed to their feelings of dissatisfaction, anxiety and sometimes anger:

- **lack of clear information** on the progress of building work on Dhuvaafaru island;
- **uncertainty** as to where and from whom to get information on the housing project;
- **insufficient feedback** on their concerns and questions and little assurance that their feedback was being acted upon; and
- **misconceptions** about what the Red Cross Red Crescent stood for and its role vis-à-vis the government's resettlement project.

Dealing with genuine concerns and rumours

Uncertainty among both the IDPs and the host communities about the ongoing work of housing construction had led to false rumours and misconceptions about the project and the role of the Red Cross Red Crescent.

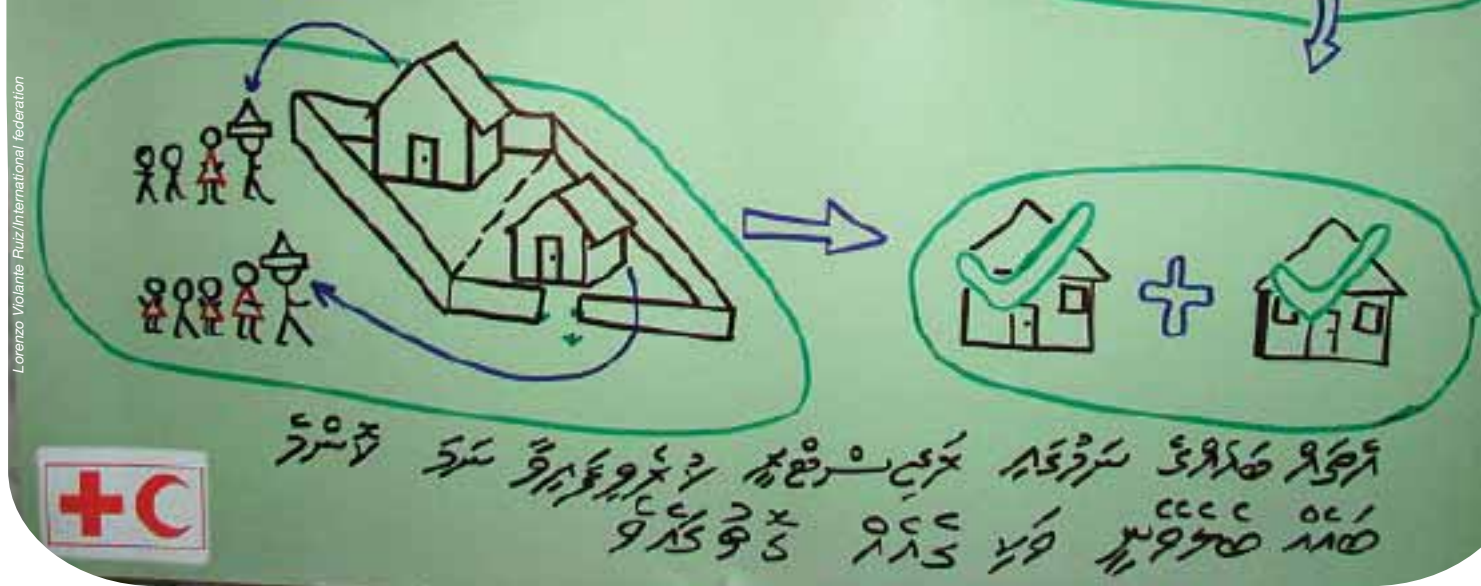
Men from the displaced community were concerned about such issues as the availability of space on the new island for repairing and storing their fishing gear and the direction in which the houses would face (they were worried that they would be exposed to the full force of the monsoon). Women's concerns included the size of the houses, location of the kitchen, the number of bedrooms and the availability and purity of water. Other questions raised included when families would be able to move into their new houses, and when construction of other basic infrastructure, such as schools and health facilities, would take place.

In addition to these questions, rumours were circulating among members of the displaced community, for example that the site contractors were misusing underground water or that the government would provide furniture and cutlery for the completed houses.

