



SOUTH/SOUTHEAST ASIA & EAST AFRICA: EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMIS

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SUSTAINABILITY:



Sri Lanka Red Cross volunteers have been at the forefront in helping to empower communities to a sustainable future. Japanese Red Cross

It is a well known and accepted fact that projects which factor in sustainability as a requirement in its outcome have a higher percentage of success when the project ends. Newly-built infrastructure and systems to improve the well being of a community are more likely to be utilised and maintained for a longer period of time if they are accepted by their users. Communities are also more inclined to take ownership of these systems when derived benefits continuously demonstrate reduced hardships and positive improvements in their lives.

In Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Maldives, the Federation tsunami-recovery programme identifies resources and various means as incentives to strengthen and encourage the communities' own capacity in managing their recovery. Communities are trained to manage and even maximise their recovered livelihoods in the long run.

An excellent example would be a house given by the Red Cross. For all beneficiaries, it is an asset and a permanent starting point for livelihood recovery. It is used as a home but its garden can be used to grow vegetables to be sold, its spare room can house a sewing machine and a tailoring business or to run a grocery store. These enterprises are crucial in sustaining a beneficiary's long-term recovery and financial security.

Sri Lanka: Working with communities to secure sustainability beyond the initial recovery

The tsunami operation has pursued the objective of sustainability from two approaches in 2007. Firstly, by instituting planning practices which identify the key milestones of achievement along the path towards phasing out/over of tsunami programming to the national society. This approach, loosely referred to as exit planning, is occurring at the delegation and programme level.

Secondly, Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) partners have increasingly focused on the sustainable impact of programmes on target beneficiaries. This is done by identifying local resources and linkages that will enable project activities to continue even after RCRC funding ends, and implementing activities that will strengthen the communities' own capacities in managing their recovery.

The health programme has advanced to incorporate branch capacity and programme sustainability issues into the project planning phase. It also aims to base performance indicators and targets on realistic capacity



assessments and longer-term project duration. The programme aims to complete training of a core group of volunteers in community-based first aid (CBFA), community-based disaster management (CBDM) and livelihoods skills across 17 branches by the end of 2007. Another intention is to provide national society branches across Sri Lanka with income generating opportunities such as providing first aid services to the local communities.

The disaster management programme is seeking to establish an emergency fund, buffer stocks at national level and a strategy for stock replenishment. At the community level, many community-based disaster management activities are self sustaining through voluntarism and local resource generation. The national society also attempts to link CBDM activities to strengthen disaster management committees established by the government of Sri Lanka at village level.

In livelihoods, the Red Cross Red Crescent seeks to ensure the impact of projects are sustainable via the strengthening of community-based organizations and assisting them in partnerships with other organizations. If properly supported, traditional livelihoods that were recovered or strengthened have a good chance in remaining sustainable. In this regard many RCRC partners have initiated linkages between beneficiaries and specialized government services and other institutions able to support their future livelihood needs. The national society is also planning to mainstream livelihoods as a core area under disaster management.

A good example of thoughtful programming for sustainability is found within the programmes of the Irish Red Cross. The programme plans to provide additional inputs to its initial small asset replacement. Final grant installments, access to micro finance and community strengthening all aim to further strengthen beneficiary livelihoods after initial recovery.



Learning embroidery is one of the many activities created by women groups in the community as part of PSP in Bait village, Aceh Besar. International Federation/ Vina Agustina.

Following the tsunami, shelter projects were not designed with a clear definition of sustainability or in many cases, adequate consideration of the needs and priorities of beneficiaries. As assets, houses are likely to have a sustainable impact for the recovery of livelihood security for beneficiaries. The Red Cross and Red Crescent is now focusing on establishing home ownership for legitimate beneficiaries, hence allowing beneficiaries the opportunity to capitalize on their home as an asset for livelihood recovery.

