



# GUIDELINES FOR TSUNAMI-RELATED REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Centre for Poverty Analysis

## Introduction

In the face of the scale loss of life and material property brought on by the devastating Tsunami, there has been an overwhelming response from people and organizations to help in the rebuilding effort. They want to see immediate benefit as well as lasting impact. They have goodwill and resources, but expertise of how best to help is limited.

In such a situation, it has become imperative to develop and apply some basic guidelines for the delivery of assistance in order to avoid pitfalls commonly associated with rehabilitation and development. It is essential to emphasise that experience worldwide has shown that "good practice" in recovery after natural disasters generally reflect principles of good practice in development, albeit with a shorter timeframe" (World Bank 2004)

Following is a set of guidelines for the delivery of reconstruction, rehabilitation and development assistance to those affected by the tsunami in Sri Lanka.

They are based on experiences made by CEPA as well as other agencies nationally and internationally, in the areas of development assistance, including disaster-related relief

- They are aimed at individuals and organizations that have limited or no experience in relief, rehabilitation or more broadly, development work
- They are formulated to assist measures that go beyond the immediate emergency and relief phase, and deal with post-crisis recovery.
- They will be continuously updated and revised as the situation and priorities change in the country (please see special link on [www.cepa.lk](http://www.cepa.lk))

The guidelines incorporate the various stages associated with rehabilitation and development interventions and includes,

- Situation assessment
- Identification of support interventions
- Delivery of support intervention
- Monitoring and follow up

## Principle Considerations

At the outset, some basic principle considerations to prepare the grounds are set out.

Better than before. Planning for a post-Tsunami vision should be to build a nation that will be better than what existed ante-Tsunami

Considering the overwhelming support affected countries are presently receiving, a vision for rebuilding could encompass a return to more than the situation that existed before. Many of the worst affected areas were those that were already experiencing poverty and other forms of deprivation. Conditions of socio-economic infrastructure, as well as livelihood conditions were below than those seen in the rest of the country.

The recovery from the disaster will be essentially a development issue, which involves elements of poverty and vulnerability. Planning efforts should look to laying the grounds for the recovery of those left behind in a way that makes them and the nation stronger and better able to face such calamities in the future. This means dealing with longer-term issues of poverty and vulnerability at the outset.

Flexibility and staying power. Sustainable and lasting impact requires flexibility and longer-term support and commitment. Rebuilding lives and livelihoods requires time and patience

It takes time to plan, especially if the vision is to return to a status that is better than before the Tsunami hit. Damaged structures and services may not necessarily be restored in their previous locations or forms and this can be used as an opportunity to make improvements.

Respect for individuality. The scale of the trauma will produce different coping mechanisms, we have to respect and work with the different choices people will want to make.

We have to keep in mind that people have different ways of coping with such a trauma. For some it might be a secure house, but one

that has a second storey, or built away from the coast, for others it might be a temple and not a house. Rehabilitation interventions must show flexibility to meet these needs. It is after all the affected that we are trying to help, in addition to our own need to do something.

## Guiding Principles

**Guiding principle 1:** One among many. Obtain information on similar efforts by others by coordinating with relevant authorities / agencies at the central and decentralized levels, and complement these efforts. This will avoid wastage of resources due to duplication of efforts and competition among support providers.

Coordination and communication channels are getting into gear and dissemination of information on relief and rehabilitation is becoming available. At the central level, the government has set up three task forces and the foreign agencies as well as local and international agencies have their coordinating points (see annex 1). Potential donors are advised to take the time to obtain accurate and reliable information on 'who is doing what'. This will help to identify where the gaps are. In terms of the type of activities as well as issues of quality, the principle of 'building better than before' should be at the forefront.

Possibly due to its emotional symbolism as well as visual images, houses are receiving high attention by a large number of non-government and private sector organizations. Decisions on numbers and locations are being made on the basis of inadequate information, without reference to the relevant authorities, not least the recipients themselves. Information such as the availability of land, willingness of the affected to return, type of structure - have to be assessed prior to decisions being taken. In many cases, those who lost houses were squatters and they will be given land in new and safer areas. In other cases, people may not want to live in the same locations anymore.

