Factsheet folder: *Decent work matters in crisis; ILO response to crisis challenges*

This package of 22 factsheets shows how ILO builds its work in crisis contexts around and through decent work.

Three sets of fact sheets compose the package:

- The first explains **The basics of ILO crisis response** approach and activities. Its 7 factsheets cover:
  - Decent work at the core of crisis response
  - Country-level interventions
  - Knowledge development/dissemination
  - Building crisis response capacity
  - Advocacy for employment-friendly crisis response
  - Strategic partnerships
  - Selected reading materials

- The second presents **How ILO works in crises**; that is, its 9 main relevant technical areas:
  - Employment and labour markets in crises
  - Emergency public employment services
  - Training for employability in crises
  - Labour-based infrastructure reconstruction
  - Local economic recovery
  - Micro/small enterprises for socio-economic revival
  - Cooperatives restoring livelihoods and communities
  - Social protection against crisis vulnerability
  - (Re) building societies through social dialogue

- The third covers **For whom ILO works in crises**; focusing on 6 main targets:
  - Gender in crisis response
  - Jobs for ex-combatants
  - Reintegrating child soldiers
  - Youth in crises: from victim to protagonist
  - People with disabilities in crisis response
  - (Re) integrating refugees and IDPs

These factsheets comprise an explanation of the theme, an overview of the ILO approach and work on it, along with concrete examples illustrating a given methodology, results, etc., key lessons learned from that work, a presentation of recent publications and tools, additional ILO readings and contacts in the ILO for further information.

Being more detailed than customarily, these factsheets can be used for advocacy, but also for training purposes and as general information and guidance on the themes covered.
Advocacy for employment-friendly crisis response

Decent work matters in crises!
It’s a powerful rope that can pull people and societies out of crises and set them on a solid development path.

Advocacy: Why?
The ILO is devoted to peace, social justice and socio-economic development. Its InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) advocates on behalf of the people affected by emergencies (armed conflicts, natural disasters, financial and economic downturns, difficult socio-political transitions), their right to regain stable, productive and decent lives.

IFP/CRISIS main advocacy goal is the promotion and wide recognition of the employment dimension of crises, and of ILO contribution to this crucial dimension. It works in particular to:

develop a culture of crisis prevention and response built on employment and decent work.

As those working with refugees, demobilized soldiers, victims of cataclysms and other emergencies know well, once physical security and immediate food needs are met, survivors demand one thing: decent work opportunities.

The negative impact of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion cannot be ignored in crisis prevention and response. Their strong link to crisis vulnerability makes tackling these challenges essential to prevent and reduce the impact of crises, and pull societies and individuals out of them.

Productive jobs give back to crisis victims and their families income, as well as freedom, equity, dignity, security, self-confidence, hope, and a stake in the reconciliation and reconstruction of their communities.

Yet in many emergencies policy-makers and other actors tend to neglect the employment dimension, particularly in the early, humanitarian phases.
Advocacy: What is it?

IFP/CRISIS advocacy strategy combines knowledge, initiative and foresight. It consists of targeted communication to key donors, governments, partner agencies, ILO constituents, the media and internal ILO audiences in its headquarters and field structures. The strategy is based on a vision of employment and decent work promotion as fundamental for effective crisis prevention, relief and reconstruction, regardless of the implementing agency, coupled with ILO comparative advantage and relevance in this area. Advocacy is for IFP/CRISIS an overarching activity to raise public awareness, influence decision makers, mobilize public support while fund-raising, and ultimately to profile IFP/CRISIS as a valid contributor in this process.

Advocacy work can count on substantial support from ILO structures, particularly its:

- Crisis Focal Point Network, made up of over 70 ILO officials trained and responsible for crisis response, based at headquarters and in field offices. Meeting and corresponding regularly with the members of this crisis network, exchanging experiences and information and undertaking joint activities, are themselves important internal advocacy activities.
- Bureaux for Workers’ Activities, and for Employers’ Activities
- Department of Communication, assisting on the advocacy plan, and the delivery of concrete outreach activities and products. This includes special events, film productions and publications, often co-produced.

Advocacy: How?

IFP/CRISIS acts as a catalyst within ILO to mobilize internal and external attention and resources. It adopts a crisis response approach that covers the full range of ILO objectives, and carries out a variety of activities to promote national, regional and international recognition of employment and other decent work concerns in crises. It is engaged in a long-course navigation which requires taking on board as many partners as possible, constantly checking if its key messages correspond to the will and requirements of constituents, in a feedback process which utilises the entire ILO system, especially at field level, and partners’ inputs.

Crisis victims demand decent jobs “clear and loud”; in the streets of Buenos Aires, during the Argentina crisis (2001-2002), as well as in the rubble of the earthquake in Gujarat (2001).
Key external advocacy targets are:

- ILO tripartite structure, that is an invaluable asset and comparative advantage.

- Employers’ and workers’ organizations represent an ideal vehicle to reach large constituencies and also make direct contributions to disaster-stricken economies and populations.

- Governments are both potential beneficiaries of crisis response support, and donors. IFP/CRISIS has a programme of visits to donor capitals and, naturally, takes advantage of any opportunity for meetings at ILO headquarters and in the field. In January 2002 it organized, for instance, a “breakfast-meeting” to brief donors on the ILO plan of assistance for Afghanistan. Various development cooperation agencies are enlisted among IFP/CRISIS principal interlocutors. A special effort is under way to inform G-77 countries of ILO crisis response and crisis prevention capacity and instruments.

IFP/CRISIS organizes a yearly consultation on crisis response with employers’, workers’ and government representatives.

Exchanges provide participants with a better grasp of crisis response, their respective roles, and that of ILO; help identify priorities; and strengthen their commitment and contribution to achieve employment and decent work objectives in emergencies.

- UN agencies, that receive particular attention in IFP/CRISIS advocacy work, as primary actors in the transition from emergency relief to the rehabilitation phase of any given crisis. For this purpose IFP/CRISIS actively participates in the annual ECOSOC sessions and presents statements in the UN General Assembly, emphasizing the primacy of employment and decent work in rebuilding lives and re-starting economies shattered by catastrophes.

- A wide spectrum of other international agencies, including major financial institutions such as the World Bank, the European Union and other regional and sub-regional organizations.

- The private sector, with whom IFP/CRISIS nurtures substantial relations. It is indeed important to raise corporate awareness on the role of business in crisis response and prevention; both in conducting their core activities in a socially-responsible and employment-friendly way, and in using their capacities to help in crisis relief and reconstruction.
Advocacy: Which instruments and activities?

Among the advocacy instruments and means IFP/CRISIS uses are:

- **Publicity material**
  - Factsheets and flyers
  - Brochures
  - Videos
  - Posters
  - A homepage: www.ilo.org/crisis

- **Speeches, articles and interviews**

- **Publications**
  - Manuals and guidance tools
  - Monographs
  - Working papers

- **Special events**
  - Conferences and exhibitions
  - Presentations and briefings
  - Media events
  - Advocacy campaigns

For further information:

- ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS)
  - 4, Route des Morillons
  - CH-1211 Geneva 22
  - SWITZERLAND
  - +41 799-7069
  - +41 799-6189
  - E-mail: ifpcrisis@ilo.org
  - Web site: www.ilo.org/crisis

May 2003
The number and magnitude of crises occurring simultaneously are daunting. ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) can only be involved directly in a few. Thus the Programme has at the core of its strategy, equipping with the appropriate tools ILO staff and relevant national and international players tackling these events. The two key messages are: the centrality of employment and decent work in crisis response; and viewing crises as special contexts.

**Crises are not “Business as usual”**

The nature of crisis contexts requires special approaches and tools, and special skills from the various agents working on them. Although most technical areas of intervention and target groups may be similar to those in normal developmental work, the tools used need considerable adaptation so they may fit the specificities of a given crisis.

*Speed, flexibility, the capacity to innovate and improvise, to mobilize and integrate multiple capabilities, to collaborate with a variety of other players, are core.*
Equipping for crisis response

IFP/CRISIS is preparing ILO headquarters and field structure, as well as ILO constituents - governmental institutions, workers' and employers' organizations, civil society groups and other crisis practitioners, to operate effectively in countries facing or approaching these events. As the incidence and gravity of crises will not abate in the near future, and will have wider and wider repercussions, many actors need to consider them seriously in their work; mainstreaming efforts for their prevention, for preparedness, for tackling their adverse effects, and for their resolution. IFP/CRISIS uses two main capacity-building avenues:

► Development and wide dissemination of crisis-response tools - IFP/CRISIS tools mainly consist of ready-made standard packages covering a specific type of crisis, technical area or target group. They provide a policy framework and guidelines, drawing among others from IFP/CRISIS direct experience and the work of other ILO programmes. They often take the form of manuals; ready-to-use and designed flexibly to fit the needs of a wide array of situations.

► Training initiatives, in various forms and duration, from a few hours to a few days:

Training events for ILO officials, to create a critical mass of expertise.

- The first workshop (October 2000, ILO International Training Centre, Turin, Italy) targeted IFP/CRISIS' office-wide network of crisis focal points, and included some ILO constituents and relevant organizations: OCHA, UNDP, UNOPS and ICRC. It created among the 40 participants a common understanding of the mandate and strategy of IFP/CRISIS and the role of that network; developed skills for rapid needs assessment and to elaborate and implement responses, including in partnership with relevant actors; and allowed experience sharing.

- A second workshop (April 2001, Kribi, Cameroun) targeted some 20 ILO officials covering Central Africa, an area subject to multiple crises and socio-economic fragility. It strengthened participants through a mix of technical presentations/discussions, simulation exercises and concrete examples of emergencies. They acquired skills in undertaking rapid needs assessments of crises; elaborating and implementing programmes; providing multidisciplinary responses, working together and involving other UN agencies; conceiving and implementing integrated responses; integrating crisis prevention and early warning into their day-to-day work; and setting priorities. Similar workshops are planned for Africa and other regions, such as Asia and Latin America.

- A training of trainers workshop (October 2001, ILO International Training Centre, Turin, Italy) developed IFP/CRISIS concepts, issues and tools, ILO comparative advantage and
approach to crisis response; and basic skills for organization, presentation, facilitation and design of training sessions.

Training events for ILO constituents and partners, such as the sub-regional workshops in Southern Africa and in the Great Lakes region, and a national one in Burundi, scheduled for 2003.

Current priority areas for a stronger ILO response capacity include:

- An “early warning system”, an analytical tool to identify socio-political and economic trends that could set off or announce crises, linking it with similar systems of other agencies;
- Strategic planning, to define the nature of the intervention required and the sequencing of actions to be taken;
- Active coordination and partnerships, within the ILO and the UN system, to achieve synergies;
- Resource mobilization to ensure rapid resource availability and allocation, requiring active coordination with donors;
- An inventory of existing capabilities (instruments, expertise in ILO headquarters and field structures, and relevant non-ILO capabilities) to permit quick identification of possible ILO technical contribution in a crisis;
- Rapid data collection and rapid assessment methods;
- Adapted administrative and other relevant rules and procedures to facilitate ILO effective action in crisis contexts;
- Tailor-made training sessions, for specific audiences, institutions, etc. Crisis-response training are being organized for a variety of key players (with special attention to employers’ and workers’ organizations, that have a critical role in crises), building on ILO-wide response capacity;
- Inputs to ILO non-crisis training events;
- Ad-hoc training, for instance during ILO missions;
- Inputs to training/academic courses (of the Universities of York, Pisa, etc.);
- Distance learning, through a CD-ROM currently in preparation;
- Dissemination of a trainer’s guide.
ILO Office-wide network of crisis focal points

This network, composed of some 75 officials in ILO’s various technical departments and field structure, is to mainstream crisis prevention and response into ILO regular work. Its members are ready to:

- handle the specificities of crisis contexts;
- help develop a “crisis culture”, both inside and outside the ILO;
- act as early warning agents, through networking, exchange of information, development of indicators and assessment systems;
- contribute to needs assessment exercises, analytical studies and programme formulation;
- build partnerships with international, national and local players, including NGOs, UN coordination structures and specific agencies, and the media;
- set up multidisciplinary, integrated ILO responses, seeking synergies with other ongoing programmes;
- mobilize resources;
- be mobilized in a crisis, to provide views on the context and its actors, achieve consensus and a division of labour for intervention.

