



Poverty

**Work and Employment
Community**



**Disaster Management
Community**



Solution Exchange for the Work and Employment Community

Solution Exchange for the Disaster Management Community

Consolidated Reply

***Query: Post-Disaster Livelihood Development Programs -
Experiences***

Compiled by Sumeeta Banerji and G. Padmanabhan, Resource Persons and Arif Hussain and Nupur Arora, Research Associates

Issue Date: 10 September 2007

From [Charulatha Banerjee](#), Independent Consultant, Kolkata

Posted 10 August 2007

Dear Members,

The 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami was a disaster to which there was enormous worldwide response, millions of dollars raised are still being spent in post disaster rehabilitation programs. The tsunami caused widespread loss of life, infrastructural damage and loss of livelihoods across Southern India.

During the Rehabilitation phase, one of the important components of the program in these areas is economic rehabilitation of the survivors or displaced. This includes enabling them to return to their previous livelihoods or find new avenues. It also includes identifying hitherto non-breadwinners like women in some cases and starting them off, as small entrepreneurs.

I have had the opportunity of reviewing and being part of a team designing further interventions in the Tsunami areas in the South Andaman and in Andhra Pradesh in which financial support for livelihood interventions was through Grants; small and big, ranging from 10,000INR- 1,00,000 INR.

I would like to know from members of Work & Employment and Disaster Management Communities, their experiences in any Post – Disaster return to Livelihood/Livelihood Development programme, especially on the points below:

- What types of Grants have been given in post disaster livelihood development initiatives - simple grants, revolving funds, individual or group grants or partial grant and partial loans? What types of grants were more effective?
- What were the criteria used for selection of grantees (e.g. need vs. capacity to use the aid effectively, entrepreneurs vs. individuals with proven business skills)? Are there instances where initiatives addressing gender equity were given priority (e.g. initiatives supporting non-traditional livelihoods for women)?
- Are there examples of convergence, of activities between various actors (donor agencies/ governments and all other stakeholders) who are doing livelihood restoration programs?

Looking forward to hearing from esteemed members about their varied experiences, which will help to design effective rehabilitation schemes following any disaster in the future based on a larger experience base and with more information.

Responses were received, with thanks, from

1. [R. S. N. Sharma](#), Functional Vocational Training and Research Society, Bangalore
2. [P. Sekar](#), Center for Empowerment and Policy Studies, Kulithalai, Tamil Nadu
3. Thara, Institute of Land Management, Thiruvananthapuram ([Response 1](#); [Response 2](#))
4. [Nupur Arora](#), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New Delhi
5. [Abha Mishra](#), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New Delhi
6. [Sivagami](#), Save the Children, Chennai
7. [Ravishwar Sinha](#), FXB International, New Delhi
8. [Toms K. Thomas](#), Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF), Pathinmathitta, Kerala
9. [Sudarsan Das](#), Kalinga Centre for Social Development, Bhubaneswar
10. [K. N. Rajkumar](#), DHAN Foundation, Madurai

Further contributions are welcome!

[Summary of Responses](#)
[Comparative Experiences](#)
[Related Resources](#)
[Responses in Full](#)

Summary of Responses

In the light of recurrent disasters and their debilitating effect on the livelihoods of people, there is a clear need of an effective strategy to ensure timely response and mitigation measures to minimize the impact of disasters and shorten the time taken for restoration of livelihood activities. Responding to the query on post-disaster livelihoods promotion, members tried to issues related to funding models, group varieties, and agency coordination by sharing experiences with different kinds of programs and implementation models and outlining “enablers” for success.

Participants expressed opinions of various hues on **funding modes for post disaster relief and rehabilitation**. They pointed out that different types of interventions are required for different phases of post-disaster intervention. For example, livelihood-promoting activities, initiated after relief operations are over and before longer-term development projects, need to stimulate growth by injecting cash into local economies through programs like “Cash for Work” (CFW). Participants elaborated on how CFW programs have boosted local economies in various post-disaster scenarios. They shared examples of initiatives in

[Tamil Nadu](#), [Ethiopia](#) and [Indonesia](#), using CFW programs to help communities affected by natural disasters.

On the issue of **revolving funds for livelihood activities**, discussants spoke from their experience that many times people use revolving funds, given as grants, for consumptive purposes, which affects their long-term livelihood security. Moreover, one-time grants seldom achieve their objectives, and members argued that to have an impact, organizations must provide “revolving funds” as loans and stressed that if organizations do not address consumptive use issues in the initial phases of disaster recovery, then families would use grant or loan given for productive purposes to make ends meet. Additionally, respondents highlighted the fact that the “individual” who receives the funds is also a factor determining use. They noted grants or funds given to male family members are rarely used for sustainable purposes, thus members felt it is better to give loans to women in groups, such as Self-Help Groups.

Another point emphasized was the destruction of tools and instruments during disasters and the acute need for provision of grants for skilled workers to procure tools and instruments so that they are able to return to their professions as soon as possible.

