

Integrating relief, rehabilitation and development

Introduction

Practical experience of the National Societies, supported by research, provides strong evidence that relief should take into account the long-term implications of emergency assistance on rehabilitation, recovery and development. On the other hand, development planning must identify disaster risks. If these mutually complementary approaches are not used, then opportunities to reduce or mitigate the impact of disasters on communities and to strengthen National Societies' disaster preparedness capacities are lost. Aid programming which restores the pre-disaster status quo may inadvertently perpetuate vulnerability. There is a clear need to look for ways to integrate relief, rehabilitation and development.

The International Federation is an important actor in the response to and rehabilitation after natural disasters. The Federation is also frequently involved in rehabilitation or recovery following armed conflict. Each type of disaster whether droughts, floods, earthquakes, civil disturbances, industrial accidents or other offers different opportunities to link and integrate response, rehabilitation and development. Interaction of relief, rehabilitation and development requires an analysis of the broader political, social and economic context. In structural crises for instance, the response to immediate needs has to appreciate the risk of creating social or economic distortions. In a protracted disaster there may be a need to rehabilitate the livelihoods of households and communities also during the ongoing emergency. Root causes need to be identified and exposed. The most important element to ensure that both short-term and longer-term needs are addressed is to support the capacity of the National Society to work with vulnerable communities.

Scope

This policy adds value to the existing policy framework of the International Federation on relief, rehabilitation,

disaster preparedness and development and the various sector policies. It outlines the basis for linking or integrating these different policy areas and applies to activities at local, national, regional and international levels. It aims to increase the effectiveness of International Federation action as a whole with the ultimate goal to reduce vulnerability.

Statement

The International Federation and each National Society shall:

- **Change attitudes that treat relief and development as isolated activities.** Relief should always consider the medium- and long-term needs of beneficiaries and seek to increase the capacities of communities in disaster-prone areas. Relief should lay the foundation to rehabilitate livelihoods in such a way that they emerge as more resistant to shocks in the future.
- **Emphasise that the integrated planning and programming** of relief, rehabilitation and development activities and services require close consultation with the people affected at the community level and other service providers. National Society branches should act as the main facilitator in this process.
- **Use relief as an opportunity to enhance local capacities.** Identify and build upon coping mechanisms, use local material and resources and take measures that regenerate livelihoods and local economies. There is a need to adapt programming to the socio-economic, cultural and environmental context as well as to understand gender-related needs. Employ participatory methodologies in assessment and programming.
- **Ensure that relief does not inadvertently reinforce tension or conflict** within or between communities. In unstable and post-conflict situations design programmes that contribute to co-operation and reconciliation by building upon shared needs and common beliefs.

- **Incorporate recovery indicators into relief operations** to allow for smooth and timely shifts between relief and rehabilitation.
- **Recognize the need for inclusive disaster planning of the National Society** to be based upon an assessment of vulnerabilities and capacities, a prioritization of the most disaster-prone areas, and a recognized and clear role in the overall disaster management of the country. Such planning will ease the transition between relief, rehabilitation and development and facilitate risk reduction in the future.
- **Use disaster preparedness programmes as an essential link** between relief, rehabilitation and development that build capacities at the community level as well as in the National Society to better cope with future disasters, reduce vulnerability and thus enhance development prospects.
- **Underline that the National Society is the key** to link relief, rehabilitation and development and that the International Federation should seek to back up the National Society in this role. Regional and country strategies need to provide orientation for participating partners on how to support the capacity building of National Societies along integrated lines.
- **Contribute towards more systematic coordination**, improved working methods for joint assessments and planning and the exchange of data and information between all actors in the international aid community.
- **Underline the importance of humanitarian advocacy** to promote solutions to root causes and ensure better linkages between relief, rehabilitation and development. Ensure that donor funding budget lines reflect that understanding.

Responsibilities

National Societies and the International Federation have a responsibility to ensure that all activities and programmes are carried out in compliance with this policy; that all staff and volunteers are aware of the rationale and content, and that all relevant governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners are adequately informed about it.

Reference

This policy, approved by the XIIIth General Assembly of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is based on the following reference texts: Disaster Preparedness policy, Emergency Response policy, Post-Emergency Rehabilitation policy, Development policy, Development Cooperation policy, Gender policy, Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief, Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards and the Sevilla agreement.

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