May 2003

ITCILO/J. Maillard
Reintegrating child soldiers

Achieving sustainable reintegration requires:
- tackling the root causes of enrolment
- offering viable alternatives

THE CHALLENGE

Over 300,000 children under 18 are involved in some 36 ongoing armed conflicts worldwide. These youngsters are recruited both by national armies and other armed groups. They often carry arms and are induced to commit atrocities such as killing, raping or mutilating, or to support hostilities indirectly as porters, messengers, spies, cooks and mine detectors. Girls are particularly vulnerable as they can also be used as soldiers’ “wives” or sexual slaves.

Besides the dangers of combat and carrying arms at such a young age, they suffer physical and psychological abuses, harsh duties and punishments, and are exposed to alcohol and drug consumption. Such harsh life and treatment sometimes cause death or severe injuries, and always leave deep scars.

The demand for young soldiers is high, as they are known to be less fearful and more compliant; and it is also due to lack of adult combatants. Some are abducted or physically forced into joining the armed forces. But many join without physical coercion. The reasons vary widely; some may see recruitment as the only opportunity to receive food and shelter; others as an opportunity to flee from domestic problems (beating, exploitation, sexual violence, or merely adolescence strains); others are lured by male military models, peer and societal pressure, a family tradition of military involvement; others join after witnessing brutality against their families and communities, to seek protection or revenge.

Reintegrating these youngsters is usually highly complicated. In some cases tracing their families may prove difficult. Conflict may have turned them into orphans or have destroyed their family and community ties. Many child soldiers may have been displaced, sometimes across borders due to the regional nature of a conflict. However the real challenge is the sustainability of reunification, as most of them tend to leave home again within a few weeks. First, families often lack the means to support returning

“So now we have to do military jobs. It is the only skill we know.”

Explains a young Afghan soldier
children. In addition, older kids aged 14-18, the so-called young soldiers, may find it difficult to readjust to rules and authority at home, lack of cash in their pockets, and can actually create serious instability if not attended to after demobilization. Also, mistreatment at home may continue. A series of social and psychological problems further complicate reintegration. Communities and authorities may not be willing to forget the crimes they committed. Children may display violent behaviour, apathy, or simply lack hope in their future. Thus, children reunited with their families while the conflict is ongoing risk voluntary or forced re-recruitment or punishment for them and their families.

Successful and sustainable reintegration needs grasping and addressing the specific needs of these young ex-combatants, including the reasons why they became involved, their scars from military life and their ambitions. This calls for individual, well-integrated interventions, including psycho-social support.

Creating training and employment opportunities in a war-torn economy is perhaps the biggest challenge.

ILO RESPONSE

ILO Convention No.182 (and its Recommendation No.190) on the worst forms of child labour, adopted unanimously in 1999 and ratified by over 130 countries, stipulates among others that:

“Forced recruitment of boys and girls under 18 for use in armed conflict is one of the worst forms of child labour and must be prohibited and eliminated.”

This Convention is part of and builds upon international law aimed at preventing and stopping child involvement in conflicts, that has been considerably strengthened in recent years.

The ILO goes beyond trying to stop children from carrying arms. It seeks to promote their development by providing adequate educational and training alternatives for children and, when appropriate, access to decent work and income security for their parents. Ending child-soldiering is a goal in itself; but it is also a powerful way of promoting economic and human development (see the factsheet on jobs for ex-rebels and soldiers).

The ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) and International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) collaborate closely on this issue. ILO work on the reintegration of child soldiers concentrates on two complementary axes:

- Appealing and viable alternatives for 14 to 18-year old soldiers relinquishing their arms;
- Income-generating support to receiving families and communities.

Prevent and reintegrate child soldiers in Central Africa

IPEC and IFP/CRISIS have been jointly involved in the Great Lakes region (Congo, Burundi, DRC, Rwanda) on a rapid assessment survey to map out the problem. Two publications are available:

- A manual presenting the rapid assessment methodology developed by this project, for use in other child soldiering contexts;
- A report presenting and analysing the survey results, focused on the causes of child involvement in armed conflicts and other core aspects: recruitment methods, tasks assigned, daily living conditions, circumstances of their release or escape from the armed group, their socio-economic conditions after leaving the group and future prospects. Based on it, the report sketches a regional-level strategy for action, which a forthcoming, comprehensive prevention and reintegration programme will implement.

International instruments include the statutes of the new International Criminal Court, that treat the use of child soldiers as a war crime; a new Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, prohibiting governments and armed groups from using children below 18 in conflict; their compulsory or voluntary recruitment by armed groups; and their compulsory recruitment by governments, while setting strict safeguards for their voluntary recruitment by the latter.

Further, the UN Security Council, General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights, the Organization of African Unity/African Union, the Organization for American States and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe all condemn this abuse.
KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK

- Jobs and income-generating activities are key to the economic, social and psychological reintegration of young soldiers, who are unlikely to return to school after demobilization. Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programmes thus need to be accompanied by economic revival efforts and employment-creation programmes.
- Assistance to child soldiers needs to be complemented by assistance to their receiving families and communities, who are often unable to cater for them.
- Capacity building of relevant national decision-makers in the complex task of reintegrating young soldiers is essential for long-term impact.
- Flexibility is key, so as to adapt the approach to the specific needs of individual youngsters to be reintegrated; needs can vary greatly according to culture, age, social status, and their tasks and experiences while serving as soldiers and earlier.
- Effective and sustainable socio-economic reintegration requires, first, a thorough understanding of the root causes of the enrolment of youngsters in armed groups and their motives for stopping to fight, so that the necessary positive changes can be introduced to avoid, among others, re-recruitment.
- Vulnerable groups among child soldiers, such as girls, children with disabilities and from indigenous and minority groups, need special attention to ensure their access to the reintegration assistance available.
- Reintegration of child and young ex-combatants requires considerable time, resources, communication and coordination across aid agencies, governments, NGOs and communities, as the task is complex and multifaceted.
- Stopping child participation in armed conflicts requires attention both on the supply and the demand side of enrolment.

Rehabilitate child soldiers from North and East Sri Lanka

IFP/CRISIS and IPEC have launched a project to facilitate the reintegration of boys and girls who are ex-combatants. It combines a capacity building component for local institutions, with trauma counseling, vocational training, employment and self-employment opportunities for these youngsters.

The project operates in close collaboration with UNICEF, providing income-generating support to families and communities where children are placed.

Assistance includes vocational training, on-the-job-training, apprenticeships, short-term employment, labour-intensive construction works, business start-up and micro-finance programmes. It usually starts with an identification of the economic sectors that can absorb young former soldiers.

"Voices of young soldiers"

A project (by IFP/CRISIS and the Quaker UN Office in Geneva) is giving adolescent boys and girls from 10 countries worldwide an opportunity to explain why they joined armed forces without being physically forced to do so.

Their motivation to join relates to:

- their general environment (poverty, lack of schools and employment, propaganda, adolescent attraction, societal pressure – "when you begin to fire shots around... you're almost the tough guy in the neighbourhood" – etc.)
- their specific situation (mistreatment at home – "I left because he (father) beat us, he drank and then he took me as his wife. I preferred to die in the war...", need to earn an income for their family, etc.)
- a triggering event (outbreaks of violence pushing them to seek or ensure protection, witnessing atrocities, for instance – "the killing of my mother and little sister that happened before my eyes made me decide to join...and...take revenge", etc.).

Understanding the root causes of their involvement will help to identify their core needs and the priorities for their successful and sustainable socio-economic reintegration, as well as for effective preventive action.
ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS

- Brett, R. and Specht, I.: *Broken dreams, broken voices* (Geneva, ILO, forthcoming)

- ILO: *Guidelines for employment and skills training in conflict-affected countries* (Geneva, 1998)
- ILO: *The reintegration of war-affected youth: The experience in Mozambique*, (Geneva, 1997)
- Date-Bah, E.: *Crises and Decent Work: A collection of essays* (Geneva, ILO, 2001)

For further information

- ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS)
  
  4, Route des Morillons
  
  CH-1211 Geneva 22
  
  SWITZERLAND
  
  + (41-22) 799-7069
  
  + (41-22) 799-6189
  
  E-mail: ifpcrisis@ilo.org
  
  Web site: www.ilo.org/crisis

- Also see the ILO InFocus Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC): www.ilo.org/ipec
Cooperatives restoring livelihoods and communities

The Challenge

Some of the most destructive crises strike amongst the poorest people in the world. After the first mobilization, tackling the emergency, populations are often left alone to cope with their plight. Where state and private resources are scarce, mitigation measures are usually limited and cannot match the vast consequences of armed conflicts, natural disasters, political and social transitions, economic and financial downturns. The growing informal economy, unemployment and underemployment, unorganized labour, small producers and daily wage earners, aggravate crisis impact. The absence of strong institutional settings at the local level limits further local people’s chances to recover.

Cooperatives can provide viable solutions to many of their seemingly intractable problems, offering alternative protection, opportunities and empowerment. They are “autonomous associations of persons united voluntarily to meet some common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically-controlled enterprise”. As such, they are built on the values of self-help, equality, equity, mutual aid, democracy and social responsibility – all essential for effective crisis response.

Scope for cooperatives in crisis contexts exists in many areas: from rebuilding communities (infrastructure construction, housing, electricity, water and communications supply, transport, community health and pharmacy services, schooling, funeral services, consumption cooperatives, food and nutrition purchasing clubs); to re-establishing economic activity (migrant worker services, employment mutuals, cereal banks, agricultural supply, livestock associations, machinery, water/irrigation management, livelihoods for disadvantaged groups – youth, older persons, people with disabilities, women, marketing, business service, fishing and handicraft cooperatives); to credit/financial services (credit unions, insurance mutuals, banks, crop and livestock credit); to providing social protection (food purchasing, sickness and accident clubs).

Many successful cooperatives were born out of adverse economic conditions, which somehow stimulated determination to overcome obstacles and a sense of community, from which cooperative schemes emerged.

Reaching the poorest in times of crisis and recovery through organized self-help
Cooperatives contribute significantly to recovery and reconstruction, but also play an important role in crisis prevention, preparedness and mitigation, mainly by reducing vulnerability of disadvantaged groups and communities in general and giving them the means to protect themselves against imminent crises.

In crisis contexts, cooperatives:

- Provide essential services and social protection
- Give a "weight" and a voice to the poor
- Afford employment to crisis-affected groups, and with it income, dignity and hope
- Rebuild local economies and communities
- Create capacity among populations, ensuring long-lasting solutions
- Develop local ownership, enhancing sustainability
- Foster change against constraining power structures, gender stereotypes, social divisions, etc.
- Maintain/establish social contacts and references
- Are schools of social dialogue and democracy
- Combat discrimination, racial, tribal and religious intolerance
- Build peace.

More broadly, being rooted in the communities they serve, cooperatives accept higher social and labour standards, showing that decent work is possible, and indeed advantageous, even in extreme crisis contexts.

Cooperatives' significant potential warrants ILO attention in crisis work.

ILO RESPONSE

Since its foundation, in 1919, ILO has been among the leading international agencies involved in promoting and supporting cooperatives. Its approach combines a strong emphasis on field work worldwide; with development of methodologies and training materials that incorporate lessons gathered, and of international cooperative networks to exchange information, expertise and allow distance learning.

The ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) and the ILO Cooperative Branch (COOP) collaborate routinely. Recent novel initiatives include a framework for joint crisis response; and exploring potential for combining culturally-based early warning systems for natural disasters with cooperative development for sustainable employment creation, starting with the case of tribal people in India.

Two groups receive special attention: indigenous and tribal people, for whom the special programme INDISCO is developing viable models of participatory development, and to cope with and manage displacement, environmental deterioration and natural disaster; and women. Focusing on women is critical both to address their specific needs, and because their cooperatives are particularly successful, for instance in terms of high rates of debt repayment and leadership: women are generally more inclined to cooperation, loyal to their cooperative and to cooperative principles, less discriminating on religious, political and social grounds.

KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK

- Cooperatives should be considered in all crisis programmes. Needs assessment and response formulation should examine the full range of self-help approaches that may be appropriate in the specific context and crisis (reviewing the status of existing cooperatives, current perception of cooperatives, traditional forms of cooperation, immediate opportunities to set up cooperatives, and the relevant legal/regulatory framework).
- Governments may have misused cooperative forms (state-controlled), or warring factions may have been associated with some cooperatives, leading to discredit in certain communities. Overcoming preconceptions is essential, and the terminology used to describe cooperatives needs to take into account such situations.