Discussing **selecting beneficiaries**, participants agreed that during the initial rush to provide post-disaster relief many times disadvantaged groups, such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are neglected because of the indirect nature (e.g. working as labor and not owners of livelihood assets) of their dependence on the resources affected by disasters. Members of such groups usually work as laborers and tenants with hardly any assets in their name and when disasters destroy these assets, their livelihoods suffer a great deal. However, during relief efforts organizations tend not to provide compensation because these groups do not “own” assets. Participants suggested that to set it right, a proper “livelihood profiling” is required so no groups are excluded from relief because they did not have assets in their name.

Similarly, on the skill training issue, respondents argued in order to reach out to disadvantaged communities, certain concessions, like relaxation of financial contribution and education requirements, would help programs cover a larger spectrum of the affected community.

Participants also focused on the **issue of convergence**, stressing its importance. They pointed out that wherever there has been good coordination between government agencies, implementing institutions and other stakeholders the results have invariably been encouraging. For instance, in [Orissa](#) coordination between Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), government agencies and local community led to a very successful canal desilting operation, which not only mitigated the impact of the 2004 Tsunami, but also improved crop yields through better utilization of water.

Emphasizing the importance of convergence further, members opined that most of the time the funds provided by the funding/facilitating agency is not enough to address all the issues in rehabilitation, therefore it becomes necessary to bring in government agencies to provide a holistic and longer term support system for disaster affected communities. They added that since the effectiveness and success of a program depends upon the participation of the people affected, PRIs must be a part of the planning, implementation and monitoring process. Additionally, in the absence of proper convergence and coordination a lot of duplication happens, leading to wastage of precious post-disaster relief resources.

Overall, participants felt implementing post-disaster livelihood initiatives is challenging task, noting the nature and mode of interventions are contingent upon the type of disaster and scale of devastation, highlighting that there is space for a lot of innovation in this area. Discussants further agreed post-disaster interventions must be designed to not only mitigate the effects of disaster, but also build local capacity and infrastructure to create better coping mechanisms and resilience against future disasters.

Comparative Experiences

Tamil Nadu

From [P. Sekar](#), *Center for Empowerment and Policy Studies, Kulithalai*

NGOS Duplicate Efforts

After the Tsunami struck the southern coasts of India in 2004, a number of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) converged upon the area to provide short-term relief and reinstalling the livelihood mechanisms of the people. However, in the absence of proper coordination and monitoring, duplicated efforts resulted in weak groups/institutions (e.g. a NABARD estimate says that only 10% of the SHGs formed by these NGOs are eligible for Economic Assistance loan).

Varying Approaches Leading to Failure

Post-Tsunami, Social Awareness Society for Youths (SASY), an NGO mobilized 600 Dalit women into 34 self-help groups. Each group was given Rs. 10,000 to enhance their livelihoods. The money was treated as revolving fund but without interest. Initially, the women began repaying the loan but later on, they refused, sighting that in nearby areas other NGOs have given funds as grants and not loans, as result the initiative faltered because of different approaches followed by NGOs. Read [more](#)

Reduced Vulnerability to Future Disasters, Nagapattinam (from [Sivagami](#), *Save the Children, Chennai*)

As part of Save the Children's Tsunami Rehabilitation Program, they supported a livelihood project covering seven villages in Nagapattinam District benefiting 519 families. Under the project more than 27 kms of canal was de-silted, generating 31,659 person days of employment and around 3,500 acres of agricultural land cleared. The project design used a "Cash-for-Work (CFW)" approach, but they the community chose works that would reduce their vulnerabilities to future disasters. Read [more](#)

Making Dolls To Empower Tsunami Affected Women, Auroville (from [Nupur Arora](#), *Research Associate*)

During the Tsunami response in Auroville, the Concern Worldwide India office in Chennai lent support to local communities through a skill training and livelihood initiative. Through the initiative, nearly 480 local fisherwomen were trained to make dolls out of rags, which were called "Tsunamika" Dolls. Now, the project team, who trained the women, only supply the women with raw materials and the women independently earn their living. Read [more](#)

Orissa

Draught Mitigation through Cash For Work Programme (from [Abha Mishra](#), *UNDP, New Delhi*)

After the severe drought in 2000, a program was undertaken by UNDP entitled "Drought Mitigation through Decentralized Planning"– supported by DFID. The program included temporary help in the form of food and cash, and long-term livelihood support through integrated approach and linkages with other agencies for continuity. Rainwater-harvesting structures were also created under Food for Work Program (FWP) to help mitigate the effects of future droughts, these structures are maintained by the community.

Revolving Fund for Irrigation (from [Sudarsan Das](#), *Kalinga Centre for Social Development, Bhubaneswar*)

UNNAYAN, an NGO, with support from SEEDS, after doing short-term after-flood relief work, engaged itself with rehabilitation activities in 2006. The community identified food security as a major challenge. The people wanted to irrigate their land to cultivate Rabi crop. So the NGO helped them develop a strategy to use a revolving fund model for irrigation systems. With able management by community

groups, the farmers harvested a bumper Rabi crop and many started immediately repaying their loans. Read [more](#)

All India

Rebuilding Lives Through Skill Training (from [R. S. N. Sharma](#), *Functional Vocational Training and Research Society (FVTRS), Bangalore*)

