

# Major Disasters and Humanitarian Response Intervention Methodology

Master 2 - AHI  
Paris XII University, Créteil

Aloysius John  
Mars 2011

## **Expected Learning Results:**

- **Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of risk and vulnerability in extreme environment which causes Disasters**

- To Acquire**

- 1. Thorough knowledge on how NGO respond to major disasters, the intervention methods, organisation of activities.**

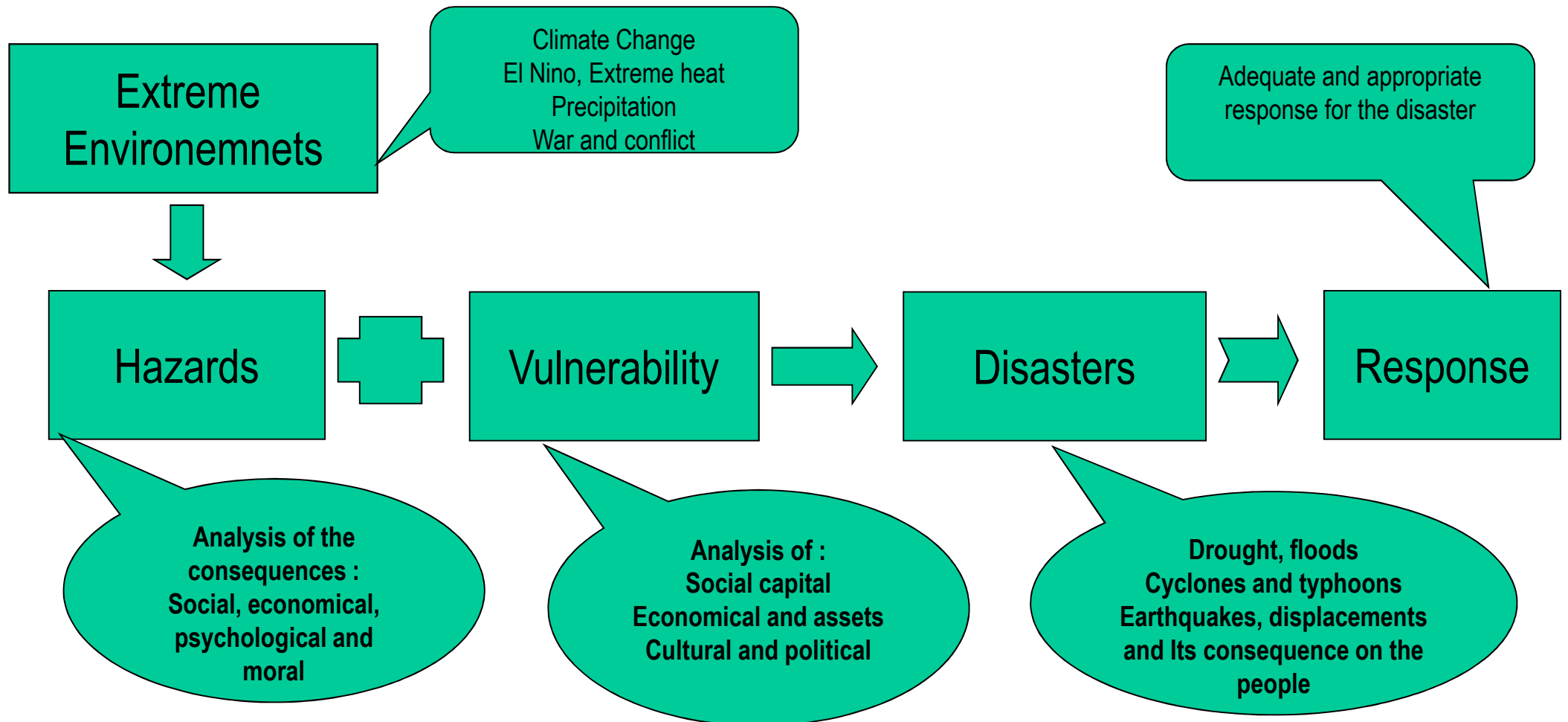
- 2. Good understanding of the UN and coordination institutions and how they operate ?**