Clear, accurate and timely information is the key to allaying such fears and stopping the spread of rumours. For example, in December 2006, a group of women from the displaced community were taken to see their new island home and were pleasantly surprised that the houses under construction were much better than they had been led to believe by some community members. "I was told this house wasn't even big enough for a box of bones, but now I see it is big and of good quality," said one woman.

Part of the IDPs' frustration stemmed from the feeling that they were not being satisfactorily informed of what was going on either by the government or by the International Federation. They lacked trust and confidence in the IDP committees set up to act as intermediaries between the community, the government and aid agencies. Although some public meetings had been organized between the displaced community and government officials, their usefulness in addressing people's concerns was said to be negligible. According to the IDPs, the reason for this was that the meetings did not take place regularly enough, the communities were not given sufficient notice to prepare in advance or to make time to attend, and not enough time was allocated to listening to and responding to the community's questions.

Owing to lack of information about the International Federation's role and responsibilities in relation to the government, some members of the displaced community incorrectly viewed the organization as a substitute for the government. Instead of raising their concerns with the relevant authorities, they expected the International Federation to advocate on their behalf. As a result, the International Federation may have been unjustly blamed for some of the problems in the community which did not come within its remit.



Towards a community involvement approach

Between July and August 2006, following consultations with recovery and reconstruction programme staff, the island chiefs and the tsunami-affected communities, the draft Community Involvement Plan was circulated. The plan described the process for future community consultation, including the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders. It also outlined the ways in which the success or failure of this process would be measured. The plan was based on the Sphere Minimum Standards in Disaster Response².

Sphere Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, Common Standard 1 on participation: "The disaster-affected population actively participates in the assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the assistance programme."

The plan included a number of initiatives, described below, to stimulate greater beneficiary participation in the housing construction project on Dhuvaafaru and to address some of their concerns and need for information.

Visual aids

In one of the first steps, the chief of the displaced community and the enumerators working with the International Federation paid a visit to Dhuvaafaru island and made a simple video and took photographs of the ongoing construction work. For most of them, it was the first time they had set foot on the island. They later circulated the video and photographs to displaced families on Ungoofaaru island. The community's response was: we need more of such information and on a regular basis.

Since then, videos and photographs of the site under development and those of visits conducted by members of the displaced community have been recorded with the aim of sharing them with the rest of the community. This has been done primarily through the community TV and bulletin boards set up in each of the five places where members of the displaced community had been dispersed. The result was to promote a better understanding among the community of how the housing project was evolving and generated positive interest in the project.

“When you have only a few minutes to convey an important message, you want your message to be effectively communicated and remembered. As a visual aid, video can significantly enhance your message. Video is an influential medium that boosts understanding of a particular message.”

Enumerator and member of the displaced community on Ungoofaaru island

² Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, Geneva: The Sphere Project, 2004.



Organized site visits

The International Federation and government team organized a series of visits to Dhuvaafaru over several weeks for the future occupants to get a firsthand view of the ongoing construction work. Groups comprising equal numbers of men and women were taken on a tour of the island and were given the opportunity to ask questions of the International Federation's resident construction delegate and building contractor and to see the design of their houses and layout of the new settlement.

Members of the displaced community on Alifushi were the first to be shown around Dhuvaafaru, led by the Kandholhudhoo island chief and accompanied by the site contractor, the International Federation construction delegate and staff from the IDP support unit. This, and subsequent visits by other groups to the site, proved to be the most effective way of showing how the housing construction was progressing. In this way, the community was told what was happening and could see it for themselves.

After each visit, members of the group filled in a site satisfaction survey. The survey sought their feedback on all aspects of the visit, including their views on the usefulness of the information received, what they had liked most and liked least about the houses, and how often and by what means they would like to receive information on future progress.

“We value your comments and questions”

The keys to a successful community site visit are:

- Ensure gender balance among the participants and the International Federation team.
- Have male and female local International Federation personnel amongst participants to capture informal comments, suggestions and questions.
- Make specific provision for women to voice their concerns and comments.
- Ask the community members what they would like to see improved on the site.
- Be honest about what can and cannot be changed in the ongoing construction.
- As far as possible, have all those involved in the housing construction available to answer any technical questions and to explain their respective roles.
- Ensure that technical issues are explained clearly and in a way that people can understand.
- Get formal feedback from the community on their views/reactions to the construction immediately after the visit.