Preventing famine in drought-stricken Sahel

ACOPAM, the Organizational and Cooperative Support to Local Development Initiatives in the Sahel, has been a major ILO Programme to alleviate poverty and avoid famine among drought-victims in eight countries. It helped strengthen rural communities’ capacity to manage their environment and access basic services, by promoting cooperatives in core areas: irrigation, natural resource management, village-based cereal banks, cash-crop marketing, savings and credit, education, health protection, etc., with special attention to women’s constraints and opportunities.

The Programme lasted 21 years, and in its last phase alone (1996-2000) created 56,000 new jobs. Although it ended in 2000, the 188 partner agencies it had organized into 10 national and regional networks are continuing its work.

ACOPAM produced a wide array of methodologies, manuals and other teaching aids, translated in local languages, which it disseminated among its partners, including a large network of NGOs. It used their feedback to refine these materials, which are now widely available. Many innovative components of its approach can be replicated in other crisis situations.
It is essential to promote and ensure the voluntary and independent nature of cooperatives.

Technical assistance personnel should be familiar with cooperative principles and processes, as they are significantly different from those of investor-controlled enterprises. Organizations with direct experience and links to cooperative structures could help identify such personnel and/or locate needed information.

Deciding whether to support cooperatives targeting vulnerable groups or broader ones that integrate them requires weighting the pros and cons in the specific context. For instance, the first option can engender greater solidarity among vulnerable members and avoid their domination by stronger ones; while in the second they can benefit from credit and other services stronger ones may afford and a larger scale of operations.

It is important to avoid creating too high expectations among target populations, and to explain to them realistically the expected benefits and cost/commitment cooperative membership will entail.

Enthusiasm for cooperatives is desirable, but no substitute for the business, technical and governance skills required to support their development.

Cooperatives are economic enterprises, and thus must be fully viable; requiring of those directing and managing them business skills and behaviour.

Cooperative leaders have the additional task of fostering cooperative behaviour throughout the organization.

The need to advance swiftly in crisis contexts should not impede involving fully target groups into project-development, including setting objectives and indicators to monitor progress.

Would-be participants must demonstrate willingness to cooperate, including acceptance of its basic principles – reciprocity, trust, fairness, openness among members, etc.

Members need to demonstrate financial commitment, for instance matching any financial aid received, with significant contribution in cash or in kind. This also avoids creating aid-dependency.

Assets provided should be replaceable with the income cooperatives are expected to produce.

Capacity building of cooperative members is a priority. It should focus mainly on leadership, for cooperative representatives; management, for its managers; and technical skills, for ordinary members. Members must also fully understand the purpose and objectives of their cooperative.

Training should be provided through coaching, on-the-spot programmes and short study visits. Access to first-hand successful experiences is a valuable complement to more formal training, particularly when undertaken within the same country or area.

Managers should always report to members' elected leaders, and not be "seconded" by government.

Secondary cooperative organizations (that is, federations of primary cooperatives) can be useful, to help develop best practices, increase the economic "weight" of grass-root ones, for instance; but they should be developed gradually to avoid burdening cooperatives with additional costs and administration too early.

Cooperatives for peace

Savings and credit, and handicraft cooperatives in Chad – After a military conflict which severely affected the population, in 1997 ILO launched a programme for grass-root associations to assist the very poor and ex-combatants, which demonstrated the potentialities of savings and credit cooperatives. The Credit Union network in N'Djamena, the capital, now gathers 15,000 members and has mobilised over 1.5 million US $. This has led to a new project for strengthening men’s and women’s skills related to Credit Unions, and those of women in handicraft cooperatives, which are numerous in Chad.

Cooperation to uplift indigenous communities in Mindanao – ILO intervened in the second half of the 1990s in two provinces of the Philippine island of Mindanao, where government-Muslim rebel conflict was pushing populations into extreme poverty. Its activities provided livelihoods while promoting indigenous culture. In Tawi-Tawi, it supported producer cooperatives in Muslim communities’ traditional handicrafts, through loans, technical training to improve handicraft quality, and marketing. In Lanao Del Sur, it helped establish a fisherfolks multipurpose cooperative. Since then, no fights between government and rebels have been reported in those areas.
Although cooperatives can operate in extreme contexts, some elements facilitate their task, such as information about cooperatives, networks of cooperatives, persons/institutions which could provide advice and guidance, sympathetic sources of finance (particularly in the early stages), clustering of successful cooperatives in a given area, an enabling public policy framework: well adapted cooperative legislation, fair taxation, financial institutions able to support cooperatives, etc.

International links should be sought with other cooperatives/networks of cooperatives, which could provide technical, advisory and financial services, particularly valuable in times of crisis.

A withdrawal strategy must be built into project design. It should include providing a source of guidance and advice, which cooperative members could contact whenever needed.

### ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS

- ILO: *Coping strategies and early warning systems of tribal people in India in the face of natural disasters* (Geneva, 2002).

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**For further information**

- ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS)
  - 4, Route des Morillons CH-1211 Geneva 22 SWITZERLAND
  - +(41-22) 799-7069
  - +(41-22) 799-6189
  - E-mail: ifpcrisis@ilo.org
  - Web site: www.ilo.org/crisis

- Also see the ILO Cooperative Branch (COOP): www.ilo.org/coop
Why IFP/CRISIS country interventions?

The direct involvement of the InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) in selected crises is a main pillar of its work. It allows:

- Showing ways to tackle effectively the employment-related challenges of crises to constituents and the development community, and their important relief and development results. Its interventions cannot cover all crises or reach all affected groups and geographical areas. They should be viewed as “pilots” of a given approach. The Programme can provide guidance on how to replicate or widen the scope of that experience.

- Establishing the Programme and ILO in general as a valuable, credible partner in crisis response.

- Gathering first-hand insights into the challenges of a given emergency, the types of actions best suited to address them, their sequencing, the desirable partnerships, etc. IFP/CRISIS analyses systematically the lessons of specific crises or types of crisis and presents them in various kinds of documents and publications, for easy dissemination and use.

Where does IFP/CRISIS intervene?

The innumerable crises striking at any one time have required adopting the following criteria for IFP/CRISIS direct interventions:

- Degree of gravity of the crisis, in terms of its impact;

- Degree of development and capacity of the country concerned to deal with crisis repercussions;

- Level of UN concern and interest, political profile of the crisis and degree of planned UN involvement in response to it;

- Assessment of the appropriateness and timeliness of ILO intervention (by ILO headquarters and field structures, its local constituents and existing early warning systems);

- ILO technical capacity for the needed response;

- Likelihood of sustainable impact of ILO intervention;

- Danger level of the security situation, to avoid any threats to ILO staff.
When does IFP/CRISIS intervene?

From Crisis to Development
ILO response to crises encompasses pre-crisis, in-crisis and post-crisis interventions. Since the relief, the rehabilitation/reconstruction and the development stages are closely knit and usually partly overlap, to be effective, ILO presence in any of them requires its presence in the others. Thus, employment promotion is systematically factored into every step and facet of crises. To that end, IFP/CRISIS builds partnerships and coalitions with both humanitarian and development organizations. Among others, it is currently working with the UN and other agencies to include employment indicators into their early-warning systems. An early ILO presence in emergencies is key to a successful, incisive intervention. It allows building and strengthening safety nets for vulnerable groups and, in particular, ensuring that the employment-related impact of crises is correctly grasped and addressed from the beginning, to avoid jeopardizing existing jobs and the prospect of creating new ones. For instance, if correctly handled, relief and other basic social services like camp building, immunization, hygiene awareness, food preparation and distribution can generate jobs for local construction, health, and other skilled and unskilled workers. Naturally, for maximum impact and sustainability, relief measures have to be linked to longer-term investment in production capacity and skills.

Crises’ immediate aftermath is also when programmes for reconstruction are being designed. It is thus an ideal time to promote consideration of relevant international labour standards as guiding principles and involvement of ILO constituents in crisis response; and generally to ensure that ILO values of decent work and ILO technical expertise play an important role in the reconstruction and longer-term development process. ILO participation since the humanitarian phase facilitates integrating the employment dimension in a comprehensive inter-agency strategy; and provides an opportunity to show the linkages between employment-related issues and the other dimensions of the problem.

IFP/CRISIS plants the seeds of development in the immediate aftermath of crises. Its short-run, relief interventions, institutions and processes are set up so they can lead to development; that is, so they can help leave societies better off than before the crisis.

This system would be based on ILO’s long-standing experience in monitoring social and economic phenomena linked to the world of work. It would help anticipate a crisis or at least help attenuate some of its negative consequences.

How does IFP/CRISIS intervene?

Emphasis on results and impact

Before the crisis ...

Early warning – IFP/CRISIS intervention in a given country may begin even before an emergency strikes. The Programme can help set up in that country an early warning system composed of a set of indicators apt to detect alarming socio-economic developments.
When the crisis strikes ...

Contingency plans – This is a preliminary step. Particularly in the case of major emergencies, IFP/CRISIS prepares itself to intervene since their very onset. It does so by sketching a contingency plan – that is, an ILO strategy spanning the immediate, medium and longer term, that includes the main technical fields and beneficiaries covered, collaboration with relevant national and international actors, based on readily available background information and experience. It then discusses and refines this plan with the relevant ILO technical departments and field structure, availing itself in particular of the Office-wide network of crisis focal points.

Needs assessment – The Rapid Needs Assessment mission is the real starting point for ILO direct intervention in a crisis. It can take place at any stage: before, during or after the crisis, depending mainly on the early warning system in place and data available. The main objectives of the assessment mission are: to secure a clear understanding of the range of factors – social, economic and environmental – contributing to vulnerability; to formulate programmes that help people and communities rebuild their livelihoods; and to find lasting solutions that uphold their rights and dignity. The mission first collects and analyses information on the general situation, including causes and impacts of the crisis, sectoral concerns, capacities and vulnerabilities of special target groups. Based on this, it then identifies the interventions most feasible and likely to make a difference (in line with national and local priorities, and ILO concerns and mandate); along with possible implementation modalities, including an identification of national and international partners and a division of labour among relevant ILO Units. Responsibility for mobilizing ILO response is shared between IFP/CRISIS, ILO field structures and technical departments; and the work is coordinated by IFP/CRISIS.

A Rapid Needs Assessment manual provides guidance to practitioners. It covers the planning and methodology of rapid assessment, information collection, the topics to be addressed in the rapid needs assessment mission (the general situation, capacity of constituents, partners and other relevant actors, major technical fields and special vulnerable groups), the relevant questions to be asked for each of them, and assessment reporting and follow-up.

Sketching response programmes – This phase consists of a detailed description of ILO intervention, including the objectives, direct and indirect beneficiaries, expected outputs, activities needed to produce them, and the main persons and institutions responsible for delivering them. Considerable attention is put into striking an equilibrium between making programmes realistic and meaningful so as not to disappoint beneficiaries – a particular danger in crisis contexts – and sustainability in the longer-term, that is, constituents’ capacity to support operations and their follow-up after the end of the programme itself and of external support. A third concern is weaving sufficient flexibility into its activities and their articulation, so they can be adapted to the ever-changing crisis context.
Resource mobilization – As operational interventions in crises may be complex and onerous, identifying donors and mobilizing their attention and resources is pivotal. This task presents two major challenges. One is convincing donors of the worthiness of investing in a crisis context, that is characterised by uncertainty of outcome. The other is explaining to relief-oriented donors, the importance of linking their short-term operations to sustainable development; and to development-oriented donors, the importance of establishing since the earliest stages of crises solid building blocks on which to construct stronger and better oriented development. The volume of IFP/CRISIS experience in crisis response (accessible through its documents and publications) and its network of strategic partnerships play a key role in resource mobilization.

Programme implementation – Large crisis response programmes may warrant a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA). But for these and all other interventions, ILO closely monitors developments, achievements and timing, to detect or even anticipate possible pitfalls or side-tracks, and formulate adjustments.

After the crisis ...

