Planning Sustainable Livelihood Recovery

According to CONSRN 2006, there are six elements livelihood rehabilitation strategies including improving policy and institutions, Providing appropriate physical assets; Restoring the environment (while ensuring equitable access); providing appropriate financial support; improving capacity in support of community livelihoods, responsible coastal resource management; Rebuilding of social assets (ISDR, 2009.)

Improving policy and institutions
The objective is to develop a responsive and well regulated policy and institutional environment at national and local level, which involve communities and recognizes the importance of local level needs in planning, monitoring and regulation. The sustainable implementation policy and enforcement require some elements as follow:

- Response to the policy related issue that existed before the disaster
- Overcome the unsustainable practices, improve the poor safety and decrease the unsustainable environmental impact
- Strong local and national institution that able to perform their require function with full support from local community.

Strategic elements to support this vision are:

- Set clear policy objectives, the objective is to ensure the recovery related policy reforms in livelihood are based on a strong understanding of national and local issues and planned within a realistic timeframe. This includes specific policy rehabilitation at national and local level which is led by affected countries and has participation of stakeholders; and clear policy objectives.
- Strengthen management institutions
- Promote integrated livelihood management as processes for facilitating discussions between stakeholders

In order to address the issues that arise from the poverty-livelihoods-risk nexus, and move policies and frameworks to actual practice, there is the need to continuously keep the discussion at the forefront. The processes that are underway now should result in government at all levels including disaster risk reduction in their development plans, allocating resources for the implementation and ensuring that it is carried out. A few suggestions to move in this direction are:

- Lobby and make resources available to build on the awareness and policy formulation to implementation.
- Build on best practices found in the region, recommend methodologies for holistic approaches for disaster risk reduced livelihoods (this would include Micro Finance, Insurance etc)
- Facilitate research on developing simple indicators and methodologies to incorporate DRR into development planning. This should include how to plan and implement secure and sustainable livelihoods.
- Keep on advocating decentralized governance as without this local DRR will not be possible (DDRM-CBDRM). It is difficult to expect that secure livelihoods will come about if local people are not consulted. Although there is documentary evidence for this trend, it is difficult to find in practice.

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1 [Regional Workshop: One Year Later-The Rehabilitation of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Tsunami Affected Countries in Asia 2008]
2 [Adapted from Rehabilitation of Fisheries and Aquaculture in Tsunami Affected Countries in Asia 2005]
3 [NIVARAN 27 March 2009]
For initiatives that have begun, there is a long way to go for this process to be really effective. These need to be implemented properly to mainstream livelihoods. Emphasis on the decentralized levels to take on the risk reduction in their development plans will need lobbying and capacity building in terms of resources and training.

- Build capacity of implementation organizations, NGOs and CBOs, of poverty alleviation programmes. Humanitarian agencies need capacity building on livelihood programmes per se and on disaster resistant livelihoods; development agencies’ capacity needs to be built on the inclusion of DRR into their programmes.
- Simple methodologies and tools are lacking at moment. There are best practices that these can be developed from.

Box 1. Good Practice: Policy in food security during recovery after 1998 floods in Bangladesh (Beck 2005)

During the 1998 floods some 300,000 metric tons (MTs) of aus (summer) crop were destroyed, and the flooding caused extensive damage to seedbeds and transplanted seedlings for the aman (fall) crop, and there was a projected shortfall of 2.2 million MTs. The government promoted private sector imports through removal of the 2.5 percent development surcharge on rice imports, and instructed customs officers to expedite clearance of rice imports. Between July 1998 and April 1999, private sector imports equaled 2.42 million MTs and government imports 399,000 MTs. Moreover, the private sector was able to import cereals within two to three weeks, whereas government imports through formal tender procedures took three to four months.

More important than the total production and level of imports for post-flood recovery is the price of rice, and the ability of poor households to purchase rice. In 1998 the national average wholesale prices of coarse rice remained in the range of 14.14 to 14.83 Taka/kg from September 1998 to mid-April 1999, and fell to 11.74 Tk/kg in the second week of May 1999 as the boro (winter) harvest began. Dorosh (2001) estimates that, if the public sector had imported a similar level of rice to the private sector, prices in the marketplace would have been 1-2Tk per kg higher. The volume of private sector imports appears to have been a major factor in keeping rice prices stable into the recovery period, combined with government intervention through the Public Food grain Distribution System and Open Market Sales was probably a significant contributor to reduced disruption to livelihoods.

Box 2: Good Practice: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)

The largest NGO in Bangladesh, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), covers some 3 million poor individuals, mainly women, with loans for productive purposes. A number of evaluations over the last five years have shown that BRAC is effective in development work in terms of reducing poverty in a sustainable fashion. BRAC’s response to the floods was funded by seven donors and continued until July 1999, covering 55 districts, with a total cost for the recovery phase of some US$680,000. It assisted about 850,000 flood affected women from landless and marginal farming households. Since most development activities were suspended, BRAC diverted its staff to recovery activities. The strategy used by BRAC was to assist targeted people so that they could quickly get back to their own homes and/or roll back to their regular income generating activities. The main sectors that BRAC worked in were: agriculture, particularly the provision of seeds, social forestry and sericulture, poultry, fisheries, sanitation, and shelter. Most of these activities fed into longer-term development programs that BRAC was already running.

BRAC is praised in external monitoring reports for providing recovery aid in kind, not cash. Thus recipients could immediately plant the grains and vegetables, rather than losing time trying to obtain these inputs in the market.

One of the main lessons from this good practice example is that NGOs with an ongoing development program are most likely to be effective in the recovery phase at targeting poorer households and supporting their livelihoods.

Sources: BRAC (2000); Russell (2000)
Box. Good Practice: Pakistan Local Level Early Recovery Programme (LLER)

Local Level Early Recovery programmes (LLER) were implemented in Pakistan to ensure that the gains made during the humanitarian phase, such as community resilience, self-reliance, and risk reduction were not lost after the humanitarian phase ended. It bridged the humanitarian and the recovery/reconstruction phase together so that rehabilitation momentum was maintained, dependency relapses minimized, and capacity that would be required for recovery activities built. LLER activities were implemented through multi-sectoral partnerships. The Pakistan experience illustrates that recovery at the local or community level is important as it gradually builds resilience into the affected communities.

Provide appropriate physical assets to ensure that appropriate physical assets are provided to the victims in a timely, equitable way to replace what they have lost while ensuring sustainable use of natural resources in the future.

 Restore the natural environment to have equitable access to inputs and the sustainably managed natural resources on which their livelihoods are based.

Provide appropriate financial mechanisms to ensure that appropriate financial mechanisms are in place for those affected.

Build human capacity to improve community livelihoods and responsible coastal resource management is to ensure that they managed in a sustainable way to the benefit of all in the communities. Specific objectives should include:

- to improve and diversify the livelihoods of coastal resource users;
- to improve the efficiency of rehabilitation investments through ensuring the conservation of natural barriers, which can act as protection;
- to achieve sustainable management of the natural resources on which community livelihoods depend;
- to ensure conflicts between user groups are resolved; and
- to ensure the needs of the poor, marginalized groups and small scale fishers and fish farmers are included.

Rebuild and enhance social assets, resources and networks upon which people in affected fishing and aquaculture communities’ draw in pursuit of their livelihood strategies and psychosocial well-being. To ensure the development of communities and community organizations which are empowered to take part effectively in post-tsunami planning and rehabilitation activities

- Empower communities
- Rebuild and strengthen community organizations
- Promote consultation with and participation of stakeholders

References

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