Informal visits and meetings

During the development of the beneficiary selection guidelines, the team carried out informal visits to the displaced community on the five islands. Members of the team dropped in to the homes of key members of the displaced community and went door to door to meet families living in temporary shelters. This gave the community members a chance to get to know the International Federation and its staff better and to discuss concerns about the housing project in a relaxed atmosphere. It also demonstrated to community members that the International Federation cared about them and their concerns.

It became apparent during the visits that many people were more comfortable in these informal settings and were more inclined to talk freely about their lives in the IDP camps and their hopes for the future. Since discussions were held in small groups in someone’s home, people were more likely to open up than they would be in a public meeting or formal discussion. It was also a good opportunity for the team to observe and understand cultural behaviours within the displaced community.

Telephone hotline

The Maldives is developmentally fairly advanced and most people would have access to a telephone. A special hotline was therefore set up at the International Federation office in the capital city of Male to enable community members to contact the team with queries or to obtain clarification on issues relating to the beneficiary selection criteria. The number and specified hours when they could call were communicated to all members of the community.

“Just back from the field. The visit to Dhuvaafaru, Ungoofaaru, Meedhoo and Maduvvaree went really really well. Community extremely satisfied with the beneficiary criteria and hoping the International Federation will be able to apply the criteria, since they understood the paper has been developed based on needs and vulnerability.”

International Federation IDP camp and support delegate



Putting words into graphics: communicating the guidelines

After all the information had been collected at household level and input had been obtained from the government and from the International Federation's partner National Societies, it was time to inform the communities of the selection criteria for beneficiaries of the houses on Dhuvafaru island. The guidelines were mainly a response to questions and concerns that the members of the displaced community had raised earlier with the International Federation team. They covered different scenarios, such as: the death of the head of the household and/or owner of the title to the property; divorce; non-registration of the house at the time of the tsunami; joint ownership of the house by a couple; and the case of orphans.

“The use of informal, highly interactive communication methods throughout the beneficiary selection process made the IDPs feel part of the process... But there are likely to be more challenges when the final list is released... Bring it to us early so that we are able to resolve the problems and psychologically prepare the IDPs to move to their new homes.”

Atoll chief, Raa Atoll

As many of the IDPs could not speak or read English, the guidelines were translated in the local Dhivehi language. However the International Federation IDP support team felt that the guidelines would be more accessible and understandable if they were also presented in a visual or graphic form. The team therefore reproduced the key messages of the document in the form of simple drawings of houses and people on a large poster-sized piece of paper. The drawings also conveyed what would be done to address the complex issues just mentioned, such as joint ownership and divorce.

By reinforcing the connection between “seeing” and “thinking”, the drawings thus stimulated discussion on and analysis of the guidelines.

Project impact

The experience from the community involvement process in the Maldives to date has highlighted some positive outcomes:

- **Recruiting, training and working with** members of the displaced community was found to be an appropriate entry point for developing more enduring relationships with the community.
- **The foundations** for a long-term relationship with the local authorities in the Raa Atoll were established by formally enlisting their support and ensuring their active participation in the development of the Guidelines for Beneficiary Selection and the planning of site visits.
- Across the islands of the Raa Atoll, the International Federation has **earned respect** from the government for its sustained efforts to involve the local authorities in its activities and has helped to **build the capacity** of the local administration.
- Enhanced community participation **increased the visibility and improved the perception of the role of the Red Cross Red Crescent** as an open, fair and accountable organization among the IDP communities in the Raa Atoll.

Some lessons learned

The IDP camp management and support team, the enumerators and the construction team came up with the following reflections:

Lesson 1: View needs holistically

When working in a community during its recovery from a disaster, it is important to look at the whole context, particularly the type of disaster the community has experienced. In the Maldives, the tsunami affected many people and devastated infrastructure on a scale they had never witnessed before nor imagined could ever happen. Although the main focus of the recovery process is on physical reconstruction and rehabilitation – “bricks and mortar” – addressing the emotional, psychological, social and spiritual needs of the community is also key to long-term sustainable recovery.