- **Demonstrate ability to use different methods for need analysis, and planning the interventions**

- **The methods used to intervene with a long term perspective.**

- Capacity to plan activities and also to implement them systematically.**

# Hazards, Disaster and Humanitarian Response



# Extreme Environment and Disasters

- How do we understand extreme Environments

An **extreme environment** is one where a natural course of life is disrupted abruptly by a sudden change in the environment due to extreme events either man-made or due to extreme climatic conditions (Cold waves, heat waves, monsoon precipitations etc) or unexpected natural events (tsunami, tornado earthquakes ) or periodic climatic changes (floods due to the monsoon, droughts during summer, crop failure due to droughts, food security etc.) which affect the normal life conditions, creating Hazards.

The result of such extreme environment is loss of life, food insecurity, health conditions are at risk, loss of shelter, psychosocial traumatism et above all displacement of population, leading to an humanitarian crisis that affect the most **vulnerable** strata of the population and often demanding huge means to deal with them.

The most vulnerable are subject to “Covariate” shocks, which are events that lead to the unexpected loss of income, consumption or assets of a large group people in a given place as a result of a single cause—the classic example being drought, flooding, conflict or displacement.

A quick analysis of the extreme environments : Tsunami in Sri Lanka, the recent floods in Pakistan  
**Vulnerability** is understood as the difficulty for a given group of people to cope up with their living environment when extreme changes in their environment .It is the extent to which the community can be affected when the extreme environments lead to disasters.

**Vulnerability is the susceptibility of individuals, households or communities to become poor, or poorer as a result of events or processes that affect them**

It can be defined as the probability of an acute decline in capacity to cope up with the changing environment due to the exposure to the risk factors such as drought, landslides, floods, tsunami, and also of underlying socio-economic process which reduce the capacity of people's ability to cope .

Recurrent natural disasters weaken people's ability to cope , when, along the process of recovery, another hazard impacts the community again, putting strain on already very limited resources of the victims.

## Understanding basic concepts

- Extreme environments lead to Hazards which in turn lead to Disasters.

The Extent of **vulnerability** depends on many factors :

- 1.its natural relation with its socio-economic environment before the events
- 2.The social capital of the victims
- 3.The magnitude of the disaster.

Vulnerability (V) is the combination of Exposure to risk and the inability to cope with it :

$$\mathbf{V = Exposure\ to\ Risk + inability\ to\ Cope\ with\ it.}$$

The extent of the extreme environment and the vulnerability of the community helps us to determine the risk that are potentially at stake. The risk, perceived as a negative outcome is high when the changes are high and the vulnerability is high.

Risk as an outcome of the extreme events can be defined as the function of the Hazard (that created the shock) combined with the vulnerability of the given group.