An example would be the RCRC and UN Habitat-implemented partnership housing reconstruction programme in Sri Lanka. To provide beneficiaries with opportunities to make a living and to improve the quality of life within the communities, the partnership housing reconstruction programme has introduced a sustainable livelihood support process as part of its top-up programme. Each family receives USD 90 to start-up their activities. The funds are provided through a fund managed by a local institution called the Community Development Council (CDC). These CDCs are established as an essential part of the partnership programme with each made up of around 100 families. The CDC draft its own action plans to address the needs identified by the community and work with families to

identify the best allocation of this funding. The cooperation among members contributes both to facilitate trust, and to reduce the cost and help needed in the development of informal livelihood opportunities and safety nets to ensure their well being.

Focusing on the increased integration of core programmes and high levels of participation within national society branches will result in greater recovery and development impact, and enhance the reputation of the national society. This in turn will strengthen the potential sustainability of RCRC programmes in Sri Lanka.



Indonesia: Ensuring sustainability through community involvement/participation

The Federation, the Indonesian Red Cross (Palang Merah Indonesia/PMI) and partner national societies (PNS) have strived to ensure sustainability throughout their programmes in the tsunami recovery operation in Aceh Province and Nias Island in Indonesia. It is the main concern when providing services and carrying out their humanitarian mandate.

One way to ensure sustainability is by targeting both PMI and communities in the project area as the main beneficiary in capacity building. Some programmes reach the targeted communities directly through a community-based approach while other programmes are implemented by the PMI. This enables the Federation and PNS to support the capacity building of PMI chapters and branches prior to the start of every project. The community-based approach is used in programmes such as the community-based first aid which targets more than 200 villages in Banda Aceh, Sabang, Aceh Jaya, Bireuen, Simeulue, Nagan Raya and Nias districts.

The same approach is used in the integrated community-based risk reduction (ICBRR), a disaster risk reduction programme, which is being implemented in Banda Aceh, Sabang, Aceh Besar, Aceh Jaya, and will be extended to Aceh Singkil and Aceh Tengah. The partners supporting PMI in this programme are the Federation, American Red Cross, British Red Cross, Belgium Red Cross and Danish Red Cross. One component of this programme is the training of PMI volunteers in carrying out activities as facilitators, and proceeding with the training village volunteers.

This approach ensures the capacity of volunteers and communities is developed in addition to enhancing the community's ownership towards the programme, resulting in the host national society and the community's resilience at the end of the programme.

Maldives: Community ownership is the key to sustainable water resources

Providing sustainable access to safe drinking water and protecting fragile ground water resources are the core of the Federation's water and sanitation work in the Maldives. The water and sanitation programme consists of three main components: optimizing rainwater harvesting through the distribution of household rainwater harvesting tanks, building supplementary water supply systems (desalination units) on 15 islands to ensure adequate water resources during dry seasons, as well as providing waste water collection and disposal systems on five islands to maintain and improve the quality of ground water.

Sustainability is a vital aspect in all projects aiming to improve water resources in the long term. Communities themselves need to have the ownership and ability to manage the water supply and disposal systems. Therefore, mobilizing and training communities, and providing adequate support are central to ensure sustainability.

In addition to distributing household rainwater harvesting tanks to over 70 island communities, mobilization workshops were organized on islands with particularly low installation rates. The households also received education materials on ways to optimize and ensure the safety of rainwater collection and storage.



Qasim Shah has been trained as a reverse osmosis plant operator and received his certificate at the hand-over ceremony on Mahibadhoo Island. International Federation/Valpuri Saarelma



Plant operators from the community were hired and trained to maintain and operate supplementary water supply systems. Island water management committees have been established to manage the system and to find ways to make the supplementary water supply systems more beneficial to the community. For example, communities in some islands selling water to nearby fisherman as additional income.

In the same way, waste water collection and disposal systems are operated by trained operators. This results in communities managing and taking ownership of the quality of ground water after the completion of the system.