Lesson 2: Provide a sense of certainty and security as soon as possible

Following a disaster and during a time of accelerated change, aid workers need to identify strategies that support a sense of normality in the community. Identifying and encouraging segments of the displaced population who played a key part in the community’s structure prior to the disaster, such as fishermen, local authorities, young people, etc., to resume their role can contribute to that sense of normality.

Lesson 3: Manage community expectations

Staff of aid agencies going into a disaster-affected community for the first time need to be aware that the community may have preconceived ideas of their or their agency’s role. The reception they get, for example, may depend on how the community perceives the organization they represent and what relationships have already been established with the community by the organization.

It is crucial to gauge early on the community’s expectations of the recovery process and of the staff members’ role in supporting that process, as this may be very different from the staff members’ own perceptions, and yet it is the most important starting point. A key part of this process is to ensure that strategies and activities developed are addressing issues that are seen as important by the community.

While it is useful to have an appreciation of what strategies and activities have been employed in other recovery processes, they should not necessarily be seen as recipes that can be transplanted wholesale into a totally different recovery context.

It is also important that communication and consultation do not focus exclusively on the displaced community, but also on the community hosting them. This will help to reduce tensions or misunderstandings between the two communities and between the communities and the agencies assisting them.

Lesson 4: Respect and work with existing community structures

Isolated communities are generally resourceful, independent and protective of their people and services. As a new player, it is vital to earn the trust of the community and to gain an understanding of its workings and dynamics. This will almost certainly reveal ways to capitalize on the community's existing capacities.

Lesson 5: Acknowledge the pressures related to working in a recovery programme

For aid agency staff and volunteers working in a recovery context, pressures can arise from a mix of personal beliefs and commitment to the task. But they may also come under pressure from the community because they are seen as the “public face” of an organization, with an identifiable role in supporting the recovery process. While peer support and open communication are valuable in sharing and alleviating this pressure, staff and volunteers will work more effectively if they are able to access appropriate forms of support and training in community recovery and development.

Lesson 6: Encourage integrated programming

The International Federation's programming in the Maldives after the tsunami, including that of partner National Societies, is strongly focused on housing and water and sanitation. Better integration of technical with people-focused aspects of programmes is highly desirable for the future. Integrated programming can be facilitated by a management structure which includes a recovery coordinator position. This role should have a holistic view of recovery needs and be able to make the linkages between different sectors and projects. The integration of these different aspects of programming means that a pool of staff skills can be shared across the board, leading to better quality programming overall.

Lesson 7: Ensure adequate human resources with relevant skill sets

In order to have successful communication and consultation with communities, it is essential to provide information in the local language and have local people facilitating discussions. In addition, programme implementers should have adequate skills and experience in working with communities. These skills can be further enhanced through training and peer support.



A key lesson: The value of communication between host and IDP communities

Ensuring good communication between the IDP community and the host community in places where IDPs are temporarily settled is of the utmost importance. The earlier communication begins, the greater the chance of building trust and creating an open and honest dialogue between the two communities and between the communities and the International Federation. For the International Federation, action also plays a significant part in building trust and reducing tensions within the community, as well as ensuring fairness and transparency.

The provision of services, such as water tanks, on Maduvvaree, Meedhoo and Alifushi improved living standards for both the IDP and the host communities. The equitable distribution of goods and services between communities was key to preventing inter-community tensions and jealousies. When deciding what actions to take or what services to deliver to IDPs, it is essential to consider solutions that do not create divisions between the communities.

It is also crucial to recognize the burden placed on host communities by IDP settlements, especially in a context where the IDPs will be living on the host island for up to three years. Working closely with the IDP community's island chief, as well as the chiefs of the host island and atoll proved to be an effective way of building relationships and provided another route to identify community needs. In future, it would be advisable to dialogue with the government about what resources could be made available to upgrade infrastructure in host communities in order to reduce the pressure on services arising from the presence of so many additional people.

