



UNITED NATIONS HUMAN SETTLEMENTS SUPPORT PROGRAM (UN-HABITAT) PROGRAM IN ACEH, INDONESIA

Snapshots from the Field

UN-HABITAT's Tsunami Response in Aceh

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UN-HABITAT's Aceh-Nias Settlements Support Programme (ANSSP) was developed in January 2005 as part of UNDP's broader Aceh Emergency Response and Transitional Recovery Programme (ERTR). The implementation of ANSSP started in mid-2005 and was implemented in six districts in Aceh and North Sumatra Provinces. The overall cornerstone of UN-HABITAT's strategy is to link interventions in the emergency relief and recovery phases into the longer-term development of human settlements so as to facilitate reconstruction of more sustainable, disaster-resilient communities. The primary task of the post-tsunami reconstruction process is to ensure that everyone has access to a secure place to live and make a living.

ANSSP has clearly been successful in achieving not only swift delivery of shelter units, but also in setting up processes and mechanisms that are supporting people-centered approach for shelter delivery. Wise rebuilding recognizes also the opportunity to include broader issues like environmental quality, social equity, economic vitality and overall livability. Below are some of the highlights from the project:

Shelter delivery: By the end of December UN-HABITAT's ANSSP Program had completed the reconstruction of 3,446 houses (10% of total housing delivery) in Aceh Besar, Banda Aceh, Pidie, Simeulue and Nias.

Unit cost: Immediately after the tsunami, the government announced that all earthquake and tsunami victims would be entitled to assistance for housing reconstruction. Each eligible household was to receive a standard 36 m² house for free. The price for 36m² housing unit was estimated at approximately US\$4,667.

Community participation: The essence of ANSSP implementation approach is support to communities' own efforts through a Community Action Planning (CAP) mechanism which aims to facilitate people's pro-



"The CAP doesn't only provide a platform for multi-stakeholder participation in the reconstruction process, but it also involves community mobilization and socialization aspects which could be further utilized for various capacity building initiatives."

“The CAP approach assists the communities in identifying their own reconstruction priorities and shaping the content of assistance package, which is totally aligned with the core objective of UN-HABITAT’s approach. An inclusive decision-making process is central to all UN-HABITAT’s post-crisis reconstruction programmes, enabling sustainable recovery, vulnerability reduction and civil empowerment.”



active participation in planning and implementation of community recovery initiatives. The CAP process entails the community members to formulate clusters composing of 5 – 7 families. The cluster system is the core vehicle for planning, implementing and monitoring the housing reconstruction in the community. The cluster members discuss and make decisions on house design, building material identification, labour arrangements (self-help or sub-contractor), financial management (bank account) and monitoring the progress. The community participation process has the following key steps; a) Community mobilization and information sharing; b) Stakeholder consultations and Community Action Planning (prioritization); c) Feasibility and verification of proposals; d) disbursement of funds and implementation; and e) monitoring and accountability.

Design and building materials: Cluster groups are allowed to choose the house designs from a number of prototype designs provided by UN-HABITAT. In some occasions UN-HABITAT team has also designed individual houses rather than used standard designs due to limited land and varying sizes of individual plots. All designs are locally appreciated and culturally acceptable, following the trends of vernacular architecture in the region. The standard sizes of permanent houses are either 36 m² or 42 m² as per the government guidelines. ANSSP houses are full brick houses (reinforced concrete stub columns, brick walls and iron sheet roofing).

Settlements Planning: In addition to preparing housing proposals, the ANSSP community planning process also includes a level of village mapping and identification of priority needs of the community, i.e. prioritization of required community infrastructure, for example. In reality, however, concepts of spatial planning, integrated community development and environment management have been overtaken by pressure for quick housing delivery.

Risk and Vulnerability Reduction: ANSSP ensures that earthquake-resistant features are introduced in the prototype designs, and appropriate training is taking place during the re-building phase.

