

Post-emergency rehabilitation policy

Introduction

Once emergency needs have been met following a disaster and the initial crisis is over, people affected and the communities that support them are still in a state of heightened vulnerability. The country and the National Society, from branch to national level, may have been weakened by the disaster. It is in these situations that post-emergency rehabilitation programmes should be considered.

Scope

This policy covers all National Society and Federation assistance activities, targeted to disaster affected communities, in the post-emergency phase of disaster response (as described in the Emergency Response Policy) which are designed to reduce immediate vulnerability to disaster or to address the root causes of those vulnerabilities. It also covers actions taken specifically to rebuild and strengthen the capacity of the disaster affected National Society. The policy recognizes the prime responsibility of government, at the national and local level, to direct and resource disaster rehabilitation and the auxiliary role of National Societies in complementing such actions. The policy applies to activities carried out at all levels of the Federation: branch, national and international.

Statement

Each National Society and the International Federation shall:

- **Engage in active dialogue with local authorities** over the priorities and focus of rehabilitation programmes seeking to ensure that local authorities are aware of the National Society's potential role in rehabilitation and are aware of the Society's concerns and priorities with regard to rehabilitation programming.
 - **Prioritize community services.** The National Society and the Federation will prioritize activities which rehabilitate the most important life preserving systems in a manner which takes advantage of the Society's volunteer nature, ongoing programs and skills, and expertise available locally and through the Federation. Of particular concern should be; the rehabilitation of health care support systems and public health infrastructure, the provision of tracing services, systems to ensure food security and access to potable water, and the rehabilitation of shelter.
 - **Enhance capacity building.** The National Society and the Federation shall use rehabilitation programming as an opportunity to further develop their own skills and capacities in order to be better able to respond to disasters in the future.
 - **Consider gender and environment factors.** All National Society and Federation rehabilitation interventions will be carried out in a gender sensitive manner and with due regard to environmental concerns. Rehabilitation programs provide an opportunity to redress unavoidable environmental damage done during relief operations and an opportunity to develop more disaster resilient communities through disaster mitigation measures.
 - **Effectively coordinate rehabilitation activities.** The Operating National Society has ultimate responsibility for and authority over all rehabilitation activities carried out in the name of the Federation in its
- **Undertake rehabilitation activities with the active participation of the community in the planning and implementation of the activities on the basis of a timely and thorough assessment of unmet needs and available response capacity and,** ensuring that, should assistance be given, it is targeted to the most needy and most vulnerable groups and complements rather than replaces the responsibilities and activities of government services.

country. All parts of the Federation - the Operating Society, Participating Societies and the Secretariat - have an obligation to ensure that their planning, resource mobilization, implementation and reporting are effectively coordinated.

- **Coordinate with national and local authorities and other agencies.** Federation rehabilitation activities complement the activities of national and local authorities. Federation planning and implementation must take into account the policies, standards and actions of the relevant local authorities as well as the rehabilitation activities being planned and implemented by other agencies.
- **Develop advocacy for disaster mitigation.** On the basis of its operational work, the National Society and the Federation where appropriate, will share with local and national authorities, and other agencies and international organizations, information and opinion on appropriate strategies and activities to address disaster vulnerability.
- **Develop an exit strategy.** The National Society and the Federation are committed to maintaining involvement in rehabilitation programming for as long as is necessary to ensure that the lives and livelihoods of those they seek to assist are protected. Rehabilitation will be programed so that those services and activities which are the prime responsibility of government or other authorities can be handed back to them or adapted to fit with the long term programming of the National Society.

Responsibilities

National Societies and the Federation have the responsibility to ensure that all post-disaster rehabilitation operations are carried out in compliance with this policy, that actions taken under this policy are coordinated with the rehabilitation activities of the national and local authorities and other relevant agencies, and that all such authorities and agencies are adequately informed of this policy.

Reference

This policy was adopted by the 12th session of the General Assembly of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on October 26, 1999. The policy replaces all previously established post-disaster rehabilitation policies.

Further reference texts are

- The Emergency Response Policy;
- Principles and Rules for Red Cross Red Crescent disaster relief;
- The Seville Agreement;
- The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief;
- The Development Policy;
- The Development Cooperation Policy; and
- The Gender Policy.

For more information, please contact:

**International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Disaster Preparedness and Response Department**

P.O. Box 372

CH-1211 Geneva 19 - Switzerland

E-mail: secretariat@ifrc.org / Web site: www.ifrc.org