

From emergency relief to post-tsunami reconstruction – The Indonesian experience

Post-tsunami reconstruction has been under way in the Indonesian province of Aceh for nearly two years. In the authors' view, swift coordination of goals and instruments has enabled positive synergies to be created between short-term development-oriented emergency aid and long-term recovery. In this way, and by means of a conflict-sensitive approach, the aim is to guarantee the sustainability of the reconstruction effort.

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A few days before the end of 2004, on 26 December, a massive tsunami wreaked devastation across wide areas of the coastal regions of South and South-East Asia. Within the space of a few hours, 280,000 people lost their lives and more than 1.8 million people were made homeless. Many of them not only lost their homes and their access to food and safe water. The destruction of their productive capital – fishing boats, small craft workshops, micro-enterprises and restaurants serving the tourism industry, as well as cropland located in the coastal zones – deprived many families, especially the poor, of their livelihoods.

The tsunami, more than any previous natural disaster, unleashed an unprecedented wave of public interest and generosity. Donations in Germany topped 650 million euros, even exceeding the support received after the floods along the River Elbe in 2002. Worldwide, more than 14 billion US dollars (USD) were donated to tsunami appeals. Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) responded swiftly to the disaster, providing substantial resources for development-oriented emergency and transitional aid programmes which were implemented by the United Nations and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The German Government also provided 500 million euros for medium-term reconstruction.

Even during the acute response, German development cooperation (DC) not only focussed on providing local communities with urgently needed relief. Rather, the aim from the outset was to create synergies for sustainable reconstruction. Emergency aid programmes were therefore designed to lay the foundations for subsequent technical cooperation (TC) and financial cooperation (FC) projects.

Well-established development-cooperation principles and quality criteria – such as participation by affected people and communities, sustainability, capacity-building and the involvement of existing political, administrative and social organizations and structures – were applied in

the wake of the tsunami as well. In both Indonesia and Sri Lanka, a conflict-sensitive approach has been adopted, with projects being designed so as not to intensify existing conflicts but to utilize the peace-building potential of emergency relief and reconstruction.

This article describes the approach adopted, using examples of activities which were funded and implemented by GTZ and KfW Entwicklungsbank on behalf of BMZ in close cooperation with Indonesian partners in Aceh and Nias. Many of these activities also involved German partners such as THW (Technisches Hilfswerk – the governmental disaster relief organization of the Federal Republic of Germany), Malteser Hilfsdienst (Relief Agency of the Order of Malta) and the German Red Cross, as well as international organizations (CARE, OXFAM, FAO etc.). The overall coordination of the emergency response – which involved many different agencies, and included the projects discussed in this article – was undertaken by Indonesia's government agencies and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). However, the coordination process was fraught with difficulties; in particular, the scale of funding created problems as it increased the number of agencies while removing some of the normal incentives for agencies to engage with coordination mechanisms (see ALNAP 2006, Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, Initial Findings).

Development-oriented emergency aid

By January 2005, just a few weeks after the tsunami, emergency accommodation was being constructed along the eastern coast of Aceh, initially for around 23,000 people; this was undertaken in conjunction with the national and local authorities and the affected communities. The prompt provision of food, drinking water and medical and psychosocial care allowed some measure of stability to be restored in the local people. Their economic rehabilitation began in March 2005. The provision of the physical pro-

duction inputs needed for economic activity – such as fishing boats, small-scale machinery, and equipment/materials for artisanal production – enabled people in the devastated villages to gradually return to their former occupations.

In summer 2005, the emergency relief organizations and their local partners began the reconstruction of community infrastructure such as schools, wells and irrigation channels. Housing and settlement programmes were launched within the framework of financial cooperation (FC) at the same time. The emergency and transitional aid reached a total of 120 villages in seven districts in the eastern coastal region of Aceh.

In the immediate aftermath of the disaster, Germany's Federal Armed Forces, the Australian Army and the German Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW) restored basic emergency services for patients at Zainoel Abidin General Hospital in Banda Aceh, while the operation of the hospital and initial building work were supported within the framework of German financial cooperation.

In conjunction with financial cooperation and with donations from the German private sector, coordinated by the Indonesian-German Disaster Relief Committee (INDOGERM-direct), it was possible to restart training activities at the Vocational Training Centre of Banda Aceh very quickly after the disaster.

From the outset, the provision of emergency relief and the integrated regional recovery process along Indonesia's east coast were interlinked with the Indonesian Government's own initial post-disaster planning process and with the preparations for reconstruction being undertaken within the framework of German technical and financial cooperation. As far as possible – bearing in mind the precarious situation faced by many families – local people were involved in all major decision-making processes. Risk assess-

ments were carried out as part of the local planning process to ensure that reconstruction in this disaster-prone region also aimed to reduce vulnerability and increase local communities' disaster preparedness.

From emergency relief to reconstruction

In the first few weeks after the tsunami, German development agencies and the Indonesian Government agreed on emergency response measures and defined various joint objectives for the reconstruction process, which served a frame of reference for the emergency relief effort from the outset. The primary aim was to restore people's livelihoods. The secondary aim was to enable them to become self-reliant again, on a sustainable basis, as quickly as possible.

Like the emergency relief, support for the reconstruction effort began very quickly; the aim is to complete this process by 2009. The Indonesian Government charged the newly formed Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi – BRR) with coordinating the recovery. The BRR, which is also to be wound up in 2009, reports directly to the President and has wide-ranging powers. However, these powers do not include practical project implementation, which is the joint responsibility

of the local authorities, the specialized ministries and their on-site representatives.