In addition to houses, many other physical structures have been destroyed. To name a few, household level livelihood assets, household assets, wells and water systems, toilets and other sanitation systems, at the community level social and economic assets schools, community centres, dispensaries, places of worship, training centres, modes of transport and connectivity such as rural roads, culverts, vehicles. All these are aspects of physical reconstruction. In addition there are non-physical aspects that are necessary to re-build communities and lives affected by the disaster.

In addition to obtaining information at the central level, it is necessary to make on-site visits to the locations intended for support, to incorporate information from the ground.

**Guiding principle 2:** Why and what for. Be clear about the focus of the intended support, including questions of why is it being considered and what is to be achieved. This may seem obvious

given the circumstances, but nonetheless necessary in order to make an effective contribution. It is necessary to discuss questions such as, why are the activities considered being chosen, are there intrinsic skills, expertise, resources being brought in by the donor, is it on the basis of perceived needs, how can these be linked into the 'larger picture' of the rebuilding effort, what should be the end result, in the mid- to long term.

**Guiding principle 3:** The parts make the whole. Focus activities within a broader 'whole' and don't ignore complexities

Rehabilitation and development deals with people and societies, which involves complexity. Post-Tsunami recovery cannot be divorced from the broader dynamics of the society and community before the disaster. Rebuilding lives involves more than erecting physical structures, and rebuilding a house is physical intervention in a human setting. It also involves consideration of how the process is organised as well as what is to be done. Aspects such as how the assistance will be delivered, who to involve, how can recipients be consulted on the form of support required, needs as much consideration as the question of what to do.

**Guiding principle 4:** Ownership/ Donor-ship. Invite joint planning and implementation with those affected, rather than 'doling out'

In emergencies of this nature, a policy of 'all aid is welcome' tends to be adopted and the response to the crisis is supply driven (the support that is forthcoming than what is needed). Supply driven responses go even beyond the immediate relief stage, even when channels for communication and access to affected communities are available. Rushing to deliver support, be it houses or fishing boats, on the basis of information that has not involved the communities for whom it is intended, is in almost all instances, considered 'bad practice' in development.

Post-Tsunami recovery should build on the hopes and aspirations of people rather than further compounding their sense of helplessness through externally directed intervention. People have their own ideas of what needs to be done, which are usually more informed than those made by external actors. Even if there are reasons to do things different, this should be explained through joint planning and meetings. Above all it is important to keep in mind that dignity is all most people have left. Taking this away, and turning victims into beggars should at all cost be avoided.

Development practice is replete with examples where the more sustainable projects are those that involved consultation and involvement of affected communities and families. Involving people the planning of interventions is fundamental to creating a sense of ownership, which will determine the longer-term sustainability of the intervention. 'Doling out', will only further their sense of helplessness and create unhealthy dependency. For instance if a project wants to support income generation in a fishing village, it might be that opportunities existed outside fishing that the community didn't previously have access to. Giving fishing

boats will keep them in their previous situation. Training them in masonry might provide them with a new skill that can open up new opportunities in addition to their old ones.

**Guiding principle 5:** Planning for sustainability. In addition to provision of immediate needs, focus on investment into longer-term economic and social infrastructure, skills and means of generating income

As much as there is an urgent need to provide immediate needs (food, clothing, drinking water, medical care) these are by and large now being met and will lessen in the weeks ahead. Investments into reconstruction should include socio-economic and cultural facilities (housing, sanitation, wells, schools, community centres, dispensaries, recreation and religious facilities, transport and access roads, bridges, culverts, shops, to name a few). Equally important is restoring the means of income generation. Jobs have to be restored or created, loans provided or re-scheduled (ideally not written off), skills have to be developed (ranging from areas such as disaster preparedness, first aid, health and nutrition to more practically oriented vocational and technical training). It might be that in some cases pre-Tsunami livelihoods might not be possible to be restored (for instance tourism, if regulation require that new structures cannot be near the beach). In this case skills and loans might need to be facilitated.