In the aftermath of the Tsunami in the coastal states of India, FVTRS has offered skill training for affected youth to enable them to find employment, through collaborating with various local NGOs and CBOs. FVTRS has involved local people in the project formulation by forming a 'Stakeholder For a,' which play a major role in the selection and placement of the trainees, and in networking with other agencies. So far, more than 60% of the total 7,500 trained youth have found jobs. Read [more](#)

Ethiopia

From [Nupur Arora](#), *United Nations Development Programme, New Delhi*

Post-Disaster Cash Aid for Boosting Local Economy

Ethiopia suffers from recurrent drought and famine, resulting in a large population being dependent on relief. Learning from experience, humanitarian organizations changed their approach and successfully experimented with distributing "cash for work" instead of food aid. They provide the most vulnerable groups with money, reducing the need to sell precious assets (i.e. livestock or tools) & enable the poorest to buy food. This has stimulated the local economy & encouraged farmers to produce more. Read [more](#)

Indonesia

"Cash for Work" Boosting Devastated Local Economy

Cash for Work (CFW) programs have been used in a variety of disaster and emergency contexts. CFW was a prominent component of the immediate response to the Tsunami in Aceh. Through the CFW program, a number of temporary and permanent structures were built and large areas cleared. In addition to facilitating recovery, CFW provided a substantial infusion of cash to the population, which helped to restart local economy. Read [more](#)

Related Resources

Recommended Documentation

From [Nupur Arora](#), *UNDP, New Delhi*

Ethiopian Droughts: Reducing the Risk to Livelihoods Through Cash Transfers

Case Study; Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ECSR); Ethiopia; 2003

Available at <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/pubs/disasters/reduction/Ethiopia-droughts-en.pdf> (PDF Size: 810 KB)

Case study of a post disaster livelihood programme carried out by ECSR where they successfully experimented distributing cash instead of food aid to drought victims

The Mercy Corps Cash for Work (CFW) Program in Post-Tsunami Aceh

Case Study; by Shannon Doocy, Michael Gabriel, Courtland Robinson, Sean Collin and Peter Stevenson. Mercy Corps & Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health; Aceh; December 2005

Available at <http://www.mercycorps.org/files/file1134672803.pdf> (PDF Size: 810 KB)

Case study describes Mercy Corp's experiences in implementing CFW programs, and provides recommendations for implementation of similar programs in future emergencies

Recommended Organizations and Programmes

Functional Vocational Training and Research Society (FVTRS), Karnataka (from [R.S.N. Sharma](#))
19, First Floor, Hutchins Road; 3rd Cross, St. Thomas Town Post, Bangalore 56084 Karnataka; Tel: 91-80-25460585/592; fvtf@vsnl.com

FVTRS provided financial assistance to NGOs to impart vocational training and assist them to find livelihoods on their own through micro-enterprises and employment schemes.

Social Awareness society for Youth (SASY), Tamil Nadu (from [P. Sekar](#), Center for Empowerment and Policy Studies, Kulithalai, Tamil Nadu)
56/52, Vivekananda Nagar, Marakanam Road, Villupuram, Thindivanam 604002 Tamil Nadu; Tel: 04147-251490

Provides support to women's Self-Help Groups through microfinance activities in Cuddalore District to restore livelihood after the Tsunami.

Oxfam, Australia (from [Nupur Arora](#), UNDP, New Delhi)
132 Leicester Street, Carlton VIC 3053, Australia; Tel: 61-03-9289-9444; Fax: 61-03-9347-1983;
<http://www.oxfam.org.au/world/emergencies/tsunami/india.html>

Under the post-tsunami livelihoods programme in India, Oxfam provided training and loans to self-help groups to set up small enterprises and linked them to financial institutions.

From [Thara](#), Institute of Land Management, Thiruvananthapuram

Kudumbashree, Kerala

State Municipal House, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala 695010; Tel: 0471-2728320; Fax: 0471-2724205
spem@asianetindia

Works for micro-enterprise development, provides employment to below poverty line people especially women and can be focal point organisation during emergencies.

Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), Gujarat

SEWA Reception Centre, Opposite. Victoria Garden, Bhadra, Ahmedabad, Gujarat 380001; Tel: 91-79-25506444/6477; Fax: 91-79-25506446; mail@sewa.org ; <http://www.sewa.org/aboutus/index.asp>

SEWA is an organisation of poor, self-employed women workers and has been working to provide livelihoods to women in earthquake affected areas of Gujarat

Save the Children, New Delhi (from [Sivagami](#) and [Toms K Thomas](#), Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF), Pathinmathitta, Kerala)

4th Floor, Farm Bhawan, 14-15 Nehru Place, New Delhi 110019; Tel: 91-11-4229-4900; Fax: 91-11-4229-4990; info@savethechildren.in; <http://www.savethechildren.in/india/emergencies/tsunami.html>

Organisation under their post tsunami rehabilitation programme implemented Cash for Work scheme to meet the immediate needs of the victims and to help restore their livelihoods.

From [Sudarsan Das](#), Kalinga Centre for Social Development, Bhubaneswar

Sustainable Economic and Educational Development Society (SEEDS), U.S.A.