Preventing/alleviating future crises – If correctly analysed and integrated into relevant decision making, the lessons learned in a given crisis context can be most useful to avoid or alleviate future similar situations, in the same country and elsewhere. IFP/CRISIS can help in this analysis, as well as by disseminating worldwide its experience in any given country, type of crisis, technical area or target group.
The challenge of crises

At the turn of the XXI century ... Hurricane Mitch wiped out twenty years of national development efforts in Honduras and Nicaragua. Floods in Mozambique caused some 247 million dollars of lost production, 300,000 job losses, besides leaving 800 people dead or missing and 540,000 in need of emergency aid. The Asian economic crisis set back the achievements of decades in numerous East and South-East Asian countries. The transition to market economy in Central and Eastern Europe pushed unemployment from virtually zero to double digits within a few months. Conflicts in Sudan, Sierra Leone, Kosovo and Afghanistan, to name a few, were tearing apart the socio-economic fabric in those countries and their neighbouring ones.

Crisis present a formidable, multifaceted challenge. They:

- Cause enormous losses of human lives and disabilities.
- Destroy vital production assets, natural and human resources, commercial networks, and socio-economic infrastructure, including labour market institutions, thereby negating development and the capacity to earn decent livelihoods.
- Disperse families and communities, depriving their members of vital psychological, social and economic references and support mechanisms.
- Affect masses of people, particularly those already disadvantaged and dispossessed, such as refugees, the elderly, the disabled, the poorest, youth, children and women – the traditionally disadvantaged, expanding their numbers and deepening their destitution.
- Are often multiple. Wars, economic downturns, socio-political unrest, earthquakes and similar disasters tend to “attract” each other. Thus, crises combine two or more types, creating complex, intractable, long-lasting emergencies.
- Are appallingly numerous and increasing. Currently, about a third of states are in conflict, emerging from it or affected by one nearby. Severe disasters in the 1990s were 3.5 times as numerous as in the 1960s, and in 1999 alone the world was struck by some 700 of them.

The magnitude, pervasiveness, international repercussions and alarming upward trend of such human tragedies cannot be ignored by any country or agency concerned with development. In particular, the employment dimension of crises needs to be given greater importance. It is revealing that very few national and international media cover the job losses caused by crises or the rebuilding of livelihoods after them. This, in turn, limits the attention paid to these issues by national policy makers, international agencies and donors.
Yet, productive jobs constitute a powerful coping strategy. They give back to crisis victims not only income, but also dignity, self-confidence, and hope.

It is often wrongly assumed that reconstruction and subsequent economic growth will automatically create enough job opportunities. Jobs just do not happen by themselves. Job creation has to be a clear, ever-present target; it should be part of contingency and disaster preparedness plans, as well as the humanitarian and developmental phases of crises.

Crisis demand and receive special ILO attention.

Why ILO involvement? Decent work matters in crisis

ILO is a “people’s” organization. It promotes a culture of peace, tolerance, social justice and equitable development. Its work is intrinsically connected to human values, traditions and rights.

At the core of ILO mandate and action is Decent work; that is, promoting opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive employment in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Decent work integrates essential enabling rights that allow people to develop and enhance their capabilities to be productive and climb out of poverty.

Decent work’s link to crises is powerful and fourfold:

- Crisis constitute a major direct threat to chances for sufficient and good jobs, humane livelihoods, development and social progress.
- Decent work is the strong rope that can pull societies and individuals out of crises, and put them on a sustainable recovery and development path.
- Decent work can reverse the downward spiral linking poverty, vulnerability and crises, impacting positively all three.
- Crises create a window of opportunity for decent work. They are a time when past institutions and processes are disrupted, making way for new ones. They are a time when all relevant actors are mobilized and join forces for reconstruction and to lay the basis for a better future. This opens their minds to new values and approaches. Thus, crises provide a unique opportunity to reshape the socio-economic setting, the role of different actors, procedures and priorities, so they better reflect and help achieve the legitimate aspirations of individuals and societies to decent livelihoods and development.

In fact, the ultimate aim of ILO policy and action on crises goes well beyond prevention and reconstruction. It is to work with communities to help create a collective vision of the future and design new structures and processes enabling them to achieve higher, more equitable and durable standards of life and of human and social development.

ILO has a definite comparative advantage in crisis response. It rests on its extensive research work; and its long-standing first-hand experience in poverty reduction and most socio-economic technical areas relevant to crisis response, including core international labour standards, built through advisory work and operational interventions worldwide. The ILO also has proven capacity in programmes assisting the socio-economic reintegration of crisis-affected groups, and rebuilding of physical infrastructure and institutional capacity. Also crucial is its unique tripartite structure and emphasis on social exchanges, essential to promote dialogue, reconciliation, and to build consensus around socio-economic and other objectives.

ILO’s network of some 65 Offices worldwide, and its full programme on crises allow prompt and effective crisis responses.

What is IFP/CRISIS? In a nutshell.....

Since 1999, the ILO has a special InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS), dedicated to tackling the employment and related decent work challenges of crises.

IFP/CRISIS:

- Identifies appropriate early-warning indicators, to detect areas of potential strain where crisis is likely to erupt or be particularly harmful, capitalizing on ILO’s unique experience in monitoring socio-economic conditions.
- Assesses and helps reduce the immediate socio-economic adverse impact of emergencies, and defuse tension. It also helps tackle their causes, which often include social exclusion and poverty, lack of social protection and observance of fundamental rights, lack of social dialogue and democratic processes.
- Lays the foundations for crisis prevention, by promoting employment and creating the conditions for long-term reintegration, reconstruction, broad dialogue, economic growth and socio-political stability.
To that end, the Programme can mobilize and swiftly bring together in integrated action ILO technical expertise in a variety of technical fields relevant to crises: basic labour administration and employment services; skills training; labour market information; employment policy; local economic development; micro-finance; micro- and small-enterprise development, including cooperatives; labour-based technology; working conditions; fundamental rights and principles; social protection; the role of workers’ and employers’ organizations and ministries of labour in crises, as well as social dialogue in general; the gender dimension and concerns of vulnerable groups (people with disabilities, the elderly, youth, children, etc.).

**Which crises?**

IFP/CRISIS concentrates on four types of emergencies:

- **Armed conflicts**
- **Natural disasters**
- **Financial and economic downturns**
- **Difficult socio-political transitions.**

**How does IFP/CRISIS approach crises?**

The Programme has an integrated rapid response, based on:

- **Its core staff;**
- **An ILO crisis specialists network,** consisting of focal points in ILO technical departments and field Offices worldwide;
- **Joint work with ILO field structure and headquarters’ technical departments;**
- **A solid, continuously expanded and updated knowledge base, manuals and other tools** derived from it on the various types of crises, relevant technical areas and target groups;
- **A roster of external crisis consultants;**
- **Strategic partnerships and joint interventions with other international agencies** and institutions within and outside the UN system, NGOs, the private sector, research institutions and the media;
- **Full coordination with ILO national tripartite constituents,** including all relevant national departments and commissions responsible for reconstruction, workers’ and employers’ organizations, local communities and relevant civil society groups;
- **A Rapid Action Special Trust Fund,** along with innovative and lean procedures, allowing the mobilization and allocation of needed resources swiftly and appropriately, for maximum impact.
Core principles of IFP/CRISIS operations are:

- Local ownership, indispensable for ensuring both the appropriateness and sustainability of projects and programmes. All relevant national actors must be involved from the outset and throughout the emergency.

- Speed, flexibility and integrated work in field interventions, to match the peculiar nature of crises that involves unpredictability, abrupt change, complexity and uncertainty of duration and outcome.

- Gender sensitivity, and special focus on gender concerns, reflecting their critical importance in crisis. This dimension demands special care and continuous attention.

- ILO decent work principles, that are systematically incorporated from the earliest stages of interventions.

- Using crisis response to introduce positive change that advances social justice, equity and social inclusion; rather than re-establishing the *status quo ante*, which may have even caused or worsened the crisis itself.

- Ensuring linkage between relief and development – between short- and longer-term concerns and objectives.

For further information

- ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS)
  - 4, Route des Morillons CH-1211 Geneva 22 SWITZERLAND
  - +(41-22) 799-7069
  - +(41-22) 799-6189
  - E-mail: ifpcrisis@ilo.org
  - Web site: www.ilo.org/crisis

May 2003
Emergency public employment services

Linking up job seekers and new job opportunities, prompting job-intensive crisis aftermaths

THE CHALLENGE

Public Employment Services (PES) are important bridges between job seekers and employment opportunities. They become crucial in the aftermath of armed conflicts, natural disasters, financial and economic downturns, political and social transitions — when changes in labour supply and labour demand are larger, occur faster, in less predictable directions, and employment needs are pressing.

Employment issues arise as early as the humanitarian phase. Typically, masses of people may have lost their jobs and sources of livelihood, while others — demobilized soldiers, widows, refugees, etc. — may need to find income-generating activities for the first time. Many previous job opportunities may have disappeared (particularly in the formal sector), so self-employment options also need to be considered. At the same time, new tasks such as physical reconstruction, building temporary shelters, distribution of relief assistance and socio-economic reintegration services all require labour. Employment services become essential to:

- Register job seekers, and provide them with information and counselling (e.g. on self-employment);
- Register job vacancies;
- Match job seekers and vacancies (among others for large public works);
- Plan and manage special employment and training measures;
- Meet the needs of specific groups — women, youth, old persons, people with disabilities, ethnic and minority groups, etc., including non-discrimination in access to job opportunities;
- Conduct rapid assessments of local and national labour markets;
- Refer clients to training, social services and other employment-relevant programmes/institutions.
Yet, potential contributions of employment services are usually overlooked in crisis response. Temporary “offices” are sometimes set up by aid agencies, but usually to serve their specific needs of, for instance, recruiting labour to distribute food, or to register and process files of refugees or demobilized combatants. But these services are temporary and narrow in scope.

Some contexts may lack PES altogether; in others they may exist but be partly disorganized or ill-adapted to a post-crisis context, in terms of size or work approach.

Setting up effective and sustainable emergency PES requires various steps, each with its challenges. These range from sensitizing authorities, national and international crisis-response actors about the relevance of PES for their work, to obtaining their support and use of PES activities, along with their commitment to the survival and longer-term development of PES.

Emergency PES must establish their credibility. They need to show they are not bureaucracies, but dynamic, result-oriented services, viewing job seekers and employers as clients to whom they can provide valuable support.

ILO RESPONSE

The ILO In Focus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) has been piloting the introduction of temporary employment service centres, sometimes consisting of a tent where a small group of staff perform basic job-matching operations, which can be gradually transformed into more solid, larger and more permanent centres. These activities build on ILO long-standing work on PES and labour administration.

Emergency PES also constitute a window of opportunity to deliver, at the heart of crisis-response programmes, ILO core message of promoting more and better jobs, including the importance of employment-intensive reconstruction, of fair and transparent recruitment, and decent working conditions.

KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK

- Determining the type of emergency PES necessary, first requires assessing the extent and nature of existing facilities, and their adequacy for crisis response, so as to fill gaps and avoid duplication.
- Emergency PES should deliver services that are directly relevant to the post-crisis context – focusing on specific target groups, areas, services.
- Setting up a pilot emergency employment centre, with limited scope and functions, may be useful to show quick results – and thus gain credibility – while gaining experience.

Supporting peace consolidation processes through Employment Services in:

- **Sri Lanka** – by strengthening district Job Placement Centres in 2003-04, to help reintegrate ex-combatants, and ultimately benefit all job seekers. Well embedded into a broader reconstruction strategy, this work focuses on staff training in psychosocial needs identification and referral, vocational and training guidance and referral, job placement, business set up, market assessments and employment information.

- **Timor-Leste** – by establishing the first Employment Service Centre in 2000, that focussed to start with on quick response to vacancies for large projects. The Centre gradually developed a range of pamphlets, information kits and other tools to help job seekers identify and take advantage of job, self-employment and training opportunities, including job-search techniques, starting-your-business guides, micro-credit schemes and guidance on vocational courses available.

- **Sierra Leone** – by setting up a “pilot” Employment Information Service Centre in 2001, to provide job seekers with information and referral services related to self-employment and training opportunities, including a labour market information database with skills profiles of job seekers, details of skill shortages and information on training institutions. Emphasis was on assisting war-affected youth, and orienting them towards self-employment and informal sector activities.
If a small pilot employment centre is set up, its specific target-group work and other objectives should be achievable, and financial resources available, so as to avoid unrealistic expectations.

Emergency PES activities can widen over time, and should be planned to anticipate integration into the national labour administration system.