Community participation: A win-win situation

The importance of community participation in supporting a community through the recovery process cannot be overestimated, yet it is often overlooked by those involved in planning and implementing a recovery project or programme. Staff need to be trained to identify opportunities for and to apply a community-development approach in recovery programmes and to be able to demonstrate the potential benefits of working in this way. The capacity to inform people and to gain their support and trust in this process will significantly reinforce the credibility of staff on the ground.

Community involvement is key to building effective and sustainable relationships with members of the community during the implementation of any recovery programme. In the case of the Maldives, sustained community involvement is emerging as a process whereby displaced communities interact regularly and constructively with International Federation staff and local authorities, as well as amongst themselves. Sustainability is further enhanced if team members are locally recruited, familiar with their locality and enjoy a good standing within their communities. Moreover, the participation of the local leadership in and understanding of community involvement activities proved to be pivotal.

In the long run, it is expected that this rich experience will contribute to the emergence of a strong community voice in the development process at local level in the Maldives.



ANNEX

ANNEX

Guidelines for Beneficiary Selection:

Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement Permanent Construction Programmes in the Maldives

Date: 06/09/06

Please note: These are the criteria agreed by the British Red Cross, French Red Cross and the International Federation Secretariat with the Government of Maldives.

Introduction

The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the British Red Cross and the French Red Cross have jointly agreed the following guidelines to be used for beneficiary selection as part of their recovery programmes. These guidelines draw on the experiences of the Movement to date. It is important to highlight that the International Federation, the British Red Cross and the French Red Cross are obliged to act in accordance with the principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. The guidelines outlined in this paper are in line with these principles and are informed by the local context.

The premise for the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement operating in the Maldives is to assist tsunami affected populations. The projects are based on an understanding that the provision of shelter is essential in enabling families to recover from the tsunami. Worldwide the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement operates on a 'needs' basis where the beneficiaries are the most vulnerable people within a community. Considering this, the Movement is not in a position to replace assets (provide more than one house per person) but rather aims to provide shelter to those who need it most.

Relocation and reconstruction on original plots have different characteristics. However, in terms of beneficiary criteria, our approach remains constant. The objective of this paper is to share the Movement's common approach to the selection of beneficiaries with Government of Maldives (GoM), affected communities and other stakeholders in an open and transparent manner.

Intended audience

This paper is intended to provide the basis of our communication and implementation strategy with:

- Government of Maldives (Ministry of Planning and National Development and Ministry of Atolls Development particularly)
- Atoll Chiefs and Island Chiefs
- Island Development Committees, Women's Development Committees, IDP Committees
- Shelter technical forums / working groups / Red Cross partners

In addition, the contents of this paper can be used to communicate our strategy effectively with:

- Island communities
- Shelter beneficiaries
- Construction contractors

Programme summary

International Federation is funding the building of shelters on four islands in Kaafu, Dhaalu and Raa Atolls. In particular, there is a commitment for 14 shelters on K. Maafushi, 46 shelters on K. Guraidhoo, 109 shelters on Dh. Kudahuvadhoon and 600 shelters (plus associated public buildings and facilities) on Raa, Dhuvafaaru. Wherever the International Federation funds the provision of shelters, it is also providing a sewer system for effluent disposal for all new shelters and services that extend into and are to be accessible to existing housing on the same island.

The French Red Cross has agreed to provide up to 400 shelters. The French Red Cross is currently funding the building of a new settlement of 240 houses on Laamu Gan as well as the extension of Gan hospital, a community centre, a sport centre, a primary school, 2 preschools and a vocational training centre. Beneficiary list is confirmed for Gan. The French Red Cross will fund new shelters on Mundhoo & Kalahidhoo islands for beneficiaries not willing to resettle on Gan as well as in Gan-Mukurimagu, final list to be confirmed. The French Red Cross is also implementing a community integration programme on Gan Island

The British Red Cross has agreed to build 545 houses on 6 islands across 3 atolls. Beneficiary lists are confirmed for 5 of the 6 islands. The British Red Cross is building up to 250 houses on Thaa, Vilufushi as well as the communal sanitation system. The British Red Cross is also implementing a community based livelihood recovery and disaster management programme on these 6 islands.