12688 NW Naomi LN, Portland, OR 97229, USA; seedsnet@yahoogroups.com; <http://www.seedsnet.org>

SEEDS empowers NGOs by sponsoring sustainable projects in rural areas and supported UNNAYAN in implementing a post-disaster livelihood programme in Orissa

Unnayan, Orissa

S-42, Chandralok Market, Niladri Vihar, C. S. Pur, Bhubaneswar, Orissa

Unnayan with support from SEEDS, promoted self-reliance via Self Help Groups (SHG) in their post-disaster livelihood restoration intervention implemented after the Orissa super cyclone

From [Nupur Arora](#), UNDP, New Delhi

SWAYAM, Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society (SEEDS), New Delhi
D-11, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi 110017; Tel: 91-11-26498371, 41748008; Fax: 91-11-26498372
info@seedsindia.org; <http://www.tsunamilearningproject.org/casestudiesseeds.htm>

SEEDS carried out "SWAYAM," a microfinance programme to restore and revive livelihood options of the tsunami-affected population in Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Post-Tsunami Livelihood Support and Partnership Programme, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Rome

Via del Serafico, 107, 00142 Rome, Italy; Tel: 39-0654592446; Fax: 39-0654593446;
<http://www.ifad.org/english/operations/pi/lka/i665lk/index.htm>; Contact Mr. Sana Jatta; Country Programme Manager; s.jatta@ifad.org

Assists communities to recover physical and social infrastructure destroyed after tsunami. It applies participatory community approaches and decentralised funding system

Concern Worldwide, Ireland

52-55 Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2, Republic of Ireland; Tel: 353-1-417-7700; Fax: 353-1-475-7362; <http://www.concern.net/indexD.php>

International non-governmental organization that provided training and employment opportunities to tsunami affected women in Tamil Nadu.

Development of Humane Action (DHAN) Foundation, Madurai (from [Arif Hussain](#), Research Associate)

18, Pillaiyar Koil Street S. S. Colony, Madurai 625016 Tamil Nadu; Tel: 91-452-2610794/805; Fax: 91-452-2602247; ghan@md3.vsnl.net.in; <http://www.dhan.org/>

Professional development organization based in south India, has been involved in post-Tsunami rehabilitation work in coastal areas of Tamil Nadu.

Recommended Communities and Networks

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (from [Sivagami](#), Save the Children, Chennai)

<http://www.redcross.int/EN/default.asp>

World's largest humanitarian network, which believes that relief aid, must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disasters as well as meeting basic needs

Responses in Full

[R. S. N. Sharma](#), Functional Vocational Training and Research Society, Bangalore

Good to hear about your enquiry and about the review that you are doing in Tsunami Affected Areas in India (TAAI).

In response to your query, I would like to share our organization's experience with post-disaster livelihood intervention:

Experiences of Functional Vocational Training & Research Society (FVTRS) -Bangalore in TAAI

Introduction

Two and a half years have passed since a massive tsunami struck the coastal areas of countries around the Indian Ocean. In India, over 12,000 people have lost their lives. The destruction and damage of public and private property was enormous. The efforts still continue to provide housing, livelihood support, education and socio-psychological support to the affected people. Unlike other agencies, FVTRS's effort is unique in the affected areas. It is concentrating on livelihood skill generation through vocational training. As a national organization, it is promoting functional skills of the youth. FVTRS is rendering its expertise for sustainable long-term rehabilitation through vocational training. States comprising Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu including Pondicherry are covered in the interventions.

Initial interventions in making assessments

FVTRS with initial field assessments and interactions with variety of stakeholders in the affected regions has thus narrowed down the support to vocational skill training. One of the major intervention strategies was to involve the local people into the project formulation, implementation and follow up through formation of 'Stake Holders Fora'. These fora play a major role in the selection to placement of the trainees and to have better linkages with Government and micro finance institutions.

Activities Base

FVTRS's major activities were to identify viable trades and credible NGO doers in the region. We have conducted five promotional consultation workshops in these states involving different stakeholders. This gave us a clear picture of the situation of the affected people and the needed actions. With the help of 64 NGOs, FVTRS reached more than 7,500 youth through 40 odd trades. These NGOs were given financial assistance ranging from INR 1, 00,000 to 9, 00,000 for imparting vocational trainings. So far, more than 60 % youth were either employed or self-employed.

Our interactions with the NGOs and the beneficiaries reveal that the training program has helped them to find a livelihood on their own through micro enterprises and employment. To that affect, to benefit the organizations for a wide interaction, an exhibition was organized on the June 8, 2006 during the National partners' meet.

The short review of the projects and the feedback from the partners reveal that in a short span of time, most of the trained youth are able to make a living based on the learned skills. There has been greater coordination between Government, Micro finance institutions and other stakeholders to enable the trained youth for placement.

The efforts of FVTRS in providing skill training to the marginalized and neglected people, has been remarkable. Target group covering dalit and fisher folk communities were widely covered in the entire region. Relaxations in terms of local contribution and educational status of the trainees, has enabled FVTRS to cover a large spectrum of the affected families.

Learning from the Project

- There is acute need of interventions in the field of skill training for the Tsunami affected population. The youth is looking for alternate means for livelihood.
- There is greater need for providing support to the youth who are indirectly affected by the Tsunami, who have not received any benefit from any organizations and have lost their means of livelihood.
- Community participation through formation of stake holder's forum has yielded better credibility.
- There was a positive response from other stakeholders towards the trained youth in setting up self-employment ventures.