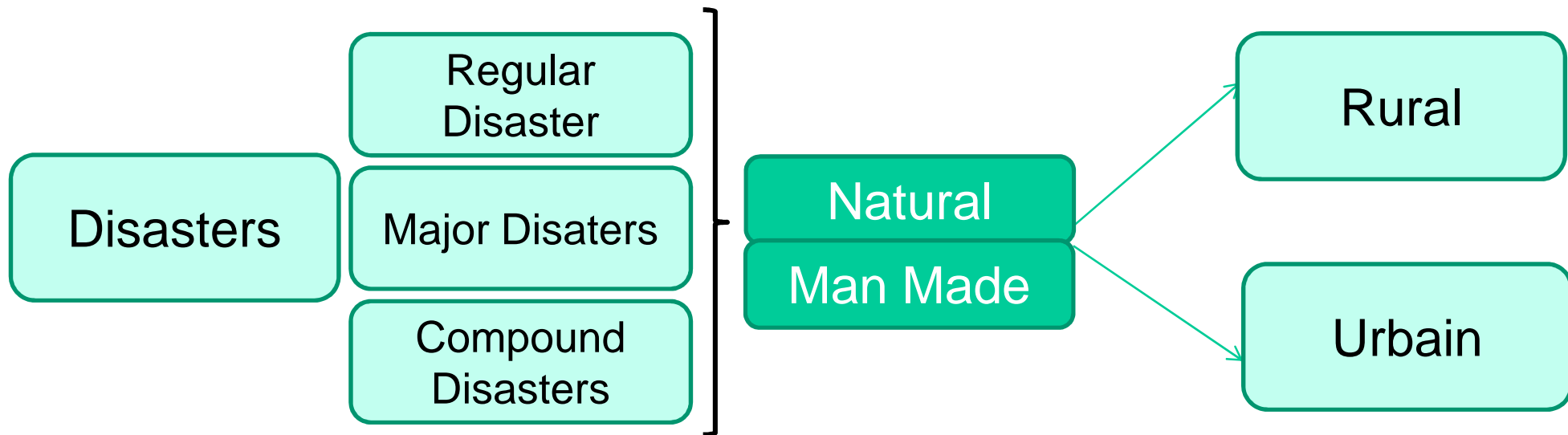
$$\mathbf{R = f ( H. V )}$$

A community or a group of people is considered to be at high risk when the magnitude of the Hazard is high and the vulnerability is also high. High risk often lead to covariate shocks within the community and require humanitarian action that would respond to these shocks in order to make the community resilient.

**Resilience** is the capacity of the individual or the community at large, to cope up with the effects of the disaster and get back to normal life. It depends on the intensity of the disaster, the frequency of its occurrence and the capabilities of the victims (Social, Economical and Physical)

**Vulnerability, Risk and Resilience are important factors to be taken into consideration in the disaster response.**

# The Characteristics of Disasters



Disasters occur frequently leading to humanitarian response. There are in general three intensities of disasters : Those that are regular (tropical cyclones, storms, droughts etc) ; Major disasters (Tsunami, earthquake, conflicts ) and compound disasters (the present Fukushima disaster; the libyan conflict- revolt for democracy leading to communal riots and violence against the immigrant worker, resulting in them fleeing Libya and going to the borders ; thus creating humanitarian crisis difficult to manage)

The disasters are either man-made or Natural and they happen in the urban or in rural areas.

# Humanitarian Response in Major Disasters

It is essential to introduce the Humanitarian Response stage by stage, keeping in mind the peoples' capacity and their resilience. These different stages are presented elaborately in the following schema :

## Stage 1

This is the moment of crisis, just after the emergency, a situation of chaos, massive loss of both human lives and material loss leading to a situation of shock and distress. The emergency response in the crisis situation aims at stabilizing the situation, giving the victims safety and security, basic needs and above all take care of them from the psychological point of view. Basic need analysis takes place and the extent of the damage is also evaluated by the different stakeholders.

Depending on the magnitude of the disaster, its intensity and impact on the victims this stage may last from the first day to a maximum of a month {sometimes even more}.

## Stage 2

This is the rehabilitation stage. The victims are helped to come out of their crisis situation and they are accompanied towards more autonomy. The different data are analysed, the needs are studied and in-depth assessment of the needs and the response to be given is analysed and worked out. At this stage, semi-permanent structures can be introduced, victims are helped to get into income-generating activities while awaiting livelihood programs.

### **Stage 3**

At this stage the rehabilitation programs are giving place to the development programs. The different perspective here are long term and need to be worked out with a long term recovery strategy. Different need analysis, constraint analysis, risk analysis are undertaken in order to ensure that appropriate programs be initiated. If need be new departments are created, new systems and structures are introduced for relevant management of the program and this program will aim at long term recovery and return to a normal life for the victims; permanent housing if need be will also be introduced at this stage.

This is the development stage and may continue for a longer period from 1 year to 3 or 4years.

At this stage, the program will be community oriented with a clear focus on empowerment of the victims, enabling peoples' participation, permanent livelihood programs and creation of cooperatives etc.