Land tenure and ownership: Much of the rural land in the province of Aceh falls under the customary ownership and many villagers have never held formal land titles. Therefore the mapping of plot ownership has become one of the first challenges of the community reconstruction. This type of land audit entails verification of plot boundaries, legality of ownership and confirmation of the beneficiary status, being also the basis for eventual registration and provision of land certificates by the National Land Agency.

Beneficiary selection: As stated earlier, the central government had agreed to support all eligible households with new house or support for repair works. Village mapping and land audits are meant to verify the beneficiaries within communities, also to be confirmed through the community consultations.

Capacity building: ANSSP has a substantial training component for technical aspects and management of reconstruction activities, resulting in a large number of tools and guidelines recording and supporting the community driven reconstruction process.

Monitoring and Evaluation: The Architecture Department of the University of Unsyiah is undertaking continuous monitoring of the progress of the settlement recovery, covering 60 agencies in 161 locations in northern Sumatra. The monitoring is benchmarking housing organizations on achieved construction quality, beneficiary satisfaction and accountability. It needs to be mentioned that UN-HABITAT is in the top-three in all three categories. The discussions are on-going to elaborate the current monitoring criteria to incorporate some elements of the SRR Indicators.

Normative outputs: The UN-HABITAT programme management in Banda Aceh is paying specific attention to the delivery of normative outputs, supported by systematic and regular monitoring process. All implementation processes of ANSSP are documented together with variety of respective training manuals, largely developed and produced by competent and designated programme staff. In addition, external media professionals have documented UN-HABITAT's community based reconstruction process through web, photo and video documentation. The discussions are currently on-going for global adaptation of the training materials as well as wider distribution of the programme normative outputs within the agency. UN-HABITAT needs to utilize its operational experience to generate lessons learned and normative products, such as tools and guidelines to be recycled into future disaster response both within the organization, and in support of other agencies operations.

Tsunami shook the status quo and brought changes to communities. Changes can create opportunities. Community organization and stakeholder participation is the key strategy of UN-HABITAT implementation, and could be utilized as a vehicle for even broader spectrum of integrated interventions in support of post-tsunami recovery. In particular, our future interventions should build upon the existing organizations created within the communities, if and when possible.



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In sustainable recovery and reconstruction the principles of sustainability should be the key decision-making criteria applied throughout the recovery process, assisting communities and stakeholders to take advantage of the opportunity that disaster recovery brings.

Recommendations

On the basis of the main lessons learned and good practices described herewith, some concrete recommendations for UN-HABITAT's programming can be formulated;

1. Communities must be in the center of the recovery process through full involvement in planning, implementation and monitoring of all activities.
2. Involvement and empowerment of women must be encouraged throughout the process.
3. Settlements planning and integrated community development should be used as an instrument to facilitate multi-sectoral programming and enhanced coordination among all partners and stakeholders.
4. Risk and vulnerability reduction measures should entail a broad variety of interventions from physical aspects to planning and capacity building.
5. Addressing land and property issues of affected populations should be seen as pre-condition for any shelter and settlements interventions.
6. Beneficiary selection needs to be impartial and objective to ensure equity and fairness in delivery.
7. Sustainable settlements recovery entails a systematic integration of shelter and infrastructure support with elements of economic growth, environmental protection and social development.
8. Revitalization of local livelihoods and economy must be developed at earliest stages of recovery.
9. Local governments must be strengthened to manage and support all disaster management efforts, from risk reduction to planning and implementation of recovery initiatives.
10. Building and engaging capacities at all levels and of all actors to be a priority from the earliest stages of support and recovery.
11. Systematic documentation of processes, methods and delivery must be encouraged to support development of normative products for future reference and programming.
12. Monitoring and evaluation must be incorporated in all programming to improve programme relevance, methods or outcomes, to capture lessons learnt and to provide accountability for programme results.

“Community contracting has proven to be one of the best measures for speedy injection of cash to local communities as seen throughout the ANSSP implementation; utilization of community labor force, skills development for construction works and most importantly the eagerness of local communities to participate in reconstruction are all contributing factors to local economic recovery.”



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