- Effective monitoring and continuous support resulted in achieving the objectives of the project faster.
- Women trainees outnumbered the men for vocational training.

Conclusion:

In the whole scenario of working for the needy and deserved communities, the tsunami project intervention has been a kind of enriching experience for FVTRS. As we are in the process of working out further, we anticipate for getting more ideas in making innovations for addressing the rehabilitation situation in the region. Support from all directions would definitely render in making the people to come out from the sorrow and distress.

Hoping this would be of some help in finding an answer to the issues

P. Sekar, Center for Empowerment and Policy Studies, Kulithalai

I am Dr. P. Sekar, currently involved with Tsunami rehabilitation program in Cuddalore district of Tamil Nadu. I am assisting an organization called Social Awareness Society for Youths -SASY.

I have also been a part of the assessment team for Oxfam Australia to assess their partners through out Tamil Nadu. Based on my experience, I have a few things to share regarding livelihood promotion for disaster-affected communities.

Since Tsunami hits so fast and the effect is so devastating that most of the organizations do not have time or adequate expertise to assess the need and the capacity of the community. After the Tsunami (2005), there was a rush of the NGOs to get involved in rehabilitation work. As a result, there was a lot of duplication of work. For instance, in Cuddalore, prior to Tsunami there were 7,000 women self-help groups (SHGs) but the recent data reveals that there are 20,000 groups. I am sure there is major overlapping of members in these groups. According to an Assistant General Manager (AGM) of NABARD, out of these 20,000 SHGs, hardly 10% are eligible for Economic Assistance (EA) loans. It shows a lack of preparedness and coordination among the social organizations.

Moreover, in the initial post-Tsunami (2005) days, there was no one concentrating on other disadvantaged coastal communities such as dalits and Irula adivasis who are also dependent on sea based activities. Therefore, my humble suggestion is while framing livelihood development programs, also keep in mind the variation of social groups in the coastal areas.

Revolving fund for livelihood activities is another area of concern, as my observation regarding revolving fund in almost all parts of Tamil Nadu has been that people use it for consumptive purposes because there is no proper plan for the activities by the concerned organizations.

In another instance, Social Awareness Society for Youths (SASY) mobilized 600 dalit women into 34 self-help groups and were given Rs. 10000 each to enhance their livelihoods. This money was treated as revolving fund but without interest. Initially, the women began to repay but later on, they refused because they said that other NGOs in nearby areas are giving grants and why we are asking for a repayment. Thus, different approaches by different organizations led to the demotivation of the community.

My suggestion would be livelihood development should be based on local needs, available local resources with effective market linkages along with organizational backing with a certain practical timeframe in mind.

Thara, Institute of Land Management, Thiruvananthapuram (response1)

I am working as the professor & Head of Disaster Management Faculty at the Institute of Land Management, Government of Kerala.

Many of the issues posed by Mr. [P. Sekar](#) can be addressed if we have a comprehensive disaster management policy. Questions as to how the NGO's should be involved in the rehabilitation process, problems of overlapping & different standards etc can be solved if the rehabilitation activities of both the government as well as the non-governmental agencies are routed through one single 'umbrella agency', preferably, the local panchayat body.

Learning from the experience of 2004 tsunami, I think ,in Kerala, the best option would be not to give one time grant but to give loan to groups (women self-help groups such as 'kudumbashree', SEWA etc, who engage in catering, soap making, pickle making etc), ensuring market linkages and sustainability.

One time grants given to the victims were mostly used in non-productive investments, without any economic return. Grants given to heads of family (usually men-folk) were also not often utilized for the betterment of the family.

Nupur Arora, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New Delhi

I would like to share a unique 'post disaster livelihood programme carried out by the Ethiopian Red Cross Society (ERCS) where in they experimented successfully distributing cash instead of food aid during the drought of 2000. This allowed the ERCS to help the victims of drought to protect their livelihoods and other important assets. The victims could choose what they invested their money on, in order to cope with the disaster and reducing the need to sell off precious assets such as livestock or tools. It also enabled the poorest to buy food and thus stimulated the local economy and encouraged farmers to produce more. More on this can be read at the following link: <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/pubs/disasters/reduction/Ethiopia-droughts-en.pdf>.

Another successful mentioning worth mentioning here is "The Mercy Corps Cash for Work (CFW) Program in Post-Tsunami Aceh" by the Mercy Corps. Under this programme cash is paid in the local currency, in exchange for work completed on public works projects. Mercy Corps introduces cash for work projects on a short-term basis in environments where it is necessary to rapidly inject cash into communities in order stimulate the local economy and provide temporary employment to community members, such as after a natural disaster. I am attaching here a document that describes the Mercy Corps CFW program, discusses experiences in implementing CFW programs, and provides key recommendations for the implementation of similar programs in future emergencies. Something interesting to note is that at its peak the Mercy Corps CFW program employed nearly 18,000 participants and disbursed over USD 4.5 million in direct payment during the seven-month program lifespan. More on this can be read at the following link: <http://www.mercycorps.org/files/file1134672803.pdf>

Abha Mishra, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New Delhi

Looking at the rehabilitation activities being undertaken in various parts of the country after a disaster it is very difficult to specifically pinpoint what is the best methodology for livelihood restoration specifically in terms of grant/loan to be given as each area has its peculiarity and each community is different.

