

Disaster Recovery Plan

NGO Emergency Operations

When a disaster happens there is a natural tendency to optimize the capacity to respond quickly in order to find the best solutions to reduce the effect of the disaster either on those affected by it. Such a disaster response mechanism at the time of the events, is time consuming and has an important risk factor. It can lead to erroneous process or devising in appropriate solutions, resulting in ineffective intervention or sometimes failures.

Disasters are getting to be more and more frequent due to climate change and extreme environment and the impact are quite high due to vulnerable situation created by urbanization and extreme poverty conditions. The recent disasters (tsunami, earthquakes, drought) are frequent with high intensity impacts leading to humanitarian crisis. The human and economic cost are high leading to economic crisis and sometimes the pauperization of the Most vulnerable groups. The tsunami experience followed by the Haïti earthquake brings the humanitarian sectors to reflect on disaster recovery plans which are means to anticipate crisis situation and ensure good preparation for efficient and effective intervention. Disaster recovery plans are getting to be part of the Disaster management process, as such becoming one of the elements in the process.

The Disaster Recovery Plan introduced in the corporate sector has become a source of inspiration for the humanitarian NGO and based on such DRP practice the NGO sector must be encouraged to device recovery plans for quick actions in the humanitarian sector.

A good DRP will help reduce the critical intervention time, thus enhancing the quick, focused delivery of services. For example, in Bangladesh, after the 1991 deadly cyclone, Caritas Bangladesh introduced a new logic of disaster preparedness and disaster management. This consisted of construction of cyclone shelters, awareness building on prevention, introducing new ways of agricultural activities and community based development programs leading to early recovery, has indeed reduced the number of death and the critical emergency period. There are less number of death and the recovery from the disaster and return to normal life is quite efficient and effective in short period of time. Devising a DRP for humanitarian NGO require a certain methodological approach and analysis of the potential Risk situations. It also entails, Risk Analysis, Vulnerability Analysis and a prior theoretical contextual analysis, which indeed can be completed at the time of disaster with relevant Data.

This paper, based on the critical analysis of different disaster responses in Asia and in particular the 2004 tsunami experience, 2010 Haïti earthquake response and also the present Arab spring events, will lead through a discussion on the disaster response and the disaster recovery plan, thus giving a new perspective for the disaster management. These analysis will lead to the proposition of a DRP framework for NGO and means to streamline disaster recovery plan and disaster prevention measure into the development programs.

Disaster and Humanitarian Crisis Management

Disasters are caused by extreme environment which are both natural and man made. Natural disaster relate to earthquakes, cyclone, typhoons while the man-made disaster refer to war, social unrest, fire or conflicts.

Disaster, in the humanitarian field are to be defined as the impact of the hazards due to extreme environments which impact the vulnerable groups, leading to humanitarian crisis, especially when the frequency and the intensity of the hazards are high. The impact of the disaster on the urban or rural environment are not the same, because the urban environment is subject to massive destruction due to the congestion or high concentration of populations compared to the rural environment.

Disasters are said to lead to humanitarian crisis when the population is made highly vulnerable and their resilience capacity is low. Humanitarian crisis implies that the Risk are high on the Most vulnerable groups leading to death, high casualties or injuries. In major disaster the most vulnerable groups are highly exposed to the impact due to their living conditions.

A humanitarian crisis is defined to be compound in nature when one disaster leads to a sequence of new disaster which are a consequence of the initial disaster. Ex. In Fukushima, Sendai crisis, an Earthquake lead to a tsunami and swept away the houses and assets and this lead to the accident in the nuclear plant which in turn, lead to people being internally displaced, health hazards etc.

Disaster often provoke covariate shocks which can be defines as a situation in which, the citizen are not able to get back to their normal work condition and are unable to lead a normal life. In other words when the early economic recovery becomes difficult or impossible. For example, the Pakistani floods, where the agricultural workers are unable to go back to their traditional economic activities and are obliged to live on humanitarian aid. Fukushima is another example wherein the government imposed sanitary regulations do not allow farmer to go back to farming.