Process for beneficiary identification

Processes will differ depending on the Red Cross agency, the nature of construction and the island context. In general the following activities will make up the selection process:

- household level interviews,
- cross referencing with the local community,
- analysis of VPA and Census data,
- participatory focus group discussions at community level,
- engagement of local committees and institutions
- collaboration with local and national authorities.

As discussed above, the basic principles underpinning identification in general are to ensure that those affected by the tsunami and in need of homes receive an appropriate replacement house; that the most vulnerable of the tsunami affected are included in the shelter programme; and that donor funds are utilized effectively. The process will be designed and implemented in coordination with the Government of Maldives. In addition, GoM are requested to support any legal interventions that are required in order to resolve individual cases (i.e. registration issues).

Guidelines for beneficiary selection

1. One person (alone) is living in the house

- Red Cross is providing 3-bedroom houses as agreed with GoM. Initially, GoM planned to design two types of houses depending on the size of the family but it was eventually agreed that if it is a very small family (1 or 2 members) they should be encouraged to live with relatives.
- Red Cross will provide houses to families but not individuals. In the case of an individual living with relatives in the temporary shelter or in another house/host family at present, the Red Cross will only provide one house to the family.
- According to the Red Cross principles and the objective of targeting the most vulnerable affected communities, the Red Cross is bound to allocate its limited resources with equity and fairness to all.
- **Recommendation to GoM:** (a) provision of empty plot, (b) financial compensation and/or loan scheme should be considered to compensate the individual.

2. Waiting list to get a plot

- In regards to relocation/resettlement, those families who applied (approved case) for an empty plot of land on the original island should receive an empty plot of land on the new island.
- The allocation of empty plots of land in the new island needs to be done as soon as possible (ideally in parallel with confirmation of beneficiaries) in order for construction to commence.

3. Divorced couple (unsolved)

- Red Cross will need to analyze the situation of the partner without ownership rights and where they will be living in the future.
- The objective is to ensure that in the case of divorce, the majority of the family will benefit from the house and will have a place to live.

4. Deceased

- Legal inheritance processes should be completed and, thus, proper registration documents should be provided. 1 person may own only 1 Red Cross house¹.

5. Extended families

- The extended family concept has proven to be particularly complex. The main objective of the Red Cross is to provide shelter to those vulnerable families affected by the tsunami.
- Several variables will be used to analyze each case
 - Family size (number of members in the family)
 - Gender composition of the family
 - Age composition of the family
 - Elderly and disabled members in the family
 - Number of nuclear families within the extended family
- Within our financial and operational limitations and considering our initial obligations to the GoM, the Red Cross aims to include all stakeholders, in the formulation of extended family criteria including active participation of the community².
- Considering the specific features of each island and community, the Red Cross intends to conduct an exercise in which the communities themselves in a participatory way will link the reality of the extended families with the vulnerability concept to define which extended families are more vulnerable and should be eligible for a second house.

6. House under construction

- Red Cross will replace houses that people were living in at the time of the tsunami. If only the foundations or a boundary wall were laid at the time of the tsunami it will be considered as an empty plot.
- In the case of a large family the extended family criteria will be applied.
- **Recommendation to GoM:** an empty plot of land with house under construction (not suitable for living) will receive an empty plot plus financial compensation for the lost building materials.

7. Unregistered house at the time of tsunami

- If a family was living in a house at the time of the tsunami, then the house to house policy will apply independently of the registration status of the house (based on the concept of provision of shelter).
- To verify this it is required that the Atoll Office issue a document confirming the occupancy of the house before the tsunami.

8. Registered house for commercial purposes

- No commercial buildings will be replaced. Red Cross is providing shelter and not restoring business or assets.

¹ In this case it is crucial to emphasize that one titleholder will not benefit from two houses. Take the following case as an example of what should not happen: "A person is awarded one new house although they are set to inherit a second house. The consequence of this is that one person will benefit from two houses."