### **Stage 4**

At this stage the **Community Based Development Activities** continue, the livelihood programs are in place and the beneficiaries are getting back to normal life. The community organizers recruited work with the beneficiaries and their families to build active communities.

At this stage, Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction is introduced and there are also Community Based Disaster Preparedness activities undertaken to make the beneficiaries aware of the preventive measures to be undertaken in case of future emergencies.

Different exit strategies or phasing out strategies are introduced ; audit and evaluation TOR are made ready and the program can now be ended.

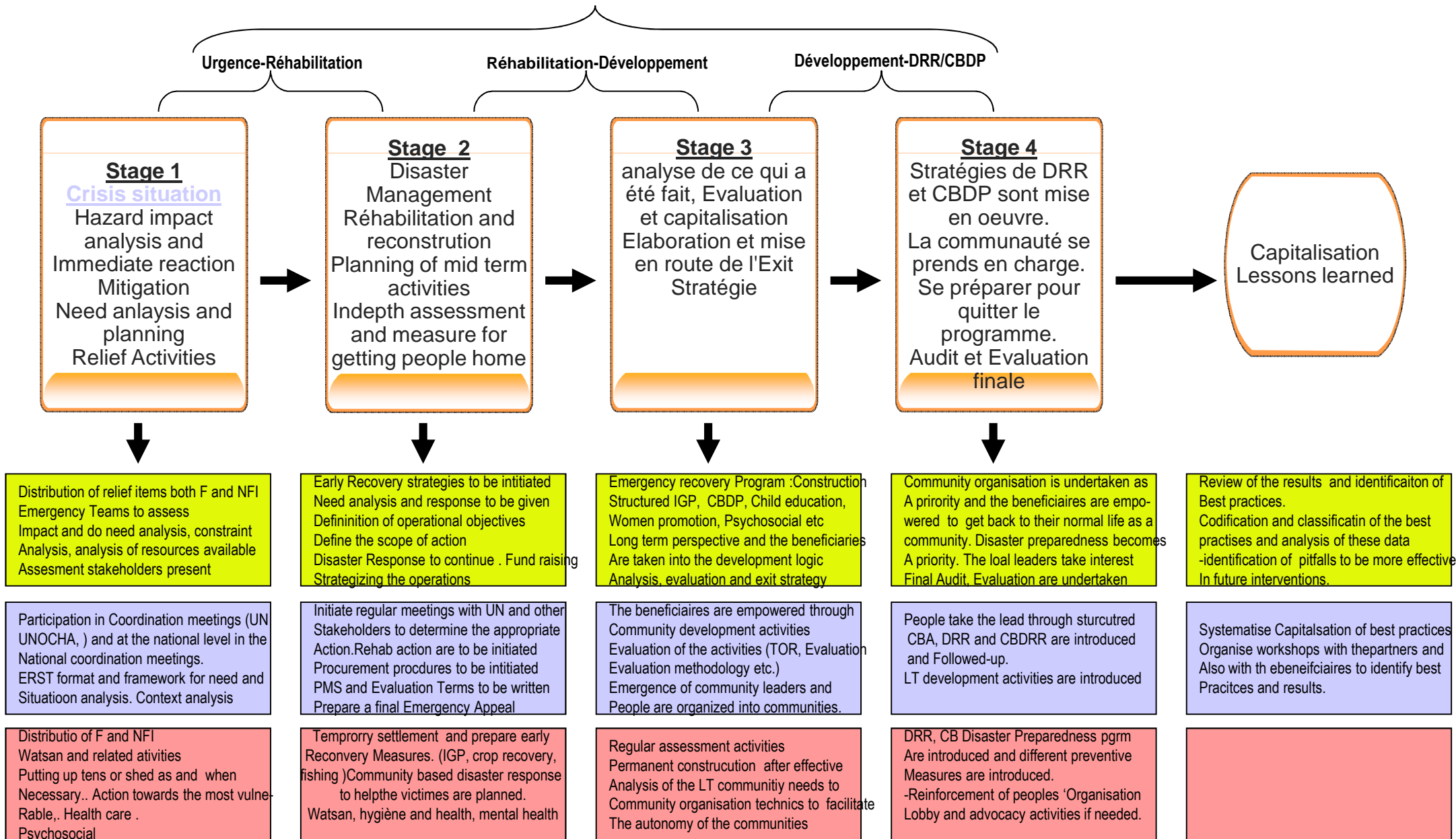
It will be later continued as a development program by the partner.