Covariate shocks are highly possible in compound crisis and this a major challenge for humanitarian Action. Covariate shocks, as in the case of tsunami requires strategies to device alternative recovery plans, because they add to the trauma of the victims from the psychological point of view. In such situation the resilience of the victims is a major question leading to psychological crisis and sometimes to situation of anomie wherein programmed interventions cannot be applied or implemented easily., leading to protracted emergency situation and relief activities for longer periods.

Disaster Recovery Plans must take into account the compound nature of the disaster and the covariate shocks in the vulnerability analysis and globally the disaster management.

Need for an Analysis Framework

Due to the complexities and magnitude of the disasters, it is important to undertake certain number of quick analysis in order to ensure relief aid efficiency. This is getting to be all the more important because funds for humanitarian relief are getting to be scarce and it is becoming highly important to prevent and mitigate the effects of disaster. This will also contribute to the appropriate, relevant and effective utilization of scarce funds.

This implicitly means a need to first undertake a vulnerability analysis in order to understand the vulnerable conditions (cf framework for vulnerability Analysis) and also to pr assess how the disaster conditions may impact the most vulnerable groups. It will also lead to the understanding of the impact of the disaster on the victims, their resilience capacity and above all the nature of the crisis.

When we refer to vulnerability, it is combination of many factors as seen below :

$$\text{Vulnerability (V)} = \text{Impact of the disaster (I)} \times \text{Resilience (R)} \times \text{the frequency (f)}$$

Thus the analysis must take into account the three main elements, the impact of the disaster, the frequency and the capacity of the victims to withstand the impact.

Once the analysis is done, the next step will be to understand the Risk on the most vulnerable groups.

$$\text{R} = \text{Vulnerability (V)} \times \text{Intensity} \times \text{frequency}$$

Again we need to understand Risk as a combination of different factors such as vulnerability, the intensity and the frequency of the disaster. The risk is high when the vulnerability is high with high intensity and high frequency.

These analysis are important basis for elaborating the DRP and the intervention to be taken up through appropriate responses.

The analysis of the cross-section of the Geographically affected areas and the impact of the disaster in these areas is also important. In the case of conflicts, this analysis will provide valuable data to understand the vulnerability of the victims and the risk they may be subject to .

For example in the case of the Syrian conflict (2011-2012) it is now urgent to identify the High Risk Zones and the risks for the different category of the population. This goes beyond the speculation on when or how the regime will fall, but what is the appropriate action to be undertaken when the change happen and what will be the humanitarian imperatives, Risks and complexities from the humanitarian response perspective.

In other words, it is a matter of futuring on the disaster response, based on the data available today and the way the Disaster Response is to be induced once the disaster happens.

1. Disaster Mapping

i. Any Major International Humanitarian Agency must have a mapping of the disaster zones which can be classified into three categories :

A : Frequent and regular disasters

B : Potential unpredictable disasters

C : Potential predictable disasters {especially in the case of man made disasters.}

For these three categorise, thress levels of anlaysis must be undertaken/

- For ABC identify the nature of the impact of the disasters, the vulnerable situation and the Risks that are predictable and un predictable
- For ABC identify the geographical regions and areas concerned and if necessary the national context in which the disaster will take lace.
- A country wide poverty analysis will be needed in order to indicate the vulnerable situation and resilience of the population.
- It will also be important to analyse the potential of the government to bring about a relevant response to the potential disaster situations, the means it has to respond to such disaster situations and the political will to carry out disaster response.
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2. Disaster Response Local Capability Analysis

This is another area of analysis which consist of taking the three disaster categories (A,B and C) and analyze the humanitarian reactivity in these areas or countries concerned. It is a question of knowing how quickly and how relevantly an organization can get into action with the right approach. This implies that the organization has an experience, the technical capacity, the financial means and the human resources necessary to carry out the action quickly. This preparedness is an indispensable factor for launching the quick recovery process. In order to analyze this a certain number of indicators as follows will be necessary :

- a. The previous experience of the different actors in dealing with the disaster
The NGO

The government

Existence or not of civil security and how well are they organized.