Emergency PES must be embedded into the overall crisis-response programme.

Staff should be carefully selected, trained and monitored to ensure that they view all job seekers and potential employers as clients, and thus provide them with effective and friendly services.

Emergency PES must be flexible and respond swiftly to emerging needs, including ad hoc servicing arrangements such as deploying staff to temporary/mobile registration centres, visiting groups of job seekers in camps and other locations, providing special information sessions to disadvantaged groups, or visiting employers on new large project sites.

Tight collaboration of emergency PES with key national and international crisis-response actors, including employers, their associations and the UN system, is essential to maximize impact. But it is also complex to achieve, warranting specific efforts to make PES services visible, recognized and used by them.

Donors, the UN and other crisis-response agencies and institutions need to help, by recruiting their staff in an orderly way.

Emergency PES need to be particularly pro-active and inventive to market their services via the appropriate media, publicity materials, special events, visits to large project sites and agencies, etc.

PES should complement and collaborate with private employment service agencies operating in sectors of the labour market, but they cannot be replaced by them, especially in times of crisis.

Any emergency PES needs ownership by a national counterpart (the Labour Ministry, where it exists) and a clear strategy since the start to ensure its full involvement, commitment, and responsibility to take over once the project period expires.

A memorandum of understanding should confirm arrangements among the parties – the sequence of steps, division of responsibilities, timeframe and expected outcome. This helps to avoid confusion and delays, monitor progress, and to ensure long-term sustainability.

Careful and realistic planning is needed to ensure that emergency PES have sufficient resources to achieve their potential and be sustainable; including commitment from donors and relevant national authorities.

Recognition of the importance of employment issues by authorities coordinating crisis response and other relevant national and international actors, greatly facilitates the work of emergency PES.

Meeting the needs of special groups of job seekers (displaced, old, disabled persons, youth, ex-combatants and women)

Special features of emergency PES (pro-active, flexible, visible, result- and client-oriented)

Core partnerships (with national authorities, employers’ and workers’ associations, NGOs, private Employment Services and international agencies)

Steps in setting up emergency PES (location, priorities, staff, work organization, etc.)

Details on day-to-day operations (including basic forms, other documents and tools used in PES)

Promoting longer-terms sustainability of PES operations
ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS

Heron, R.: Employment services – An introductory guide (Bangkok, ILO, 1999).


For further information

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  - 4, Route des Morillons CH-1211 Geneva 22 SWITZERLAND
  - +(41-22) 799-7069
  - +(41-22) 799-6189
  - E-mail: ifpcrisis@ilo.org
  - Web site: www.ilo.org/crisis

- Also see the ILO Employment Services Team:
  www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/skills/empserv
Employment and labour markets in crises

THE CHALLENGE

Conflicts, natural disasters, economic downturns and problematic socio-political transitions disrupt labour markets in many ways, particularly by:

- Weakening or destroying labour market institutions and hampering their functioning; for instance, public and private education and training institutions and employment offices may have ceased to exist or function, or may need considerable change to match post-crisis needs.

- Greatly modifying labour supply and demand, wages and other earnings; as in cases where the most skilled and capable workers leave the country, or there are large inflows of refugees.

- Severely reducing important prerequisites for an efficient labour market, such as the free flow of information among labour market actors; unhindered physical mobility of workers; non-discrimination (ethnicity-based, etc.); and equal access of both women and men to labour market opportunities.

Many individuals and families slip into poverty, through the loss of assets and jobs or shrinking market opportunities. Many engage in informal or even illegal activities, usually with poor remuneration and working conditions. The child labour market may thrive, due to growing poverty, coupled with lack of education and training opportunities.

Warfare and disasters in particular also create large numbers of physically and psychologically disabled, who face difficulties in becoming workers.

Problems relating to special groups like disabled persons, war widows, demobilized combatants and youth need specific attention.

The breakdown of governance, regulatory and policing institutions, that frequently accompanies crises, leads to a wide range of labour market abuses, including discrimination, harassment, forced labour and intolerable conditions of work, especially for women and children.

Rebuilding or restructuring labour markets may pose a range of challenges, from the time needed, to financial costs, logistics, availability of the relevant skills among labour-market actors, socio-political constraints (hindering for instance information flows), and authorities’ attention focused on other priorities. Employment growth is often still considered a consequence of reconstruction rather an essential, urgent component.

Jobs are key to pulling individuals and their communities out of crises and poverty. Thus, employment promotion must be central in all crisis work – from prevention, to the humanitarian, relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases, with a view to building bridges for longer-term, sustainable development.

A variety of crisis-related market uncertainties and constraints may hinder this work: international donors are reluctant to commit funds until normal conditions are restored; private investment, especially from abroad, is slow to return; purchasing power is low; infrastructure, destroyed; local markets, depressed; and the state, which may be the only credible actor, is often weak and near bankruptcy.
Employment and labour market stimulation also need “supportive” macro-economic policies – namely policies promoting economic expansion and a stable environment. This is a major challenge on many grounds. In Afghanistan, for example, the post-Taliban government faced an empty treasury and had to start building economic policy more or less from scratch. In several other countries emerging from crisis, economic policy options are constrained by the fragility of the ruling coalition of parties and groups, the heavy burden of past debt, and strict conditions that may be set by the Bretton Woods institutions and donors before external resources can flow in.

This calls for conscious efforts to refocus the attention of crisis relief and reconstruction agents at all levels towards employment-intensive interventions.

**ILO RESPONSE**

Demonstrating the key role of employment-intensive initiatives to tackle crises effectively, from prevention and preparedness, to humanitarian and reconstruction phases, is at the core of the ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS). It carries out this task through developing and disseminating a knowledge base on the matter, direct field interventions, as well as advisory work, training and advocacy.

ILO operates mainly in the following labour-market fields:

**Labour market information** – To find ways in which basic labour market information flows which may have been disrupted or never existed, can be set up and oriented to meet specific post-crisis needs – among others, evaluating the volume and type of job seekers and the skill needs of humanitarian and reconstruction operations.

**Employment services** – To help restore employment services damaged by crises, or reorient existing ones to post-crisis needs and make them pro-active and client-oriented. Cases of conflict and natural disasters often need the setting up of employment centres, usually in the capital city or major urban centres, providing key services such as basic job matching, information and referral, which vary according to the specific circumstances. Financial and economic crises and transition economies may require the revamping of existing services, in particular to stimulate client orientation, rapidity of response and to fit the needs of a market economy (See the Factsheet on “Emergency public employment services”).

**Labour-based reconstruction works** – To provide advice and guidelines, and to help design and implement such programmes at all post-crisis stages, based on ILO' 25-year experience in labour-based methodologies. The huge reconstruction effort following armed conflicts and natural disasters, for instance, offers many opportunities for massive job creation. Many jobs can be created immediately – to repair dwellings, petty commercial infrastructure, feeder roads and small-scale irrigation schemes, and to clear away debris prior to rebuilding. This can also help jump-start the local economy by increasing local purchasing power, restoring its links with neighbouring markets, and helping restart economic activities. Further, it can help reduce hostility and build solidarity and understanding among different groups at the local level, including between returnees and the “host” population, and among those supporting opposing sides (See the Factsheet on “Labour-based infrastructure reconstruction”).

**Livelihood-promotion programmes** – To provide income-generating opportunities to the poor and disadvantaged. Intervention areas range from support to micro-scale informal activities, through the provision of...
micro-credit (for instance the setting up of micro-credit groups among women), materials and marketing support; to guidance, training and support services for micro- and small-scale enterprise development, including cooperatives. This emphasis has proved most valuable in post-crisis contexts; both because wage employment is scanty, and micro-entrepreneurs can actually offer jobs to others (See the Factsheets on “Micro/small enterprises for socio-economic revival” and on “Cooperatives restoring livelihoods and communities”)

Training and retraining – To help rebuild training facilities and curricula (such as after a conflict), or redirect them (for instance, following sharp political and social transitions) to fit context-related emerging skill needs. The challenge has often been daunting, for instance satisfying the phenomenal training needs with scanty financial and human resources. This may require flexible and “informal” or “unorthodox” approaches. Indeed, investing in human capital remains the best investment to rebuild and pull out of poverty persons, communities and economies, thus achieving both immediate and longer-term development results (See the Factsheet on “Training for employability in crises”).

Vulnerable groups, affected by the crisis, such as ex-combatants and different categories of refugees and returning persons, receive special attention. The dual goal is to relieve their strong distress, while removing the hurdles that hamper their capacity and opportunity to be active participants in the rebuilding of their livelihoods, their communities and of peace.

ILO’s comparative advantage is the pool of technical knowledge and experience in its technical Units, some 65 Offices worldwide, and its network of consultants, which can be mobilized and coordinated to formulate and implement swift employment and labour market elements in crisis responses. This is coupled with ILO keenness to seek partnerships with national and international actors operating in crises, which allows important synergies, along with a mainstreaming of employment-related elements into broader crisis-tackling programmes, for maximum impact (See the Factsheet on “Strategic partnerships”).

KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK

- Employment is core at all stages of crisis response. It is an immediate as well as a development need. Thus job creation must be an integral part of both humanitarian and reconstruction response.
- Employment-intensive crisis responses provide simultaneously poverty relief, identity and self-worth to individuals, along with faith and a stake in the future of their community and its peaceful development.
- Labour market initiatives have limited impact if not supported by enabling macro-economic measures that create an environment of limited risk and expanding demand for goods and services, and provide incentives for economic actors to expand production and acquire skills.
- Several labour market instruments need to be activated more or less simultaneously and be well coordinated in an integrated package for maximum impact.
- Where crises create massive joblessness, destitution and depression, labour-intensive public works are particularly crucial for injecting purchasing power and a positive outlook and attitude.
- Public labour market initiatives, on training, employment services and labour-intensive works, are essential in post-crisis contexts, where national private business may be battered and international companies under “shock”. But public-private partnerships and division of labour should then be gradually established, to ensure effective and sustainable labour market services.
- Labour market initiatives need adaptation to a country’s post-crisis context. This requires, for instance, the setting up of training and other such services within a few weeks or months, rather than years.

In Timor-Leste, post-conflict reconstruction, that used heavy machinery and skilled labour, largely from abroad, did not immediately help the large numbers of jobless. It actually created some resentment among the locals against outsiders, who seemed to be getting most of the benefits of the donor-funded reconstruction investments.
ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS


For further information

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Gender in crisis response

CRISES
- Affect differently men and women
- Change gender roles
- Offer a window of opportunity to question gender stereotypes

THE CHALLENGE

Gender is a complex yet key dimension in effective crisis resolution, recovery and development.

Crisis affect men and women, boys and girls differently, given the different roles society ascribes them. The gendered division of labour in households and the economy makes most women less able to control resources and processes relevant to tackle crises, than most men. Also, men and women experience and respond to crises in different ways.

Women face multiple disadvantages in crises. For instance, in economic downturns they lose their jobs faster and in greater numbers, their small businesses are hard hit and their household entitlements decline. In natural disasters, women lacking land rights or farming small plots are most vulnerable and may be forced off the land entirely. Since land and labour arrangements are usually negotiated through men, women may lose access to both without a man representing them, as may happen after wars. In all crises women’s working conditions plummet. Their workload increases tremendously due to damaged infrastructure, housing and workplaces; the need to compensate for declining family income and social services; and to care for orphaned children, the elderly and the disabled. This also limits their mobility and time for income-generation. Demographic patterns and household structure change, particularly after conflicts, and women often become the sole providers and caregivers of the household. Education declines most for girls, due to tighter family budgets and increased demands on their time. Specially in socio-political transitions, women’s opportunities are further diminished by their declining political participation and the re-emergence of traditional patriarchal attitudes. Women are also prey to violence; linked to the deterioration of law and order, men’s stress that translates into sexual and other abuses, and mass rape being used as war weapon. Crisis-related hardships combine and compound old disadvantages.
Yet, women are also engines of recovery. They display resilience and resourcefulness in extreme conditions, self-reliance and willingness for proactive community work. They are typically society's last safety net.

**Crisis is a window of opportunity to break down gender barriers**

Women showing resilience and resourcefulness in extreme conditions, self-reliance and willingness for proactive community work.