In many places small grants are given to the already existing Self Help Groups (SHGs) for restarting their activities and they are quite successful as they already have established norms of functioning, but if their other needs i.e. basic shelter and food are not met most of the money will be used for consumption. The grant or soft loan to the group or the individual will be used up and the livelihood activity will not be

started. It is also very important that proper planning is done before a livelihood option is propagated because too many sewing machines would help in the initial days but as the purchasing power increases, its utility would be lost.

In Orissa after the severe drought of 2000 a programme was undertaken by UNDP " Drought mitigation through decentralized planning" –A model for short & long term drought prevention and mitigation which looked at the immediate, short term and long term interventions supported by DFID.

Beneficiaries were identified by the community through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercises along with Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and approved in Gram Sabhas where food and cash requirement for some time was taken care off. Livelihood support through integrated approach was undertaken through providing cash/food for work for creating rainwater-harvesting structures. These structures were to be maintained by the community and their capacity was enhanced for this purpose. Linkages with other government activities specially crop diversification, diversified farm activities, etc, were established to ensure continuity. The whole programme was implemented by the PRIs and the committee formed for monitoring and overseeing the implementation of the programme. The programme achievements were widely appreciated.

It has also been felt that artisans whose tools have not been destroyed benefit from immediate material loans or grants while those who have lost the tools benefit from immediate material loans or grants tools and material. It is important that some grant is given because all the money a family generates in the first couple of months is used up in buying their basic items which has been lost in a disaster. No agency or government can fulfil all the families' requirement and the person has to buy it from an open market, so initial grant is must to ensure the continuity of earlier livelihood options or else every disaster would increase the number of unskilled workers as traditional occupation loses out.

Sivagami, Save the Children, Chennai

I would like to share Save the Children's experience related to post disaster livelihoods in the worst Tsunami affected district of Tamil Nadu. This project was an effort to address one of the principles of code of conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in disaster response i.e. relief aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs. The project had emphasized mainly on Cash-for-Work (CFW), but the activities chosen by the community reduced their vulnerabilities to future disasters.

As part of Tsunami Rehabilitation Programme, Save the Children supported a livelihood project covering seven villages in Nagapatinam District benefiting 519 families including 1110 children. Under this program more than 27 kms of canal was de-silted generating 31659 person days and around 3500 acres of agricultural land (including land area benefited indirectly) affected by Tsunami was reclaimed in which men and women from the project villages (one person from each family) worked as laborers. The entire work was completed within 61 days. The community participated in these activities enthusiastically and they got motivated to complete their work within specified period. The community committee formed for this purpose monitored the work and they maintained even muster roll records. The landowners even sponsored refreshments for these workers while they were working.

Before initiating the work, the community representatives had discussions with the Panchayat board members about the proposed work. The government representatives provided technical inputs related to selection of appropriate places, the methodology adopted for de-silting, etc. These canals are a vital component in the farming cycle. They serve a dual purpose – they not only act as irrigation canals but also double up as drainage outlets. Both these functions are vital for the maximum yield of crops being raised by the farmers. The irrigation canals help the cultivated agricultural crops and the drainage canals help in draining the excess water during heavy rains resulting in floods. This is crucial as excess water stagnating in the field means reducing the crop yield. Moreover, the two-fold approach of desilting the

canals and strengthening of bunds on either side done in the main and sub canals meant that the yields were higher compared to previous years.

The program also included construction of a three feet high retention bund in Neithavasal Vadapathy village. Till then, during high tides the seawater would inundate the agricultural fields rendering them saline. The construction of the retention bund reduced the risk of seawater intrusion. Due to all these efforts, the excess rainwater that came with heavy rains during the end of 2006 did not have much impact on these communities' lives and they were safe enough. The rainwater drained into the sea without entering agricultural fields and the retention bund helped in arresting seawater intrusion into the fields. The agricultural production that increased due to these strengthened irrigation systems was safe and people were relieved from the impact of disaster. This is the result of joint initiative undertaken by the landless, landowners and Panchayat facilitated by World Trust with the support of Save the Children. Thus, the program aimed at bringing about socio-economic changes in the community had an impact on the flood situation as well.

In addition, Dalit people who got 8 acres of land on lease were able to cultivate their land for the first time after several years of being kept as barren land. The landless laborers also got continuous benefit by getting employment in these lands thereby reducing their migration and conflict with neighborhood communities, in addition to the generated employment opportunity in these activities. Another highlight of the activity was the provision of equal wages for men and women. This led to other women laborers in neighboring villages demanding high wages. More than 170 families spent their earnings primarily on children education, health and clothing. Most of the children in these villages go to nearby higher secondary schools located at a distance of 4-5 kms. The parents of these children gifted them with bicycles to have easy access to schools. Thus, the project, which started as a post-disaster relief operation, contributed to the holistic development of the communities to a certain extent.

Ravishwar Sinha, FXB International, New Delhi

I thank Charulatha for bringing up this topic. The inputs are very helpful.