Other stakeholders identified locally such as the army and other public actors like crisis cell, disaster cell etc.

- b. The capacity of the local actors to carry out relevant disaster Response
How does the organization views its own capacity to mobilize the means ?
Financial and Human resources available.
Technical knowledge.
Impartiality in dealing with multi-ethnic or communal groups.
Emergency Response mechanisms.
- c. What are the possibilities of the government
Disaster Response Mechanism
Deployment of the army
Deployment of technical staff
- d. The existence of Infrastructure
NGO consortium for humanitarian action
Quick deployment of means to put safe structures
Army and Ngo collaboration
- e. Procurement possibilities in the country or neighborhood
Procurement of basic Food items
Procurement of Basic NFI
Shelters, boats, tents
Building materials
- f. Identify experienced technical NGO existence, who are reliable and competent
- g. Identify if any DRR or CBDP activities have been initiated.

All these analysis will give important information about the capability of the local actors, the profile of the local situation. This will also give indication about the capacity for the local environment to be reactive when a disaster happens.

For the sake of quick operations and application of the DRP, it will be important to class them into categories in order to respond appropriately to the needs of the victims and at the same time minimizing the critical recovery time to its least.

Although these analysis are time consuming, they will help in formulating different types of scenarios which can be adapted according to the needs of the situation and the nature of the crisis.

3. Disaster Recovery Plan

Disaster Recovery Plan is a future action plan in the event of a disaster happening in a given environment. It is based on the experience of the different disasters in the past, the mechanism

introduced and above all learning from these experiences, both positive and negative. The shortcomings will become a stepping stone for a more effective and better planning.

As in the corporate IT sector, the September 11 terrorist attack on the WTC, brought the experts to devise a recovery Plan in order to reduce the Critical Response Time to avoid risk for business. Today the DRPs are systematized in the major companies. This consists of storing data in different places to access them as quickly as possible, introducing compliance officers, training of the staff, and above all a complete plan to get business back to normal within a short period. In the same way, the DRPs in the humanitarian sector must help organize emergency operations quickly in order to alleviate the sufferings of the victims.

A relevant DRP takes into consideration the Risks, which are known uncertainties and whose impact on the normal course of life can either be avoided or mitigated if taken into account well in advance. It is a question of formulating a disaster response in the eventuality of a disaster situation happening. The tsunami disaster did put the emphasis on the Disaster Risk Reduction, but there is a need to concretely plan for a quick recovery program, based on the concept of "known uncertainties".

The elaboration of a DRP is undertaken by steps as follows :

1. The DRP is a series of activities that are to be undertaken and are documented for future use and easily exploitable.
2. Within the institution the potential resources are identified and a roster is kept for a quick deployment of human resources. Regular exercises are undertaken to keep them abreast of disaster situations and interventions. A core team is formed to become operational at short notice, at the outbreak of the disaster.
3. Communication and information management is defined and people identified to do this job. Line management and line of command is also established to give the right instruction at the right moment.
4. Regular information to the core team is given and if necessary mock interventions are undertaken to be prepared for future intervention. The management is also periodically informed about the DRP.
5. Potential procurement points are identified and contacts are established for quick purchase in case of need. In the same way the storage points are also identified.
6. The communities are prepared with the DRR exercise and are fully prepared, the field staff are informed about the DRP and can mobilize the people in vulnerable areas quickly.