Needs also change with time. In the immediate aftermath, asking a person who has lost her home what she needs might say, "a house". Asking the same question in two months, might bring the reply "a road access to transport goods to the market. When these needs change, the flexibility and resources should not have dried out.

**Guiding principle 6:** Transparent selection. Decide on how to select beneficiaries (irrespective of whether individual or group) and make the selection criteria transparent

One of the biggest challenges of development interventions is the selection of recipients for support. Finite resources and infinite needs means that some will gain and others will not. The process of how the selection is done is of crucial importance in order to have the desired outcome and impact as well as to mitigate, if not prevent, the creation of conflict.

Any community or locale also has a specific and distinct conflict environment. Any outside intervention then becomes part of this conflict profile and runs the risk of exacerbating existing conflicts. It is vital then in areas such as beneficiary selection, selection of particular locales, dealing with local hierarchies and targeting marginalized groups, that this factor is also considered.

It is important to better understand the pre-existing community environment and to accept that the interventions made by the external actor will not take place in a social vacuum. The social relations that existed may have been changed or damaged by the disaster but they remain powerful and cannot be ignored.

This is another reason to link up with existing organizations and networks at the local level as they would have the desired overview. Decisions on who will receive support and who will not should also involve the communities themselves. This will ensure not only that decisions are made transparent, but that responsibility is shared by community and not passed on to some outside agent that can later be blamed.

**Guiding principle 7:** Encouraging self-help. Draw on local capacities and resources wherever possible and don't do what people can do themselves

As with planning, the delivery of support should involve those affected. At times of such disaster, the emotional response is not to impose additional burdens on those affected. In the longer term however, drawing on local knowledge, resources and capacities will help revive local economies (e.g. using locally made bricks, local masons and carpenters) and local systems (decentralised authorities, community level organizations and societies). Even if the resources are not available in the community, they might be in town close-by. This may not appear economically efficient, but the multiplier effect into the local economy will be vitally important in the longer run. Experience has shown that even in instances of reconstruction after a natural disaster, the more sustainable interventions have been those that draw on people's own skills, efforts and resources

Most communities have vibrant local organizations and societies. Even if temporarily displaced and dislocated these would eventually revive, and all efforts should go into supporting their revival. The relief and reconstruction work that is currently taking place in many of the affected areas are using the existing networks and social hierarchies that were in place before the disaster. Examples of this at work are religious leaders community leaders and respected persons such as school- teachers and principals organising relief delivery and absorption at various centres. It is important to acknowledge that social networks and a distinct social hierarchy was in place before the disaster and that they would have far greater legitimacy within the community than any outside actor.

Donors should therefore form partnerships with existing local networks and societies (e.g., temple societies, death donation societies, Samurdhi Societies, Women's Groups, School Development Societies, Community Centre Societies) in the planning and delivery of support. The interventions would perhaps then be most sustainable and most accepted by the community of such leaders and networks are explicitly and officially involved. This will also enable longer-term supervision and follow up of activities beyond the immediate weeks and months

**Guiding principle 8:** Follow through for success. Systematic monitoring and follow up will make interventions more sustainable. All those interested in what the ultimate outcome or benefit of their contribution has been should invest a minimum of effort into monitoring and follow up of activities. Even in development

projects that are implemented under 'normal' conditions, require constant monitoring so that adjustments can be made on the basis of new information. Staying in touch with the recipient communities will enable the donor to provide input into additional areas of support that may be required. Since the ground situation will be dynamic and constantly changing, staying in touch is imperative.

Examples of the mis-utilisation of aid are plentiful and largely due to inadequate monitoring of both financial disbursements as well as the activities and outcomes of interventions.

Community based monitoring where recipient communities self-monitor the support they receive is an efficient and empowering method of organising monitoring and follow up.