² Financial limitations and initial obligations of GoM will be considered. Hence, on certain islands Red Cross may not be able to provide a second house for an extended family and will recommend, instead, the attribution of one Red Cross-funded house plus one empty plot with house on loan scheme funded by GoM.

9. House subdivided into several structures

- Extended family criteria should be applied.

10. Plot subdivided into several subplots with different structures

- Should the plot belong to several different owners (and all structures have been occupied by family members during the last 5 years), the house to house criteria will be applied. If the same person owns the different structures the extended family criteria will be used.

11. Rented house (under tenants)

- Similar approach as 'empty house' shall be considered: if the landowner does not have any other property and he/she can evidence the intention to go back to the island the house will be replaced.
- A similar approach will be taken for those houses 'on loan' to others (relatives or neighbors) which do not imply a financial transaction.
- If the house has been rented or 'on loan' for more than 5 years, it will be considered as abandoned house.

12. Multi ownership

- Red Cross will not provide more than 1 house to the same person. In the case of an extended family living in 2 houses under the same landowner, the extended family criteria will be used. Ownership rights over the houses should be distributed in a fair and transparent manner promoting equality among the community members.
- People living in the two houses have to be members of the same extended family to opt for a second house (as opposed to 1 person owning 2 houses: the family living in one house and the second house for rent).

13. Abandoned house

- Red Cross will not replace abandoned houses.
- If the house has not been occupied for the last 5 years it will be considered as an abandoned house.

14. Empty house at time of tsunami

- Numerous families have left their islands of origin and subsequently their houses in the last 5 years in seeking a higher education for their children or new economic opportunities for the family members.
- If the family left the house within the last 5 years for education and/or economic reasons, has stayed during visits and has the intention to go back to the island, then this house shall be eligible³. Atoll office shall consult with the family concerned and, if satisfied, provide a document in which the intention of the family to go back to the island is stated and the temporariness of the status (empty) of the selected house.
- It should be proved that the landowner does not have any other property elsewhere.

15. Empty plot

- A house will not be constructed as a replacement for an empty plot of land.

³ According to tradition, if the family has the intention to go back to the house (for vacation, school leave or when education has finished), the house will be appropriately maintained in condition for inhabiting. This is an indicator that the intention of the family is to go back to the island.

- **Recommendation to GoM:** in the context of relocation and resettlement, an empty plot should be replaced with an empty plot; empty plots should be awarded in coordination with the attribution of new houses (when possible, extended families to be relocated nearby each other).

16. Both husband and wife own a house

- Family size (extended family) criteria will be applied. Therefore, if the family is not large there will be no justification to provide a second house.
- **Recommendation to GoM:** Fair and transparent criteria shall be used to determine which houses are to be replaced. Should the two of them own a house, the recommendation may be that the ownership for the new house will be 50 per cent for each spouse.

17. Orphans/underage potential owners

- Red Cross will replace a house to provide shelter to families.
- **Recommendation to GoM:** In the case of the potential titleholder being underage, GoM should find the legal solution in order to register the house in the most appropriate manner.

What the Red Cross will provide:

- A shelter as per GoM requirements: 86 m², 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom, gifili, living room
- Water and sanitation system: A rain water harvesting kit for each replacement house and, at minimum, a household septic tank (where appropriate).
- Options for beneficiaries where possible and appropriate such as internal shelter layout.

What the Red Cross will not do:

- Provide additional temporary accommodation
- Build extensions on damaged houses
- Provide any sort of compensation for anyone wishing to opt out of the replacement housing programme and/or to build their own homes
- Be involved in loan repayment related to house repairs
- Provide furniture for houses being reconstructed
- Construct boundary walls
- Mediation on family disputes or personal issues.

The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality

In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity

There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.



PROTECTING **HUMAN** DIGNITY **+** **☾**



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies promotes the humanitarian activities of National Societies among vulnerable people.

By coordinating international disaster relief and encouraging development support it seeks to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

The International Federation, the National Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross together constitute the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.