7. The Profile of a Disaster Recovery Plan

The DRP is a number of activities that are to be initiated when a disaster situation happens and there is a need for a quick action. These activities are as follows :

1. Organization of a Crisis Cell

The crisis cell is to be organized when major disasters break out. Their nature and configuration will depend on the magnitude of the disaster and the needs, both physical and material. Members will have to be trained on the different kinds of disaster that may occur and the right attitude to be adopted as members of the crisis cell. The members are given the opportunity to familiarize with the DRP through regular training and capacity building.

- a. The crisis cell will have a clear definition of its configuration : the different technical staff needed, the support services to be deployed,
 - b. The activities of the each staff will be defined and ownership of the plan and the contributing role within the plan at the time of emergency will be clearly indicated.
 - c. The profile of the members will also correspond to the different profiles of the emergency situation. The organization must reason in terms of resources needed and available.
2. Identify and prepare the logistics for crisis management . Crisis scenario can be designed from the different mapping.
- a. Identify the procurement sites for the purchase of relief and post relief items.
 - b. Identify the potential needs both material and non material
 - c. Device a mobilization plan (who gives the order, when and to whom), the signatories, decision making and the maintenance of the Disaster Recovery Plan.

Here the communication line and line management for operational command must be clearly identified and the roles must be clearly defined. There should not be any confusion in the operations command line.

3. Identify the communication mechanism and crisis communication activities
 - a. Identify the most important communication vector (telephone, satellite telephone, GSM etc)
 - b. Identify the most relevant source for collecting information from the country, the web sources, documentations, UN, etc.
 - c. Pre-identify the message to be shared by preparing beforehand a format which will contribute to relevant sharing of information.
 - d. Identify the designated authorities to validate the information, prepare the justification for the supporting the veracity of the collected information {sources, means of collection and date}

4. Elaborate an action plan that can be deployed and the procedures for Crisis Management.
 - Prepare the alert, notification and signal (prepare a format)
 - Prepare emergency procedures with an emergency intervention checklist
 - Prepare an activity procedure for the crisis cell according to the nature of the crisis, indicators and the level of humanitarian crisis.
5. If and when necessary, deploy the available resources according to the needs with clear allocation of responsibilities and a control mechanism.
6. Prepare a quick reckoner of the crisis evaluation, its origin and intensities, the risk and vulnerabilities identifies and the action proposes to be undertaken.
7. Prepare an implementation process with :
 - clear roles and responsibilities.
 - Mechanisms for collecting and exploiting information
 - Coordination mechanism and line of command and decision making
 - Relevant decision making and levels decision making
 - In case of complex disaster, consult experts (identified before hand)
 - Elaborate formats for quick reporting, communication, contracts, purchase of items etc.

8. Define and produce a guidelines for Crisis Management with :
 - Action format
 - Reflex needed for decision making
 - Traceability of events

➤ A basic guide to carry out action

9. Analysis of the security risk in the disaster zones to be completed

10. Communication material to be kept ready for immediate use { satellite telephone, satellite connection for internet, fax, etc.)

Conclusion

Once the disaster recovery Plan is established it must be shared with the Disaster Core Group. The composition of the disaster core group must be multi-technical. It must possess disaster management techniques, communication skills and also a partners relation path opener to negotiate and open doors. If not the DRP, the best it may be, cannot be implemented effectively.

The DRP, once finalized, must be owned by the appropriate sector or department, wherein the different Disaster Recovery Core group members can have access to it and if needed, bring about regular changes in order to update it regularly. The members of the core group must be trained regularly and must be in a position to contribute quickly at the times of need. In the same way all opportunities must be used to secure the plan and update it if for use at any time a need arises.

The different analysis undertaken must be organized electronically for quick use and must be documented as a separate chapter in the DRP. Having the document in an electronic support will help to easily update them with less cost implication.

The DRP will also serve as a means to prioritize the different areas of interventions, those who should intervene, at that time explicit with whom to undertake the different steps or stages of action. It is also a relevant tool for problem factors and solutions finding.

March 2012

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UPEC- AHM2 Extreme environments, vulnerability and Risk