**ILO RESPONSE**

ILO's InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFCP/CRISIS) is working on women’s empowerment and gender equality as necessary elements of crisis prevention, resolution, reconstruction and recovery:

- Enriching the knowledge base on gender and crises, via research and capitalization of experience.
- Strengthening the capacity of disaster-response bodies, ILO constituents – governments, employers and workers – and community groups, to address the gender dimension of crises, via training, guidelines for practice and technical cooperation programmes.
- Widely advocating a gender-sensitive paradigm shift in crisis intervention, among ILO constituents, partner organizations, donors, the media and the general public.

**KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK**

- Avoid trade-off between speed of action and gender considerations.
- Sensitize and train crisis practitioners on the gender dimensions of crises. Stress the importance of women workers’ rights and gender concerns in the reconstruction of societies, and building of sustainable peace and economic development.
- Hold a vigilant advocacy stance at all crisis stages, as gender awareness needs prompting.
- Fully grasp gender implications of crises, and the complexity of their dynamics (through gender analysis, disaggregated data, the capabilities and vulnerability matrix and community-based participatory methodologies), and reflect them in planning and programming.
- Monitor gender bias in access to services by men and women (gender-specific needs and traditional work patterns need to be recognized).
- Avoid viewing men’s and women’s roles in crises as adversarial, and present the advantages of women’s empowerment to men, families and communities.
- Use inclusive community-based approaches, as segregating women and men in crisis response can reinforce perceptions of women’s vulnerability and create gender conflict and competition.
- Take advantage of and assist positive gender role changes in crises and their long-term sustainability.
- Break down occupational segregation and give women job opportunities in all fields, including construction and other “male” jobs, independent work, etc. (through relevant technical and management training, credit schemes, etc.) and at all levels, especially supervision and management.

Pre-crisis unequal gender roles often change in crises, as women and men can step out of their socially ascribed roles in their coping strategies. Engaging in construction, mechanical and other “male” occupations, creating small enterprises, contributing to reconstruction discussions, acquiring more education while externally displaced, and having no traditional “male” and “female” roles in the absence of men, empower women in terms of economic independence, ability as family providers, decision-making and social position. Positive changes in gender roles need and deserve support. Women need sufficient and truly empowering recovery assistance.

Training provided to them should not revert to their traditional functions – sewing, cooking, etc. – but reflect opportunities in the emerging labour market and build on the changes that have occurred. Support should also target the increasing number of women working at home or in the informal economy in times of crises, often invisible. Women’s presence is needed in peace negotiations, planning and implementation of reconstruction and other recovery processes, decision-making structures and transitional governments. It helps develop a women-enabling economic, labour market and social and legal environment. Longer-term recovery should capitalize on those changes and avoid returning to pre-crisis or worse patterns so as to allow both women’s and men’s advancement, and reduce vulnerability to crises of both.

Negative side-effects of new gender roles need containing. In some instances, women’s assumption of male activities in agriculture resulted in increased domestic violence and divorce when their husbands returned from war.
Beware of and limit negative survival strategies or side-effects.

Lighten women’s burden of productive and reproductive work – restoring community support structures, establishing special family support networks, and voluntary social protection schemes.

Strengthen and build on the work of existing women’s groups (working women’s associations, environmental groups, grass-root advocacy organizations, female-dominated NGOs, etc.).

Include women and men equally in reconstruction planning, implementing and monitoring bodies and discussions, to ensure that their strategic interests are represented and familiarize them and society with their full participation in decision-making.

“We want work. Give us work!”
Asks a woman survivor in earthquake-stricken Gujarat

“Multiskilling” women in post-earthquake reconstruction, Gujarat (India)
Following the 2001 major earthquake, ILO and the Self-Employment Women Association (SEWA) jointly set up a pilot project for 10 villages, mainly targeting women artisans. Its focus is training in handicraft and other income-generating initiatives, in shelter reconstruction adopting labour-intensive techniques for earthquake-resistant construction, and in routine maintenance and repair work. It includes a model for women’s participation in negotiations defining shelter and other community needs. The project emphasizes multiple skill building, to provide occupational diversification as a major instrument of risk reduction. This empowering approach helps women take on multiple roles in society.

Providing women with “male” skills to rebuild flooded communities, Chokwe (Mozambique)
A recent ILO pilot project to counter the disastrous effects of the Mozambican floods in 2000 had women representing 87 per cent of beneficiaries. It focused on rehabilitating local market places, support to small animal breeding, training in the use and maintenance of motor-pumps and the making and repairing of agricultural tools, and training on sustainable local development and elaboration of local projects. This gave women the opportunity to take on new activities and roles.

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ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS


THE CHALLENGE

Armed conflicts leave behind large numbers of combatants, from the army, rebel and para-military groups, who pose serious threats to society and the peace process. One of the most urgent tasks in immediate post-conflict situations is their Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) into civilian life. This is vital to ensure a true, lasting peace.

For rebels and regular soldiers alike, peace and demobilization often mean immediate loss of income and status, for them and their families. Thus, they must rapidly receive assistance to make the transition from military to civilian life, and in particular to find jobs, allowing them to earn a decent livelihood and place in their community.

Socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants poses substantial challenges:

- Massive numbers of ex-combatants may be demobilized, often within very short periods;
- Their experiences, skills and competencies often have little relevance in civilian society;
- The traumatic experiences and military life in general may translate into violent or passive attitudes, lack of independent thinking and initiative, drug or alcohol abuse, etc.;
- Social tensions may be heightened in war-torn societies by the violence and losses experienced;
- While some societies view ex-combatants as heroes deserving rewards, others criminalize them;
- War-affected societies that should absorb masses of ex-combatants often suffer from extensive poverty, unemployment and weakened societal, community and family structures and cohesion;
- Ex-combatants are not a homogeneous group and call for tailor-made assistance to specific groups such as female combatants, combatants from ethnic and other minorities, child soldiers and combatants with disabilities;
- The labour market of war-affected countries is often not able to absorb more job seekers.

These features make it particularly hard and complex for governments to swiftly devise and implement appropriate reintegration strategies.
**ILO RESPONSE**

The ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) has developed recognized expertise in the socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants. It is indeed well placed to help ensure that issues of employment, social integration, social equity, and wide civil society participation are integral parts of reintegration efforts. In particular, ILO assists countries by providing:

- Operational assistance worldwide, building on experiences in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, etc.;
- Special programmes and tools for vulnerable ex-combatants requiring particular attention such as combatants with disabilities, youth, children, and female combatants;
- Studies and advice on relevant technical fields such as training, labour market, employment-intensive public works, micro-enterprise development, employment services and micro-finance;
- A practical manual on training and employment options for ex-combatants, affording practitioners step-by-step guidance;
- A training package, to help government officials and other relevant actors formulate, develop and implement effective national reintegration strategies;
- Inputs to conferences, workshops, university and training programmes on economic reintegration;
- Advocacy on international conventions, such as ILO Convention No.182 on the worst forms of child labour, which includes forced recruitment of children into combat. (See the Factsheet on “Reintegrating child soldiers”).

**Training workshop in ex-combatant reintegration**

A new ILO training tool has been developed and tested. A one-week technical training workshop, already delivered in Cameroon, Kosovo and Zimbabwe, provides 15-25 participants – government officials and other relevant key players – knowledge and tools, lessons from other countries and exercises, on formulating a reintegration strategy. It is based on a modular ILO training package, easily adaptable to country specificities. This package comprises Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration – three related elements of one process. The ILO is only involved in the latter, but delivers the whole package with partner organizations, such as the Pearson International Peacekeeping Centre and other UN agencies. Separate workshops can be organized in non-government controlled areas, to help create a common language and understanding of reintegration.

**ILO Field Initiatives**

- A strategy and programme in Sri Lanka to begin reintegrating ex-combatants who have already left the army, building national capacity for the major challenge of Disarming, Demobilizing and Reintegrating some 200,000 combatants in the near future.
- A Training for Peace component in Afghanistan, using community-based training, for the multi-agency Afghan Demobilization and Reintegration Programme.
- A prevention and socio-economic reintegration programme for child soldiers in the African Great Lakes, covering Rwanda, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Congo, using a regional strategy to address the complexity of children crossing borders.
- Active partnership in the Multi-Donor Reintegration Programme for seven African countries, coordinated by the World Bank, aimed at assisting governments develop and implement their own national reintegration programmes.
KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK

- National institutions in charge of DDR often lack capacity for effective handling of the complex process of socio-economic reintegration through job promotion.

- The above, combined with the sudden need to reintegrate large numbers of combatants rapidly, may cause delays, lack of funds, and ad-hoc decision making that endanger this delicate process.

- Capacities building of governments, national organizations and service providers should start as early as possible, preferably before the final peace agreement is reached.

- DDR should be treated as one process, as the nature of disarmament and demobilization determine the character of the reintegration strategy.

- Reintegration programmes should closely reflect country specificities, such as the roots of the conflict, past and current economic potential, socio-cultural factors, gender relations, the overall national reconciliation process and reconstruction strategy, the various war-affected groups, existing self-help initiatives, as well as its institutional framework.

- Ex-combatant socio-economic reintegration is a long-term process. Realism and close monitoring of programmes are essential to ensure effectiveness and sustainability.

- Budgeting should not be based on the number of ex-combatants, but on society’s needs to be able to absorb them.

- A good grasp of the profile of ex-combatants is necessary to identify groups needing special assistance, such as child-soldiers, combatants with disabilities or those psychologically traumatized, female ex-combatants, old ex-combatants and ex-combatants from minority groups.

- Focusing on ex-combatants alone to the exclusion of other conflict-affected groups can heighten tensions in society. If such targeting is necessary, sustainable capacities need to be built during the DDR programme to ensure that service providers can also serve other groups.

- Equal coverage of demobilized government soldiers and guerrillas is indispensable.

- Ex-combatants should be treated not merely as social cases but as serious job seekers, and stimulated to engage in productive economic activities.

- In-kind assistance, rather than cash payments, is more effective for sustainable reintegration.

- Vocational training should be based on real demands in the market and labour market.

- Ex-combatants need continued support, particularly after skills training and business start-up.

- Socio-economic reintegration is a long-term process, requiring considerable investment of time, hence a phased approach is desirable.

- “Careful” and “realistic” planning is essential, to match the complexity of the reintegration process, compounded by a usually poor and unstable economic, social and political situation.
ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS

- ILO: ILO and conflict-affected people and countries (Geneva, 1997).

For further information

- ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS)
  - 4, Route des Morillons
  - CH-1211 Geneva 22
  - SWITZERLAND
  - + (41-22) 799-7069
  - + (41-22) 799-6189
  - E-mail: ifpcrisis@ilo.org
  - Web site: www.ilo.org/crisis
A knowledge base to take crises

Crisis practitioners face the double challenge of tackling extreme, complex events that involve simultaneously a host of needs, for a variety of groups, in a context of collapsing institutions, social references, and of continuous changes; and having to act in urgency. It is essential for them to have readily available tools providing appropriate, user-friendly guidance. The ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) has been developing such tools through its research programme.

IFP/CRISIS has built a valuable knowledge base, which it reviews, updates and expands continuously. Its research aims at:

- **deepening understanding** of the causes of crises, crisis repercussions on key employment-related issues, and the requirements of different types of crises in terms of those same issues;
- **providing practical guidelines** about the instruments and processes necessary to tackle those needs. The Programme’s operational work is also analysed systematically, to extract lessons and best practices.

The core issues researched in recent years include employment-promotion initiatives, with a special emphasis on skills training, local economic development, the role of workers’ and employers’ organizations, the gender dimensions of crises, HIV/AIDS, ex-combatants and the disabled (see the Factsheet on selected reading materials).
A worldwide research network

As the Programme alone cannot handle all its research needs, it establishes close links with prominent researchers and research institutions.

To that end, it has set up an International Network of Experts, which can be called upon to conduct research or lend support on various aspects of crises. This worldwide network now counts some 30 persons and institutions, and keeps expanding. In 2000 the Programme held its first expert consultation, gathering over 20 experts from all continents. It identified and prioritized research needs for the immediate future and the longer term (see next page), and outlined modalities of collaboration.

Knowledge dissemination

The Programme attaches considerable importance to making the results of its analytical work and operational experience readily available to crisis practitioners and researchers.

