

Conclusions

The Concluding lessons from this booklet may be summarised under six headings.

1. Structural Causes and the Need for Analysis

The most serious problem with emergency relief is that it does not provide lasting solutions which address the underlying structural causes of emergencies. Structural causes include the chronic vulnerability of some groups of people and the political and economic driving forces which lead to insecurity and conflict. To design appropriate relief, rehabilitation and development activities more attention needs to be given to the analysis of:

- the development context within which relief is provided
- the underlying causes of the emergencies, and
- the nature of the situational problems

This will involve field partners providing more resources for these analytical tasks than has been the case in the past.

2. Relief, Rehabilitation and Development

A new approach to emergencies is needed which recognises that relief must include rehabilitation, and that rehabilitation requires development. The undertaking of these activities simultaneously but separately is necessary to address both the situational and structural problems and thereby reduce the risks of future emergencies.

3. Monitoring, Evaluation and Impact Awareness

More attention must be given by field partners to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and impacts of their relief and disaster prevention activities. Measurement of effectiveness is necessary for accountability while impact assessment is needed because relief is not neutral and may have unintended consequences. Improved awareness of the impact of relief measures should contribute to more thorough planning and better performance.

4. Relief in a Development Mode

Relief and rehabilitation activities should be undertaken as much as possible in a development mode. This will require the affected communities to be involved in relief activities, thereby reducing the dangers of dependence, improving sensitivity in relief provision, and minimising the period of gratuitous relief.

5. Alternative Approaches to Relief

Alternative ways of undertaking and managing relief could produce more effective assistance. These should be explored. Some areas where relief and disaster prevention practice should be questioned include:

- the choice of field partners, bearing in mind their comparative advantage,
- the use of different channels, especially the potential of the private sector
- decentralised approaches to relief, building up local capacity both to undertake and to coordinate relief and disaster prevention activities,

- the involvement of communities more fully in early warning, monitoring, targeting, and impact assessment,
- building up local adaptive responses and coping mechanisms, and
- using a development mode for relief and rehabilitation, thereby involving communities in relief activities and minimising the period of relief

6. Disaster Prevention and Preparedness (DPP)

Disaster prevention and preparedness must be a central aspect of development activities in countries prone to emergency situations. To be effective DPP must address the structural problems which underlie emergencies.