I would like to offer the following suggestions for any post-disaster livelihood program:

- Microplanning and implementation should involve the recipient/s. His/her special needs should be respected. One should remember that behind the person standing in need because of the disaster, is a person who had dignity and a way of life that the disaster has wrecked.
- Local community and Panchayat being the empowered institution at the village level are best suited for implementation.
- It is preferable that people get back to what they were doing as fast as they can. Irrespective of what help may be forthcoming, they get on with the reestablishing of their lives with whatever they have. However, some find it difficult to do so. The reasons could be psychological or material or both. However, this also brings about an opportunity to help the recipient to readdress the job skills and perhaps take on a new profession.
- There is some migration to urban centers post disaster. This exposes the person specially women and children to exploitations of various types including the risks of contacting HIV and AIDS. Counseling would be very beneficial and life saving. Peer involvement at the earliest in the rehabilitation activities would be very useful.

Toms K. Thomas, Evangelical Social Action Forum (ESAF), Pathinmathitta

I appreciate that this [query](#) is cross-posted in the Work & Employment and the Disaster Management Community, since in most cases the relief operations are followed by livelihood interventions. Especially in the case of the Tsunami in southern India, massive relief operations preceded many of the livelihood

initiatives. However, both these interventions are very different and often require different sets of behavior from the same beneficiaries making the endeavor very challenging.

The charity model of relief often puts people in a dependence mode and makes the livelihood interventions more difficult. Ideally, strategies to empower the disaster affected should be adopted right at the time of the relief operations and the issue of making relief more empowering is a strong determinant of the impact of the livelihood interventions.

There is no standard norm of assistance for livelihood but we should avoid giving grant since grant does not empower, rather make people dependant. Probably a social protection component could be developed along with livelihood support to make sure the beneficiaries are in a position to mitigate any crises.

The amount of assistance could vary from location to location and the type of enterprise. While giving assistance what we usually do is to get a list of people who are already experts in a particular field. For example if assistance is given in fish vending fish vendors needs to be identified and the assistance should be channelized through them. Similarly, method can be used for other livelihood interventions too. Disaster management investment should also build on the local capacity to act at times of any future disaster. I think the Save the Children Fund's (SCF) strategy of [Cash for Work](#) (CFW) could be an example of this.

In short, livelihood promotion in a disaster-affected community is very challenging that too after relief activities and livelihood promotion become easier if an empowering strategy is followed right from the relief phase. The livelihood support should be provided to those who are already in a particular livelihood that is promoted.

[Thara](#), Institute of Land Management, Thiruvananthapuram (response2)

When we talk about post-disaster livelihood programs, it is equally important to identify alternate livelihood options, because just after a disaster, we should not expect the affected people to go back to places/situations that caused so much harm to them and their loved ones. For example, we cannot ignore the 'fear factor' the community faces in going back to the sea for fishing, immediately after a tsunami. Therefore, alternate, socially acceptable, sustainable livelihood options need to be identified for the immediate aftermath of the disaster and gradually the people can be prepared for going back to their original occupations.

In Kerala, working on the same lines, we have just developed a proposal for cultivation of medicinal plants with linkages for marketing. The donors have accepted the proposal in principle and we are working on the modalities and financial aspects.

[Sudarsan Das](#), Kalinga Centre for Social Development, Bhubaneswar

I have worked with UNNAYAN, an NGO, on the post-disaster livelihood programs after Super Cyclone in Orissa in 1999, and also during the recent floods in Northern Orissa.

Based on my experience, I would like to put some points in response to the query posed by Charulatha.

- **Type of funding for post-disaster livelihood program:** To my understanding, revolving fund is most appropriate and relevant for this kind of program. In aftermath of super cyclone that swept the entire coastal belt of Orissa, UNNAYAN with funding from SEEDS, after short-term relief work, engaged itself with rehabilitation activities. To identify appropriate programs/ projects for sustainable

livelihood support to the cyclone hit people, we had series of discussions/ brainstorming with the community and it was found that food security was the major challenge before the people. To overcome this, the people wanted to irrigate their land to go for Rabi crop (Kharif crop was totally lost by the cyclone). Again, after discussion with the community, we developed a strategy to implement a project that was known as Micro Lift Irrigation Project. A patch of 20 to 25 acres of land was identified in each target village where micro lift irrigation system was installed, which consisted of 100 to 125 ft pipe bored into the ground, installing diesel pump set to pump water and construction of channels to protect water loss. A group in each village was formed taking the farmers/owners of the identified land, which was named as Pani Panchayat and the entire cost of the project which was about 40 – 50 thousand rupees including revolving fund for buying seeds and fertilizer. Orders were placed and money was deposited in the account of Pani Panchayat. To our surprise, the farmers that year got bumper Rabi crop and many of them started repaying the amount they had taken from UNNAYAN in the same year itself. Though, all of them could not repay the whole amount but many of them could add some more assets to the micro lift irrigation projects including construction of pump house of the Pani Panchayats and even buying of power tiller etc. From this experience, I believe that, revolving fund should be the option before us, while undertaking post disaster livelihood programs, which may not come back to the fund providers but may help community in sustaining and expanding the project, provided a good monitoring mechanism is in place.