Results are put out as:

**Manuals** – Providing step-by-step guidance in various technical areas relevant to crisis, like vocational training; as well as in modes of intervention, such as rapid needs assessment; and in how to tackle the needs of women, ex-combatants, youth and other disadvantaged groups deserving special attention. These ready-made standard packages are designed flexibly and pragmatically, so they may answer the specific needs of very diverse crisis contexts and levels of development, and steer rapid response.

**Books, articles, working papers, documents** – Presenting the results of policy-oriented and action-oriented research on a given aspect of crises, such as the political situation, ethnic and cultural diversity, programming and implementation at the different stages of crises, management and monitoring structures; or on a specific type of crisis, vulnerable group, technical area of intervention. A number of them review the experience gained in a specific country or emergency.

A separate Factsheet provides the full list of reference materials available.
Current research priorities

IFP/CRISIS research efforts are now focussing on:

- Rapid assessment methodologies to measure the employment-related impact of crises;
- Coping and survival strategies of individuals and communities in crisis contexts;
- Early warning and rapid response mechanisms, and how local communities can contribute to early warning systems;
- Factors prolonging armed conflict; incentives and disincentives for war and peace among different groups, including political leaders, combatants and civil society;
- Gender concerns in crises;
- Vulnerable groups’ specific employment, poverty and other socio-economic challenges in crisis contexts (including child combatants, refugees, internally displaced persons, people with disabilities), with special attention to gender dimensions;
- Private sector’s possible role in contributing to crises or helping alleviate them;
- How to best use ILO’s tripartite and social dialogue approach to engage community participation in post-crisis programmes: peace building, dispute prevention and resolution, developing joint visions for the future, etc.;
- Role of major external factors, such as globalization, in triggering or aggravating crises;
- Opportunities, even in devastating crises, that may spur social, economic and political transformation;
- Response mechanisms in natural disasters.

IFP/CRISIS is keen to collaborate and establish partnerships on these and other research items.


THE CHALLENGE

The aftermath of armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergencies is characterized by a massive, impelling need for income generation. This need is linked to the vast movements of people, including returned refugees and internally displaced persons seeking a livelihood and surviving on meagre relief donations in the interim, and the swelling of groups with special needs, such as ex-combatants, the disabled and women heads of households, whose safety nets have collapsed.

This occurs in an environment of seriously damaged physical, economic and social infrastructure.

In most conflicts, for instance, physical infrastructure is a prime target for damage and destruction, as opposing forces aim at roads, bridges, railways, energy supplies and communication systems to isolate the enemy. Schools, health facilities, drinking water supplies, irrigation systems and other public or private infrastructure are also damaged or destroyed.

Labour-based reconstruction can generate jobs and income quickly while rebuilding basic infrastructure. It is also an important bridge between those immediate needs and longer-term reconstruction and development. Maintenance is easier, cheaper, and creates further jobs. Moreover, labour-based methods develop a variety of technical and other skills, including in planning, negotiation and decision-making, thus empowering individuals and communities. Finally, they “build peace”, as working together to achieve a common goal creates social cohesion.
ILO RESPONSE

The InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) is using ILO’s 25-year acknowledged leadership and experience in labour-based works. ILO interventions in over 30 countries have shown the merits and enormous scope of this approach in crises.

Assistance ranges from manuals and other publications providing guidance on technical and project-management, to technical advisory and capacity-building services for planning and implementing different types of employment-intensive infrastructure (roads, irrigation, drainage, soil conservation, water supply, slum upgrading, for instance), to direct operational activities.

Crisis situations are not “business as usual”. They require quick and timely responses to urgent, large-scale needs. The time pressure is particularly difficult to handle. ILO’s long experience in this specialized field can help tackle this challenge without compromising the quality of the work.

Interventions concentrate on demonstration, replicability, and the acceptance of an employment-intensive investment approach by authorities, donors and other stakeholders.

Leading principles in ILO’s labour-based approach are:

- **Local level planning and prioritizing of works.**
- **Sound, international engineering standards** – Avoid “make-work” projects that neglect quality and costs for the sake of quick distribution of cash or food. Among others, while labour is the principal resource, other resources such as basic equipment can also be used in appropriate measures to ensure competitive and quality results.
- **Quality employment** – Ensure respect of basic working conditions and standards, including a healthy and safe work environment, non-discrimination against women, prohibition of child and forced labour and workers’ participation. Emergency is no excuse for unfair, unfit conditions which could, moreover, create or worsen tensions.
- **Local ownership** – Require commitment from central and local authorities and use a community-based approach, to ensure maintenance, further development and replication.

Most advantages of labour-based reconstruction are crucial in crises.

For instance, where daily wage of unskilled workers in rural areas is below US $, it:

- achieves similar engineering standards as equipment-based works
- is generally 10-50 per cent cheaper
- generates up to 20 times more direct job opportunities (with typically 50 per cent of investment going to wages, as opposed to 5-10 per cent in equipment-based works)
- produces a multiplier effect, adding 1-2 more jobs to each one directly generated (for instance through the wages spent locally that activate the local economy)
- stimulates entrepreneurship by encouraging local contractors
- facilitates long-term additional employment in agriculture and related activities through functioning irrigation systems, access roads and other assets
- allows large savings of foreign exchange by limiting imports of equipment, spare parts, fuel, etc.

One Direct Job ➔ Two Indirect Jobs

Building market places .... a stimulus to local economy
Selected ILO labour-based works in crisis-affected countries – some achievements

Uganda
In 1988, at the end of the civil war in Uganda, the ILO initiated labour-based activities in the Luwero Triangle, a fertile area greatly affected by warfare. Important roads for agriculture were rehabilitated, 2,100 acres of farmland were brought back into production, classrooms were built, tree nurseries established, 40 villages got access to drinking water, and local economic development was supported by a revolving fund for micro-financing of agriculture-related activities.

Mozambique
Since 1989, the Feeder Roads Programme is helping Mozambique improve access to rural areas, rehabilitating over 2,400 km of rural roads. In 1997, for instance, work was carried out by 29 locally-managed brigades, each with 50-250 workers. It employed some 6,500 workers, 20 per cent of them women. This programme is now being privatized.

Cambodia
Since 1992, the Labour-Based Rural Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project in post-conflict Cambodia has provided local workers with over 4 million paid workdays (50 per cent of which for women) and trained hundreds of managers, private contractors and government staff. It rehabilitated over 600 kilometres of rural roads, 80 bridges, 450 culvert crossings and 25 irrigation watergates. It also cleared and made accessible the 1,200 years old Angkor Wat, the world’s largest temple complex on UNESCO’s World Cultural Heritage list, thereby promoting tourism. This was complemented by twin-projects for vocational training, small-business and local economic development.

KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK

- Labour-based technology (labour and equipment) should not be confused with labour-intensive methods (labour with hand tools and no equipment).
- Labour-based work methods do not “happen” by themselves. Optimizing labour in the construction sector requires intensive lobbying and advisory support.
- Inter-agency coordination is indispensable to achieve maximum synergy, but also to avoid inadequate or even contradictory priorities and decisions. This requires identifying national and international institutions and organizations, including donors, involved in infrastructure rehabilitation and employment, and defining respective roles and responsibilities from the outset of ILO involvement.
- Creating an enabling environment for consensus among all key national and international stakeholders on the fundamental issues is essential.
- Employment-intensive methods are most efficient where unskilled labour costs are below 4 US $ a day.
- Integrated approaches work best, including in particular training of infrastructure technicians, contractors, etc. (for future maintenance and continued infrastructure rehabilitation and development), small-business development and participatory management.
- Local ownership of the completed work ensures sustainability; therefore, community-based rather than public works should be favoured.
- Wages should be sufficiently attractive, cover the basic needs of workers and their families, and allow some savings. This also helps ensure workers’ productivity and low absenteeism. However, they should not be so high as to endanger financial sustainability or divert workers from other activities.
- Payment of wages should be made in cash and/or in kind, at short, regular intervals, and directly to the worker regardless of gender.
- ILO involvement ensures the promotion of “Decent Work” practices.
- Careful planning is essential; it involves identification of the infrastructure and the rehabilitation method (bearing in the mind the needs and wishes of potential beneficiaries, in terms of employment/income as well as the economic, social and institutional framework – land ownership, availability of human and physical resources, cultural and social acceptance of procedures and work set-ups), target group participation, appropriate technical standards and environmental precautions. Schemes should be technically, financially and socially feasible.
National policies supporting employment-intensive investment are a prerequisite for sustainable job creation. They should include their approval by technical ministries and high-level decision-making bodies as the preferred means for reconstruction and assistance to crisis-affected groups; support for employment-intensive construction and maintenance national programmes over the long term; careful designation of target groups; commitment to use local workers and resources; decentralization of implementation responsibility; participation of communities in investment and maintenance.

Day-to-day monitoring and regular reviews involving all key stakeholders need to be organized to check efficiency, effectiveness and impact. Support and reviews should continue well after the project end, to ensure sustainability and wider and improved use of employment-intensive reconstruction methods.

**ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS**


For further information

- ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS)
  
  4, Route des Morillons
  
  CH-1211 Geneva 22
  
  SWITZERLAND

  +(41-22) 799-7069
  
  +(41-22) 799-6189
  
  E-mail: ifpcrisis@ilo.org
  
  Web site: www.ilo.org/crisis

- Also see the ILO Employment-Intensive Investment Programme: www.ilo.org/eiip
THE CHALLENGE

Armed conflicts and natural disasters in particular can inflict tremendous losses to physical and human resource assets of localities.

Damage to establishments, machinery, energy supplies and financial and marketing services may block production. Damage to trains, harbours, roads and other means of communication facilities and networks may cut off a whole area from suppliers and customers. Disrupted media, telephone and post office services prevent national and international communication, at a time when local economies and communities need links with the surrounding environment the most. For instance, cooperation between banks and entrepreneurs is based on good communication, and no financial institution will risk granting credit if it cannot gather information about the activity and reliability of a business. Cooperation among enterprises, particularly desirable to recover competitiveness in crisis aftermaths, may be hindered for similar reasons.

Loss of part of the local labour force leads to gaps in production-sale chains, technical knowledge, entrepreneurial know-how (such as production techniques, personal contacts, networks with suppliers and customers). Individuals and communities may be weakened and divided by discouragement, distrust and animosity.

Local Economic Development (LED) seeks to rebuild and “reengineer” the local economy and society by means of consensus-based action involving their different (public and private) agents. It seeks to promote local business capacity, stimulate innovative aptitudes in the territory; and achieve that by using endogenous resources in a well integrated approach.

Among the many advantages of LED are:

- community’s knowledge of its local actors (firms, financial bodies, authorities, etc.) and potential;
- dialogue and interaction among local actors, made easier by proximity and a common history, which facilitates understanding and partnerships;
- a common frame within which locals define common interests and priorities to tackle common problems;
- an enabling and positive ground for economic and social reconstruction;
- a bottom-up strategy that does not rely heavily on central authorities and instruments, which may be few, resourceless, crisis-stricken themselves, difficult to reach and sensitize to local needs, or slow.

Further, joint work and dialogue around the common goal of rebuilding livelihoods boost self-esteem, hope, trust, exchanges and collaboration – core elements for long-term peace and development.
ILO RESPONSE

The ILO has used LED strategies in post-conflict operations since the early 1990s, to promote peace and reconciliation and boost employment opportunities. Its approach combines different ILO tools and methodologies in areas such as business promotion, employability enhancement, social finance schemes, promotion of employment-friendly investments, social dialogue principles and techniques. All elements are refined and repackaged to adapt them to the sensitive and fragile post-crisis scenarios, stimulate a local socio-economic dialogue and revival process, and incorporate active networking and partnership practices.

Early examples were the ILO component of the PRODERE Programme in Central America (1989-96) and the ACLEDA Project in Cambodia (1992-95) (see the Factsheet on "(Re)integrating refugees and IDPs*). Recent ones include Former Yugoslavia, Haiti, Angola, Tajikistan, Djibouti and Somalia.

The InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) works closely with the ILO/LED Programme, to develop instruments, as well as crisis response interventions such as in Mozambique, El Salvador, Sri Lanka, Argentina, Somalia and Peru.