Once the program is ended, workshops are to be organized in order to study the good practices, the lessons learned and above all document the systems and structures introduced.



# Disaster Responses In major emergencies

## L R R D



# Action- Intervention Logic

1. A Thorough knowledge of the local context, the partners, the situation and a good analysis of the situation.
2. Regular contacts are maintained with the partner and the right indicator.
3. Need for a quick analysis of the media, information available and analysis of these data.
4. Contact with the another European stakeholder and funding platforms.
5. Assess Backdonor possibilities.
6. Organize to release emergency funds
7. Communication to the media and public in France. Manage Information.
8. Organize Emergency Response Cell composed of stakeholders.
9. Build communication strategy, intervention strategy, logistics and internal organization for building appropriate response mechanism.
10. Assess the extent of damage, vulnerability, Risk and prepare for intervention with means ( HR, shipments, logistics etc.)

The disaster Response has to start with a strategic approach based on internal confidence and collaboration in synergy with :

- 1.The right entity taking the lead and giving the right orientations in terms of decision-making.
- 2.Relevant Coordination of Information, communication, reflexion and action
- 3.Good analysis of: the situation, the Risk, the vulnerability and the decision to take the appropriate action.

1. Regular contact with the partner to get information from the partner perspective, the possibility for action and also to initiate the right response to the Disaster.
2. Assess, local capacity and needs to carry out the action, Means available, feasibility, HR, funds available etc.
3. Assess the different supports available and the other partners who can help them. Get in touch with the partners if needed.
4. Assess the partner's willingness to act, his capacity to collaborate and also availability of local resources (HR, F and NFI, distribution outlets, etc.).
5. Help the partner in formulating a communication strategy. This is not always so easy for the partner and it is a weak point.
6. Identify the different partners or stakeholder who can help them and if your organization has a specific relation with the partners use this as a foundation to build a coordination strategy and mechanism.
7. From the past experience or from the contacts assess the existing systems and structures within the organization in order to evaluate the need for institutional support (expatriates, somebody from your organization goes there to help them etc.). Also assess the scope and extent of the action through dialogue and focused discussion.
8. Ask the partners to give information on the Risks, vulnerability on the post damage situation.

There is a a need to assess the capacity of the partner, identify his forces , his capacities and also the systems and structures available within the organization for carrying out the action.

Identify the different stakeholder who can contribute to strengthen the Emergency Response and also initiate the necessary coordination mechanism.

Assess what the partner needs in order to make them avaiable.

# Action- Intervention Logic

1. The ERC is functioning at regular intervals and acts as the strategic think tank, space for impulsion of new ideas, relevant communication strategies both internal and external.
2. Definition of actions to be undertaken and possibilities for funding the actions become part of the reflexion
3. Decision to send expatriates to help in the disaster response, to become a coordinator or not etc are discussed.
4. Strategize the coordination of the rehabilitation process.
5. Communication and information sharing at the national level ;
6. The disaster Response has to start with a strategic approach based on internal confidence and collaboration in synergy with

1.The right entity taking the lead and giving the right orientations in terms of decision-making.

2.Relevant Coordination of Information, communication, reflection and action

3.Good analysis of: the situation, the Risk, the vulnerability and the decision to take the appropriate action.

1. The Local Partner works out an action plan taking the interventions forward towards the rehabilitation phase.
2. A relevant Rehabilitation intervention strategy is formulated and shared with all the stakeholders.
3. Different committees are put in place ( housing, livelihood, microfinance, Psychosocial ) and relevant experts in the different area are sought for.
4. Necessary staff are recruited to implement the program adequately.
5. Encourage the local partner to create necessary structures in order to be efficient and effective in carrying out the Disaster Response.
6. Different systems and structures for financial management, project monitoring etc. are put in place.