## Annexes

### Annex 1

Contact points for information on ongoing efforts.

I. Three coordination Task Forces have been set up under the Presidential Secretariat.

- ◆ Task Force for Rescue and Relief (TAFRER)
- ◆ Task Force to Rebuild the Nation (TAFREN)
- ◆ Task Force for Logistics and Law & Order (TAFLOL)

II. Foreign embassies have set up coordination desks at the Centre for national Operations (CNO) at the Presidential Secretariat to record and that coordinate assistance coming in from their countries. This includes names of organizations, types of assistance, and funds. In most cases these are in the nature of immediate relief (drinking water, medical aid, disaster equipment).

III. International and national NGOs are recording and coordinating relief assistance and types/amounts of funds received. Contact points include the Consortium for Humanitarian Agencies (CHA). See Annex for details.

### Composition and Terms of Reference of the three Task Forces

Task Force for Rescue and Relief: Dr Tara De Mel - Chairperson

TAFRER will collect, analyse and tabulate data of those affected by the tsunami disaster and assess the on going needs of all sectors. It will coordinate and facilitate the implementation of all rescue, relief and rehabilitation activities through the relevant line Ministries, District Secretaries and Divisional Secretaries and other relevant Govt. Authorities. This Task Force will coordinate all international donor assistance, voluntary services and NGO assistance and rehabilitation activities in consultation with the Ministry of Finance and Planning, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, relevant line Ministries and the Centre for National Operations (CNO).

Task Force to Rebuild the Nation: Mr. Mano Titawella – Chairman  
TAFREN will assess the damage and formulate a comprehensive

action plan to rebuild infrastructure and its future development. Work towards this end will begin on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2005 and is expected to be completed within one year. The priority areas are housing, hospitals, schools, fisheries, power, roads and bridges, railway, water supply & drainage, telecom, tourism, urban development and the environment. It will coordinate and implement the approved plans through state and private sector organizations and Local Government bodies. The 'Authority for Rebuilding the Nation' will be established under an urgent Parliamentary Act.

Task Force for Logistics and Law & Order: Mr. Tilak Ranaviraja – Chairman

TAFLOL will coordinate all logistical activities of relief work, and facilitate easy access to relief supplies to those in need of it. TAFLOL will coordinate with the Customs and Immigration Authorities and ensure the secure storage and distribution of the basic needs of the disaster victims. This unit will work in consultation with TAFRER and the Centre for National Operations - NOC housed at the President's Office. This unit will ensure the maintenance of law and order and provide security in the tsunami affected areas. This unit is tasked with the protection of the disaster victims from harassment and exploitation.

Source: Presidential Secretariat, 04.01.2005

### Annex 2

Useful coordination websites

Centre for National Operations (Government)

<http://www.cnosrilanka.org>

[http://220.247.224.24/orgrg/Search\\_urg.jsp](http://220.247.224.24/orgrg/Search_urg.jsp)

National Disaster Management Committee (comprising NGOs)

<http://www.lk.undp.org/ndmc>

### Annex 3

#### External references

Consortium for Humanitarian Agencies (CHA), & The Brookings-SAIS Project on Internal Displacement (2003), Practitioners Kit for Return, Resettlement and Development, An Agenda for a call for Action, Colombo, Washington

German Technical Cooperation (2003), Guidelines for Building Measures after Disasters and Conflicts, Eschborn

German Technical Cooperation (2003), Community-Based Disaster Risk Management, Experiences gained in Central America, Eschborn

Telford, John et al (2004), "Learning Lessons from Disaster Recovery, The Case of Honduras" Disaster Risk Management Working Paper Series 8, World Bank, Washington D.C. [http://www.worldbank.org/hazards/files/honduras\\_wps.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/hazards/files/honduras_wps.pdf)

1 The word donors is used to refer to those individuals and organizations wishing to provide support, and may come from the private sector, individuals, and non-government organizations. ■