- **Group Vs Individual:** There should not be any doubt that, while formulating any post-disaster livelihood development project our focus should be on the most vulnerable groups. While addressing the livelihood issues of these most vulnerable groups, we must go for group activities rather than individuals unless there is a special need/ circumstances. During the same period of super cyclone rehabilitation program, wherever we started the livelihood programs for the vulnerable community other than agriculture, we preferred groups rather than individual. We formed women Self Help Groups through which we under took some income generating programs. The SHGs created during that period have set examples of and some of the groups have not only shown their maturity in carrying forward and taking up innovative projects for livelihood but also have also got national awards from agencies like Jamshed Ji Tatat National Virtual Academy (fellowship for rural prosperity) and Kamaladevi award for excellence in craft by Delhi Craft Centre, Government of India, New Delhi etc. The Golden Grass Crafts prepared by some SHGs are worth seeing.
- **Convergence:** Yes, convergence between funding/ implementing agencies, government department, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and community is a must in this kind of post-disaster livelihood program. The aid/support provided by the funding/ implementing agencies is not enough at all to address the rehabilitation issues of the disasters victims completely. Hence, mechanism for bringing together Government and PRIs into the fold is necessary. During the recent severe flood in northern Orissa, while working with Unnayan with support from OXFAM GB in relief and rehabilitation work in 4 blocks under Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts of Orissa, UNNAYAN closely worked with government departments, PRI representatives and the community. There are different programs and welfare projects both at government and at PRI level that needs to be mobilized while designing a post-disaster livelihood program for the targeted area.

[K. N. Rajkumar](#), DHAN Foundation, Madurai

I am working with DHAN Foundation in its Post Tsunami rehabilitation program. The experiences with Tsunami affected communities are comparatively different because of un-natural fund flow to very early/young People's Institutions. I would like to share my experience in the context of the query.

After Tsunami, many voluntary organizations supported the affected communities. The response was huge. The affected families were supported for restoring their livelihoods and habitats. Few of the

voluntary organizations directly supported the affected family by providing the livelihood assets like boats and fishing equipments and material for construction of houses. Some of the voluntary organizations organized the community and supported the affected people through respective people institutions. The organizations aiming at the long-term sustainable development in the coastal area supported the SHGs with revolving fund assistance and the organizations aiming to address the immediate and essential need of the community supported the SHGs and individuals through grants.

I feel grants and revolving funds have crucial role in different stages of development. Grant money will have a great role immediately after the disaster. The families left resourceless will be getting an opportunity to survive and meet their essential needs. In the second stage the revolving fund will play a great role, supporting the affected families to restart and enhance their livelihood activities. The revolving fund is a one-time investment for the community development, but has the potential to create huge development impact in the context. Once the user of revolving fund benefits and repays it, other members or members in other groups will utilize the fund. In short, the revolving fund will create multiplier effect.

The Voluntary organizations should be very judicious in using grants and revolving funds. If the organization provides grant after a particular period from the date of disaster, it will only pollute the community and will make them dependent on others for all their needs. The individuals who do not have skills and interest may also attempt to initiate livelihood since the amount is given as grant. This may lead to failure of activity and waste of money. If the amount is given as revolving fund, only the individuals having sufficient skills may come forward to take-up the activity. The fund given as revolving fund can be utilized potentially and it would support the contextual development. People who are interested and in need of alternative livelihood may not have sufficient skills. These people might hesitate to take loan from the group. Under such situations, the voluntary organizations should build the livelihood skill of the individual and support them to initiate the livelihood activities.

Based on my experience I feel that:

- Different types of funding support with defined periodicity are essential in the disaster context.
- All the funding support can be utilized in the best way by routing them through SHGs.
- If all the voluntary organization route their support through SHGs, duplication can be completely avoided.
- The grant funds can be best utilized during the relief period for addressing the essential needs of the community.
- The revolving fund assistance can be best utilized for livelihood restoration.

The question of partial loan and partial grant is context based. If families are worst affected and if their need is very essential the voluntary organization can support them with grant. However, the organization should follow uniform policy, otherwise it will create unnecessary problem with other group members or individual in the same village or in the neighboring village. So while providing partial grant and loan the voluntary organization should be conscious on uniformity of policy and consequences.

In the disaster context, all the affected communities are the targeted beneficiaries irrespective of rich and poor. All the affected people would require basic and essential needs. The voluntary organization can focus on restoration in the first phase. What is lost can be replaced, however, what happened in the coastal area of Tamil Nadu is that the traditional fishermen using catamaran were supported for purchasing mechanized boats. According to a news report in 'The Hindu' even school going children were diverted to fishing activity, since the family has received mechanized boats. The objective of the voluntary organization was to support the poor family to earn better income, but the result was not positive. Therefore, the best option is to restore what is lost.

The best way to support the poor and vulnerable community is that, they can be organized as SHGs, which will address their need for longer term. To improve the livelihood activities further, poor people can be trained on value addition services. It is always better to build upon the community knowledge.

Many thanks to all who contributed to this query!

If you have further information to share on this topic, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Work and Employment Community in India at se-emp@solutionexchange-un.net.in and/or Solution Exchange for the Disaster Management Community in India at se-drm@solutionexchange-un.net.in with the subject heading "Re: [se-emp][se-drm] Query: Post Disaster Livelihood Development Programs - Experiences. Additional Reply."

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