There is a need to assess the capacity of the partner, identify his forces , his capacities and also the systems and structures available within the organization for carrying out the action.

Identify the different stakeholder who can contribute to strengthen the Emergency Response and also initiate the necessary coordination mechanism.

Assess the partner needs (technical or operational )in order to make them available.

# Systems and Structures

1. Emergency Response Coordination Mechanism to be quickly introduced to take strategic decisions. (Ex. Emergency Crisis Cell)
2. Identify a leader within the organization to take the lead in the Emergency Response strategies (A person, a department etc.)
3. Create mechanisms for analyzing information and data for relevant communication = having analysis framework for carrying out this task and also competent person to do this.
4. Identify competent persons for carrying out external and internal communication.
5. Anticipate recruitment of competent staff for future assignments = job profile to be decided, the length of contract etc.
6. Participate in regular coordination meetings in France by sending appropriate persons who can contribute to decision making.
7. Assess the needs for procurements in keeping in mind the cost, quality and rapid delivery aspects.

Does the organization has the right persons and the right means available? Do we have the right analytical framework

Prepare Mechanisms for Information, communication, anticipate recruitment of the right staffs to be sent as expats.

Need to participate in the coordination meetings

1. The local partner must be helped to put up an Emergency coordination Cell(ECC). This is the basic instrument for initiating all possible necessary steps for action. This cell needs the services of emergency experts, communication experts, representative of the local organisation, presence of long standing external partners, persons with strong negotiations skills and program officers.
2. The above cell must mandate the research and study unit of the organization to collect data and analysis on the emergency situation in question.
3. Constitute a communication cell to share relevant information and communication both within and outside the country.
4. The Emergency unit must be entrusted with the task of procurements, distribution and also the Disaster Need Assessment (DNA). If need be, recruit short term contracts to fulfill the DNA.
5. The emergency unit prospects the procurement and buying of Food and Non-Food Items.
6. The Emergency unit under the mandate of the ECC, undertakes the DNA in the different affected area, while distributing the relief aid to the affected victims.
7. Integrate Emergency Response Support team or other International Emergency Coordination in order to give a wider international perspective to the Emergency Response.

Device strategies to take up relief response in a relevant manner.

Create a Emergency Coordination cell to manage the emergency response from three angles :

1. Intervention strategy
2. Communication
3. DNA teams

Local Procurement mechanisms (procedures, means, responsible etc) must be introduced.

## **Tsunami Experience in Sri Lanka**

### **Disaster Response and strategies for reducing vulnerability**

December 2004 was the beginning of an historical Disaster Responses and humanitarian activities in Sri Lanka. Two thirds of the coastal area were affected with water entering almost from 500M to 1 Km (in some areas) into the land. More than 80000 are feared dead, tens of thousand houses are destroyed, fishing industry one of the main economic activity affected, public infrastructures are totally or partially destroyed, agriculture in some areas is affected. Psycho-social trauma is very important. Before such a massive damage in a war torn Sri Lanka, high economic and political crisis, it was important to integrate the vulnerability reduction strategy in the humanitarian Disaster Response in order to respond effectively and efficiently to the crisis created by the disaster.

**The whole disaster response can be resumed in a ten step methodology to mitigate the risk and reduce the vulnerability of the victims and facilitate their early recovery.**

- I. Immediate disaster relief
- II. Strengthen people's coping (shelter and psycho social activities) and livelihood protection strategies
- III. Rebuilding destroyed livelihoods
- IV. Build alliances and networks with multiple levels of stakeholders to increase the effectiveness in addressing risk management issues by promoting integration and consensus-building
- V. Build up the capacity of CBOs and other local institutions to represent vulnerable people and to manage technologies for their benefit (Fishing activities, Food security etc)
- VI. Reduce the impact of the hazard –disaster preparedness
- VII. Promote sustainable use of natural resources
- VIII. Conflict resolution and consensus building
- IX. Build up an understanding of impacts of long term trends and ways to mitigate these at the local level to inform policies at local, national and international levels
- X. Facilitate policy interventions where these would contribute to reducing vulnerability, particularly social protection policies.

