

UNDP and Early Recovery



United Nations Development Programme

CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

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Humanitarian intervention is an obligation of the international community when the impact of a crisis outstrips the capacity of the national authorities to respond adequately. Immediate action is essential to save lives, but there is a wider recognition amongst humanitarian and development actors that early recovery is a vital part of the response. It is critical in allowing the gains of humanitarian action to be more sustainable, to provide a foundation for resilience, and to ensure continuity towards longer-term development objectives. UNDP supports the early recovery agenda through its leadership of the global cluster on early recovery; its coordination role at the country level; and its programming approach.

The Early Recovery approach, as outlined in this paper can help an effective and efficient response to crises and gets affected communities back on the road to recovery as early as possible, and addresses today's crises in a way that helps to prevent their recurrence tomorrow.

WHAT IS EARLY RECOVERY?

Early recovery is a vital element of an effective humanitarian crisis response as a foundation for building resilience in post-crisis settings. Just as emergency relief activities are crucial to saving lives by responding to the most urgent human needs, integrating an early recovery approach within humanitarian operations is crucial to the first efforts of a community to recover. It prepares the ground for an effective 'exit strategy' for humanitarian actors and contributes to 'durable solutions' by establishing the base on which nationally-led development occurs after a crisis.

Early recovery is a set of specific programmatic actions to help people to move from humanitarian relief towards self-sustaining development. It is also an approach to encourage humanitarian response to emphasize the importance of rebuilding community capacity in the midst of a crisis, avoiding dependency, increasing the resilience of affected communities, and looking to solve long standing problems that may have contributed to the crisis in the first place.

It is '**early**' because the need to look beyond relief is immediate. It is '**recovery**' because it aims to ensure that people are more resilient than they were before the crisis, and because it prepares the ground for longer-term recovery and development at all levels. If humanitarian assistance is to bring the lasting benefits to affected populations, from the start it must be inclusive and locally owned, be it by the communities or by national institutions and local authorities, and adhere to the principles of 'do no harm'.

Humanitarian action must do more than meet the urgent need of saving lives. It must also take into account time-critical actions that can pre-empt a crisis and mitigate its impact, ultimately saving even more lives. It should restore the hope and capacities that affected communities need to rebuild their lives, livelihoods and environment in a sustainable way. Integrating the early recovery approach in humanitarian settings, and implementing early recovery projects helps achieve these goals, and is also a cost-effective and sensible way of doing humanitarian business.

WHAT IS UNDP'S ROLE IN EARLY RECOVERY?

UNDP believes that the focus on recovery and recovery planning *after a crisis* should begin as early as possible. But the principles of early recovery are also relevant prior to a crisis. *Before a crisis*, UNDP's development perspective (and early recovery in general) focuses on capacity development and national ownership which helps ensure that nations, communities and people are more resilient to recurring and/or predictable crises, and are better prepared to 'weather the storm' (or earthquake, or hurricane, or flood) of a pending crisis and maintain normality to the degree possible throughout the worst of the crisis.

UNDP'S SUPPORT TO EARLY RECOVERY

UNDP supports early recovery in two main ways:

Within the humanitarian system:

In 2005, as part of the reform of the international humanitarian system, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (IASC) assigned UNDP as **cluster lead for early recovery**. As a development agency with a crisis prevention, response and recovery role, UNDP is well-placed to influence the humanitarian community to include development-thinking into humanitarian response.

At the global level, UNDP leads the Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER) which focuses on four main lines of action: (i) Providing direct strategic and coordination support to Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs), Resident Coordinators (RCs), Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) and Cluster Lead Agencies at the country level; (ii) Defining and coordinating early recovery work that is not covered by other clusters (e.g. governance, non-agricultural livelihoods);

(iii) Providing initiative and guidance on the integration of early recovery in the work of other clusters, and inter-cluster coordination of early recovery; and (iv) Influencing the global policy agenda on humanitarian financing, civilian capacities, and strategic planning to strengthen the potential for, and impact of early recovery within international crisis response and recovery efforts.

At the country level, UNDP helps HC/RCs and the HCT to integrate early recovery approaches into the humanitarian response through the deployment of Early Recovery Advisors (ERAs). ERAs work across the humanitarian community, and help develop common strategies to strengthen the links between relief, recovery and development – including in needs assessments, appeals and the work of all clusters. UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) maintains an inter-agency roster for quick ERA deployment on behalf of the CWGER.

In addition to the advisory support provided by an ERA to the HC/RC and the humanitarian system, the HC/RC may require additional coordination support for issues not covered by any of the other clusters that have been activated in-country. UNDP has taken on the lead role for such clusters previously when related to early recovery. The Community Restoration Cluster that was established in Pakistan in 2011 in response to the floods is an example of this specific additional cluster.



Following the 2010 floods, female masons in Sindh, Pakistan participate in village reconstruction. UNDP Pakistan

Through programmes:

As part of the *response to a crisis*, UNDP also works with the affected country and its humanitarian and development partners (e.g. local authorities, civil society organizations and the private sector) to **design and implement programmes** needed to help people move from humanitarian assistance to development. It does this in three different ways:

1. Ideally such work commences 'early' during the humanitarian response. Based on experience, UNDP has developed a series of 'signature products,' or programmes, that can be deployed quickly to support early, short and medium-term recovery:
 - **Emergency employment** - including cash for work and startup grants to recapitalize small enterprises;

- **Community infrastructure rehabilitation** - to improve access to basic services as well as revitalize the local economy during and after crises;
- **Debris management** - to ease access and rebuild infrastructure;
- **Local governance support** - to strengthen local government capacity for relief and recovery planning, coordination and implementation; and improve capacities for local level risk management and beneficiary tracking systems.

Two additional signature products will be finalized in 2013:

- **Aid Coordination** - including the establishment of aid management mechanisms and systems, such as development assistance databases, aimed at reinforcing national ownership and streamlining national systems/budgets; and increase transparency and accountability for fund allocation and reporting;
 - **Recovery Planning and Coordination** - to support the capacity of key state institutions to assess the impact of the crisis and coordinate and fulfill their immediate response and recovery functions where they are lacking.
2. In addition to early recovery programmes that are part of the response to a crisis, UNDP can help ensure that early recovery as part of the humanitarian response contributes to an **efficient transition to recovery and development**. This transition includes capacity building efforts – a UNDP core activity – of national and local authorities to enable them to take over the coordination of programmes from humanitarian actors, many of whom are international agencies and organizations. In this sense, UNDP is well-positioned to prepare the ground for, and support transition processes.
 3. UNDP has a special role to play in assisting countries and their people to **prevent crises** (or at least the worst impact of crises) and as well as recover from them. This includes supporting disaster risk reduction (DRR) interventions, particularly in countries affected by recurrent crises. UNDP maintains expertise in this area, as an implementing agency, and as a central figure in supporting national DRR coordination efforts. UNDP is well positioned to align the DRR interventions of humanitarian actors with development programmes and ensure that humanitarian interventions are contributing to longer-term development programmes.

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