Operational Highlights

In Sri Lanka:

- As of September 2007, RCRC partners have collectively either fully funded or co-financed the construction of 11,989 houses in Sri Lanka. Some 2,574 houses have been fully funded while 9,415 houses have been co-financed.
- Under a MoU with the ministry of health, the RCRC is implementing 75 health infrastructure development projects in 16 districts representing a financial commitment totaling over USD 41 million. The current project list includes the construction of district level referral hospitals, nurse training schools, oxygen storage facilities and primary health centres. By August 2007, 22 projects have been completed while 24 are underway and 27 projects are at the planning stage. On 7 October, the stone laying ceremony for the latest project to commence, the Badulla general hospital, took place. The ceremony was attended by the President of Sri Lanka, Hon. Mahinda Rajapaksa, and the Minister of Health, Mr. Nimal De Silva.
- On 12 September, the Pacific tsunami warning centre issued a tsunami alert in the Indian Ocean that could have affected Sri Lanka and 30 other countries due to a massive earthquake that registered 8.2 on the Richter scale close to Sumatra, Indonesia. Following this, the Sri Lanka national disaster warning centre issued a tsunami warning and the populations in the coastal areas of Sri Lanka were evacuated to inland areas. The warning spread quickly via television, radio and mobile phone alert messages, before it was lifted about three hours later. The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) responded quickly and effectively, and the SLRCS branches in coastal areas mobilized volunteers to support government efforts to evacuate people.
- A large new water and sanitation project is now underway in Matara, south Sri Lanka, implemented by the Federation and fully funded by American Red Cross. The project aims at expanding the water delivery and distribution network in the Weligama community to enable water supply to the existing community and to 14 new tsunami resettlement villages. Additionally, the project will focus on improving hygiene practices among beneficiaries in the community. As many as 86,000 inhabitants are likely to benefit from the project, which is due for completion by December 2008.



PMI and village volunteers plant protective grass on a newly built dyke in Teunom as part of the Danish Red Cross ICBRR programme in Aceh. Danish Red Cross/



In Indonesia:

- The Federation, PMI, ICRC and partner national societies held a meeting on 21 September on a post-tsunami operation strategy to exit the tsunami operation of Aceh and Nias. One of the issues raised in the meeting was how to ensure sustainability for PMI. PMI capacity building at all levels and in all aspects, alignment of recovery programmes to the strategic plan and transfers of best practices and technologies are examples of how sustainability can be achieved.
- PMI and the Federation have conducted a 14-day CBFA training of trainers in Nias Island for volunteers at the PMI branches of Gunung Sitoli and Teluk Dalam. These trained volunteers will in turn train teachers in five schools on the programme to raise the health awareness of students. During the celebration of World First Aid Day, PMI and the Federation conducted first aid simulations and basic health promotion in those five schools. This activity involved 105 students and teachers and also marked the start of CBFA implementation in schools.
- The British Red Cross has accomplished agriculture, fishpond and simplified start your business (SSYB) trainings to targeted communities in Aceh Besar and Aceh Jaya benefiting from its livelihood programme. The purpose of the training was to provide the community with more knowledge on sustainable livelihood concepts. For example, communities are taught better methods to produce chillies, ginger, groundnuts, rice, water melon and effective organic farming techniques.
- With the support of American Red Cross, PMI's psychosocial support programme (PSP) trains volunteers to conduct PSP, working especially with community leaders to invent communal activities that would help the community to recover from traumatic experiences. Since end of 2005 until now, the communities of Banda Aceh and Aceh Besar districts maintain its weekly activities among women, men and children. The communities create the communal activities themselves based on their need and interest, e.g. producing handicrafts, forming study groups (for children), baking cakes/cookies, creating embroideries, etc. More than 1000 groups of communities and schools have participated in the programme.

In Maldives:

- Over 15,000 rainwater harvesting kits have been distributed to 79 islands across 18 Atolls, targeting over 100,000 people.
- Supplementary water supply systems completed and handed over to the communities on 15 islands.
- Construction of waste water collection and disposal on five islands is underway.
- Trained and appointed on government salary supplementary water supply system operators on the islands.

For more details and news stories, photos and all operational updates related to the tsunami, visit:
<http://www.ifrc.org/tsunami>