# Tsunami Humanitarian Response

- The occurrence of Major disaster is quite frequent requiring a professional, methodic and comprehensive disaster Response.
  - I. In situation of emergency and humanitarian imperative, initial assistance is given to all victims irrespective of caste, creed and religious differences.
  - II. The Emergency response once undertaken, must target the Most Vulnerable Groups with the aim to make them resilient and capable of getting back to normal life.
  - III. Emergency Response must be initiated in stages and the different stages are interlinked and complimentary.
  - IV. It is capital to integrate the community dimension (empowerment) from the beginning itself in order to be effective and efficient in the disaster response.
  - V. Major disaster like Tsunami require a comprehensive approach {Emergency response, introduction of new structures and systems, recruitment of competent staff, etc.}, sometimes leading to sending of expatriate staff to second local organizations.
  - VI. Once the relief phase is over, it is relevant to integrate the Disaster preparedness dimension in the program and this must be community oriented.

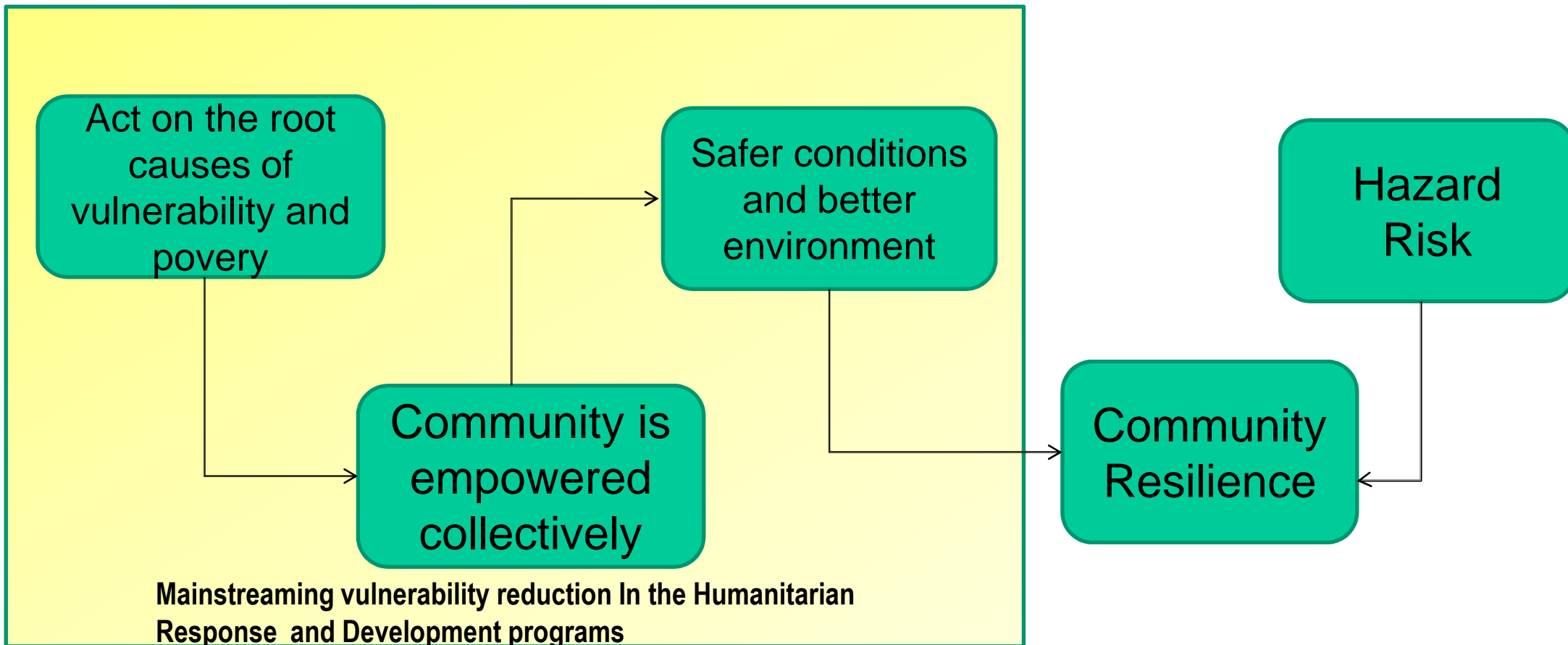
- I. Short **term immediate disaster relief**, a priority area that had to be responded to at once, the crisis situation. The local communities who have lost everything. Given the magnitude of the disaster, the Major focus was to give importance to local solidarity. Participation in the coordination meetings both UN and NGO.
- II. Bring the victims together in a **safer place**, analyse their situation through interviews and **identify their needs** and introduce adequate actions (Trauma counselling, family reunion, Understanding livelihood activities before the disaster etc.). The aim was to improve resilience in the post -disaster situation. Construction of semi-permanent shelters+ children education
- III. Rebuilding livelihood was the next step to be introduced in order to ensure early recovery. The major focus was given on fishing (boats and nets) and agricultural tools to restart livelihood activities. At the same time construction of houses was also initiated.
- IV. Importance was given from the beginning itself to include people in the decision making ad negotiations with the local authorities, networking with the other NGO and the communities to come together to reflect on their future and also take up strategic collective actions.
- V. The disaster response from the beginning itself gave prime importance to build communities and through them introduce the different activities. The Community based approach was particularly important in the housing and livelihood programs
- VI. Risk reduction strategies through Trainings, CBDP activities, the shelters were made to international standards, environment safeguard. DRR and CB Disaster Preparedness were mainstreamed into the different rehabilitation and development activities.