The reconstruction of human settlements has been orchestrated with emergency relief programmes wherever possible. The people who received support during the initial emergency response are now receiving permanent dwellings. The actual reconstruction work is being undertaken in cooperation with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local inhabitants, and in the case of house-building, with the future occupiers themselves. This program is also contributing to the stabilization of the region after the end of the Aceh conflict since in many settlements people who had fled from the conflict are now returning to their former homes and are integrated by the communities in the program.

The aim of the program is not only to restore physical infrastructure but also to promote capacity-building for village and district administrations, thereby contributing to the recovery of intact and well-functioning communities – an approach known as «integrated human settlement rehabilitation». As an integral part of this process, advice is being provided to local governments on the (re)establishment of residents' registration offices and land registry systems.

The reconstruction of the General Hospital in Banda Aceh was also a key priority. Its functionality was restored soon after

The German government's partnership initiative

In response to the call by former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder for Germany to put disaster relief and reconstruction aid from Germany on a sustainable basis of long term partnerships, the «partnership initiative» (PI) was founded in January 2005. Whereas the German Foreign Office and its attached embassies and consulates in the main disaster-affected countries constitute the «eyes and ears» of the PI abroad, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) set up a corresponding central contact and coordination Service Agency for donors and partners in Germany at the InWEnt gGmbH in Bonn. The Service Agency's

task was to register and coordinate the numerous requests concerning partnerships from local authorities, districts, organizations, schools and associations in Germany and to steer reconstruction efforts and partnership cooperations onto secure and sustainable tracks.

Since January 2005, the various actors in the PI have been cooperating at an intensity largely unknown to date with the different stakeholders at state level and in civil society. In the meantime, all of the some 1400 offerers of aid registered at the PI have been placed or been offered project proposals. Together with other organizations approximately 300 reconstruction and development projects have been launched.

The real partnership work started in summer 2005. From the project financing originally mentioned, the job was to develop longer-term partnerships. This is only be feasible to a certain extent – the work of the Service Agency at InWEnt therefore primarily focuses on providing ongoing project flanking support, advisory services and upgrading for the interested partners in Germany. Project examples and more information can be accessed at www.partnerschaftsinitiative.de.

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Photo: GTZ

Photo: GTZ



Vocational training plays a key role in equipping survivors with qualifications to match the region's labour market trends.

a joint strategy in which emergency relief, technical and financial cooperation were interlinked at a very early stage. This facilitated the progressive transition from emergency relief to the prompt and well conceived reconstruction of physical, economic and social infrastructure in line with families' needs.

Throughout the reconstruction process, it has been essential to constantly adapt measures to match the rapidly changing conditions in the region. Above all, coordination with the many different agencies – from major multilateral donors such as the UN organizations and the Asian Development Bank to small-scale local NGOs – has proved to be extremely time-consuming, but is nonetheless essential in order to guarantee a high level of coherence between the various reconstruction measures.

One of the most important political events in the tsunami-affected region of Indonesia was the signing of the peace agreement between the Government of Indonesia and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) in the year 2005. In order to support the peace process, the task now is to also support areas previously affected by conflict, as well as the hinterland which was not directly affected by the tsunami. The aim should be to lessen regional

the disaster with assistance from German and other aid organizations. In conjunction with the Australian Government's Overseas Aid Program (AusAID), KfW then initiated work on the physical renovation of the hospital in February 2005. Working with the GTZ, German organizations are now advising the hospital administration on ways of improving hospital management, while USAID has assumed responsibility for improving clinical services. In addition to the activities at the General Hospital, financial and technical cooperation support is helping to restore the district health system and basic health services in rural regions.

One of the most important aims of reconstruction is to reintegrate people into the economic process. Initial measures to promote employment and re-establish local economic cycles were launched in more than 100 villages as part of the emergency relief effort. These measures are now being pursued as further components of GTZ's micro-finance project. During the acute phase of emergency relief, families generally received grants to invest in economic activities. To boost the economy over the longer term, poor people are to be given access to sustainable financing opportunities, micro-finance services being a particularly suitable instrument, especially in rural regions.

In the education sector, German development cooperation is providing financial support to prioritizing the repair and reconstruction of general secondary schools throughout the devastated province of Aceh, on the offshore islands, and on the island of Nias. A particular priority is the recovery of the vocational training sector, which is receiving support from various German development agencies, including GTZ and KfW but also Capacity Building International (InWEnt), the German Development Service and

CIM. The first phase concentrates on rebuilding and equipping training centres devastated by the tsunami. In the second phase, centres that are especially deserving of support will be identified. During this phase it is also envisaged to support the poorer hinterland prior affected by the Aceh-conflict. The investment projects were designed and are being implemented with support from financial cooperation, while other development cooperation agencies are providing professional training and development for teachers, experts and school administrations through Aceh province. Support also addresses preparing development plans for the training sector. As the tsunami destroyed many people's livelihoods in many different sectors, vocational training plays a key role in equipping survivors with qualifications to match the region's labour market trends over the medium to long term, offering them new prospects for the future.

Conclusions

Overall, emergency relief could be well dovetailed with reconstruction activities in Indonesia. The decentralized approach was especially important during the acute emergency relief period, creating an important impetus for sustainable reconstruction at local level which can now be systematically developed and expanded via technical and financial cooperation. The key prerequisite for this process, in the authors' view, was the development of

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imbalances between the coastal zones – which are receiving massive amounts of overseas aid – and the hinterland. These imbalances could otherwise become a breeding ground for new conflicts, jeopardizing the successes achieved in the recovery process.

This conflict-sensitive approach and the integrated strategy adopted for the vocational training sector, described above, demonstrate that emergency relief and reconstruction cannot be confined to remedying direct physical damage and restoring the status quo ante. On the contrary, the post-disaster situation must be the starting point for more far-reaching measures to safeguard sustainable development in the region.