- VII. The main area of intervention was in the field of fishing and fish conservation ; avoid massive sand recuperation from the sea side or from the river beds, utilisation of wood for construction, crop recovery etc.
- VIII. Communal harmony was one of the important area of intervention in the war torn Sri Lanka. All the activities had a peace component inbuilt into the program, in order to promote awareness on living together as one nation. DO No Harm principles guided the program all along.
- IX. Since the beginning the long term trend was already planned. This was due to the nature of the disaster and the problems that were very important and demanded a systematic long term planning keeping in mind the complex political and administrative situation. This was done through negotiations with the government authorities, local administration, the army etc. Undertaken with the beneficiaries.
- X. The facilitation role between the target population and the government authorities, LTTE or political leaders were systematically undertaken in the field of access to the affected areas, livelihood activities to be undertaken, construction of shelters and obtaining land for the construction of houses. Another major area was in the negotiations related to the construction policy.

***These different steps undertaken can be classified in four stages of intervention as presented in the schema that follows and at each stage, there have been new systems and structures were introduced in order to take the program forward efficiently and effectively. Major importance was given to the Community based activities in order to empower the victims ; gender issues and the disaster preparedness.***



# Building Resilience in the Humanitarian response



Due to the recurrence of Disasters and their complex nature, it is necessary to take up a community based approach and aim at building community resilience. This will not only help respond to the disaster situation but will also prepare the community for future disasters.

# Learning during the session

- In what way the extreme environments create disasters and what are the underlying process ?
- The purposes of conducting a vulnerability analysis, risk analysis ? How do you do it?
- Different kinds of disasters and how to respond to them appropriately.
- The different Stages of intervention in a disaster response, starting from disaster crisis situation to program planning.
- Various activities to be undertaken at the time of Disaster Management and how to implement them.
- The disaster response and building resilient communities through community based disaster response.
- How to phase out of the different stages and the final phasing out.
- A thorough analysis of the Tsunami Reponse in Asia (in particular Sri Lanka); analysis of the different disasters (floods in Pakistan, Fukushima 2011, the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict)
- A concrete case study to work on the disaster response.