ILO practice has allowed identifying a sequence of Key steps in the LED process:

1. **Territorial diagnosis** – Rapid assessment of urgent problems and measures to tackle them, collection and analysis of socio-economic information, and institutional mapping;

2. **Sensitizing** – Broad awareness-raising of the issues that impact the socio-economic development of the territory and instilling ownership in the LED process;

3. **Promoting a Forum** – Developing a gathering of all public and private stakeholders, as a catalytic hub to share their views on LED priorities, improve understanding of particular policy or technical areas, bottlenecks, potential, identify workable solutions through joint planning and ventures, identify and mobilize local resources, suggest synergies, formulate a LED strategy, build consensus around it and its components, coordinate, monitor and evaluate its implementation;

4. **Designing a LED strategy** – Preparation of a central, reference document on which interventions are based and progress is measured;

5. **Establishing coordination/implementation structures** – Setting up institutional mechanisms to coordinate and keep the momentum of recovery efforts, within the LED strategy framework, such as a Local Economic Development Agency (LEDA), if needed;

6. **Actions** – Translate LED strategy priorities into actions in core areas such as business services, including (micro-) finance, training, planning, special groups, environmental awareness, investment attraction.

**KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK**

- LED needs to rest since the beginning on representative actors – local and national authorities, producers, workers, relevant grass-root organizations and service providers, including NGOs – and balanced partnership among them. Flaws in one or both requirements endanger the success and sustainability of the process or can crystallize the dominance of one group over the rest. In these cases, it is preferable to undertake activities aimed at remedying the main flaws before launching the Forum.

- Trust, partnership and coordination among local stakeholders, indispensable in LED processes, may be hard to achieve in post-crisis contexts, particularly when stakeholders represent factions that were opposed during the crisis. In such cases, LED also needs small, specific, “entry” activities to help build bridges between institutions and organizations, and send clear messages about LED principles, strategy and work organization.
Financial sustainability of the LED process requires relying as much as possible on existing local stakeholders. Setting up new, large technical units should be limited to covering functions needed to ensure the cohesion, coordination and efficiency of associates.

To obtain social legitimacy, LED must support the economic activities of an extended number of actors, including the most vulnerable.

The LED strategy should also achieve qualitative change and generate a process of economic development in the area targeted, building on the area’s comparative advantages, promoting “economic clusters”, identifying strategic investments and attracting external investors.

Institutionalization of the LED process is key and urgent to guarantee its sustainability. The LED Forum is an important first step. It should decide among others, on the need for a LEDA.

A LEDA is needed only in the absence of the basic support services for business development, to fill those gaps. A new institution could be avoided if stakeholders can recognize an existing one as the legitimate leader for the LED process, or when a well-balanced network of the various stakeholders could self-coordinate and achieve a proper distribution of tasks.

Thus far, this programme has provided over 7 million US $ of credits to small farmers and entrepreneurs, technical and business assistance to some 3,500 small businesses. It has established a LEDA in all four regions, and involved seven business support centres and four national banks in its activities.

PROMOTING LED, FOR PEACE AND RECONCILIATION IN CROATIA

Croatia’s path to peace in the late 1990s was fraught with critical challenges, such as creating job opportunities in local communities, towns and cities for youth, returned refugees and displaced persons; meeting the framework conditions for integration into the European Union; and establishing a niche for Croatian products in the global market.

In 1997, the ILO associated with UNOPS and UNDP to assume technical leadership of a comprehensive programme of support to a LED process in four war-torn regions of Croatia – Sibenik-Knin, Badovina, Western and Eastern Slavonia, aimed at economic revival and reconciliation. The technical areas selected included institution-building, reinforcement of local capacities and creation of a Guarantee Fund.

This ILO guide is conceived to answer the following questions:

**Why**... can LED be an effective answer to the complex challenges in post-crisis situations?

**What**... actions to take for an integrated approach to relief and economic development?

**How**... to implement LED in practice? (including an extensive toolkit of questionnaires, checklists, case-studies, slides, examples and contacts)

**Who**...should promote, guide and participate in LED initiatives and carry out specific tasks in post-crisis contexts?
ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS


ILO: “Economic Rights and Opportunities”, in UNOPS: Rehabilitation and social sustainability operational guide (Geneva, UNOPS/RESS Division, 2000), Chapter IV.


Lidenthal, R., Nielsen, D. and Vidal, A. (Eds.): Strategies for Local Economic Development within the framework of sustainable human development: Inputs to capacity building (Turin, ILO/ITC-ILO, UN Staff College Project, 1996).


For further information

- ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS)
  - 4, Route des Morillons CH-1211 Geneva 22 SWITZERLAND
  - +(41-22) 799-7069
  - +(41-22) 799-6189
  - E-mail: ifpcrisis@ilo.org
  - Web site: www.ilo.org/crisis

- Also see the ILO Programme on Local Economic Development: www.ilo.org/led
Micro and small enterprises can “jump start” individuals, economies, communities and peace

THE CHALLENGE

Micro- and small enterprises (MSEs) are pulling economic and employment growth worldwide, but they fit especially well in post-crisis contexts. They can spark off socio-economic revival, as they need little to operate, but can contribute much. They:

- Work with minimum, simple and inexpensive equipment and inputs, often available locally;
- Use limited space;
- Operate with basic technical and management skills;
- Adapt swiftly;
- Repair or replace infrastructure and equipment;
- Produce basic tools for agriculture, manufacturing, construction, etc.;
- Fabricate basic goods and deliver basic services needed by crisis-affected populations;
- Create quickly self-employment and jobs, much needed by the innumerable job seekers in post-crisis contexts, which large firms still existing cannot absorb;
- Provide opportunities to groups that did not have access to the labour market;
- Constitute a means of reintegration for specific groups, such as ex-combatants, giving them employment and dignity, and helping them establish links with society.

But crisis contexts are fraught with challenges for entrepreneurship:

- Destruction of infrastructure, production facilities, equipment and stocks of inputs;
- Loss or displacement of skilled labour;
- Limited market demand, linked to limited purchasing power;
- Interruption of electricity and other public services;
- Reduced investment capacity, as crisis hardships may have wiped out savings;
- Restricted movement of people and goods, due to damaged transportation networks and equipment, and political/administrative constraints;
- Disruption of financial, marketing and other business support services;
- Communication difficulties, hampering exchanges of information, coordination and collaboration among enterprises;
- Disorganization of business networks and associations;
- Uncertainty, that discourages investment and makes it harder to plan activities;
- Lack of security of persons, goods and facilities, exposed to attacks and looting;
- A society that is weak and divided by discouragement, distrust, animosity between individuals and groups;

The challenge is twofold: encouraging and helping MSE start-ups, and ensuring their viability in such contexts.
ILO RESPONSE

Virtually all ILO crisis responses include support to MSEs, both to provide jobs swiftly and to revive affected economies and societies. ILO can count on its extensive work and direct experience on MSEs and the informal sector, including in crisis-affected areas; for instance in the late 1990s it facilitated the peaceful resettlement in Crimea of Tartars and other populations deported in World War II, through Business Development Centres, special business support services for women and a revolving loan fund, and using a multi-sectoral, multi-ethnic and participatory approach; in South Africa, it participated in the 1990s in the Small Enterprise and Human Development Programme, to create jobs for the most disadvantaged (mainly poor youth and women and unemployed persons in low- or no-income households) as part of the reconciliation process; in El Salvador, it helped in the aftermath of a major earthquake in 2001 that destroyed innumerable MSEs located in dwellings, by using inflows of investment for reconstruction to re-launch local micro-enterprises that could provide the construction goods and services needed.

The InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) collaborates with ILO enterprise specialists, particularly from the InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development (IFP/SEED) and from field Offices.

The mix of instruments, and delivery, are tailor-made to the context. They include support to:

- Existing and potential micro- and small entrepreneurs, mainly through Business Development Services (BDS), training and consultancy on how to establish a business, technical and management skills, information on business opportunities and technology, and access to credit;
- Entrepreneurial associations;
- Authorities, so they may create an enabling environment – MSE-friendly legislation, regulations, policies, and specific support programmes.

KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK

- Planning for MSE development should start with careful assessment of the context – the level of relevant destruction/ disruption; security; policies and regulations; the nature, scope and magnitude of business opportunities; accessible inputs; human resources available; number of people who wish and have potential to start their own business or develop their existing one.
- Careful evaluation of potential beneficiaries’ present skills (education, technical, entrepreneurial), motivation and determination to be entrepreneurs is essential, for screening, orientation, and identifying the type of support needed. Crisis-related traumas need to be factored in – aggression, passivity, easy discouragement, over-confidence.
- Clarification of what entrepreneurship means and of realistic market opportunities of specific activities can help avoid misconceptions (e.g. expectation of becoming “the boss”).
- A phased approach is often necessary given the need to act quickly, starting with basic training and start-up kits (much valued in contexts of destitution), then developing more comprehensive support – on suppliers, technology, marketing, credit, problem-solving – to facilitate survival and expansion.

Creating enterprises for peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina

The mid-1990s civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina caused immense material and socio-psychological ravages, created new frontiers, complex political/administrative structures, and “ethnification” of relationships, which constrained enterprise- and job-creation.

Starting in 1997, ILO helped set up Enterprise Development Agencies in five critical areas, delivering services to strengthen entrepreneurs’ productivity and competitiveness, and assist start-ups. Impact evaluations for Banja Luka and Bihac indicate that in the first three years these centres helped set up 100 businesses, directly creating some 500 new jobs. The centre in Livno is also assisting demobilized soldiers start their own business, and advising them on how to invest the governmental funds they receive for reintegration.

The project aided new business associations too, such as an interethnic women’s association around Livno generating income opportunities for women, many of whom were war-widows.
Training must be adapted to local needs, capacities and potential – for instance supplementing existing packages with information on local resources, examples of successful small businesses, local regulations and crisis-related risk factors, and using local resources and training techniques.

Radio programmes are ideal for spreading business news, as they can reach remote areas swiftly, despite damaged/dangerous lines of communication.

Weaving a socio-economic fabric in Palestine through MSEs

This 1997-99 ILO project strengthened artisans and small entrepreneurs, through BDS to firms, and to Chambers of Commerce as delivery institutions. Small Enterprise Development Units (SEDUs) were developed in four Chambers – in Gaza, Hebron, Nablus and Bethlehem, focusing on marble and stone, textiles and garment and shoes. Their staff was trained through courses, international experience and on-the-job.

SEDUs worked with some 200 firms, which received training and advisory services by sector specialists from Italy. Assistance included international linkages, most valuable in preparing for the free market and global competition. Small firms benefited directly, or indirectly via middle-size firms which increased sub-contracting to them. SEDUs adapted to specific needs – in Hebron, where entrepreneurs lacked experience with credit, they focused on feasibility studies; while they emphasized marketing in Gaza, to combat isolation. Their flexibility also allowed expanding into other activities and technical areas in demand – total quality management, marketing and export, business planning, etc.

SEDU services were found useful and much needed. They directly created some 800 new jobs in those two-years; raising interest and drawing similar requests from other Middle East countries.

Packages of services should include access to credit, as crises may have wiped out savings, collaterals, disrupted the banking system, and credits may be inaccessible to those needing it the most – the poor, youth, women, etc. Traditional local saving and lending systems – village banks, solidarity revolving funds – may be worth reviving.

BDS should not exclude larger enterprises, which may be complementary (although small entrepreneurs need specific modules in training and other services); small enterprises set up by target groups with others whose skills and assets can facilitate success; and should support entrepreneurship in rural areas.

Women need careful targeting, as they face greater difficulty (linked to socio-cultural patterns) in mobility, in accessing credit, training, information on business opportunities, support programmes, networks of businesspersons, suppliers and markets, and may lack control over income and profits.

MSE programmes should use existing institutions that provide BDS – government agencies, NGOs, entrepreneur and target-group associations (building up their capacity, if necessary) rather than setting up new ones. Various agencies usually need to be involved, given the complexity/multiplicity of tasks.

Where government is too weak or lacks trust, it may be useful to set up independent business-promotion institutions, and involve government progressively.

BDS delivery mechanisms must be of good quality, professional and practical to use, among others because their sustainability requires that services can be sold to clients; as consultancy to entrepreneurs or executing donor programmes.

MSE programmes should help create an enabling environment for small enterprises: favourable policies/regulations on interest rates, taxation, licensing, registration, etc.

Small entrepreneurs’ affiliation to their own business associations, or those of larger entrepreneurs, should be encouraged. The latter need sensitization to their interest in admitting among them and supporting small entrepreneurs – to expand markets, sources of supply, gain fees from new members and services, etc.; and to the need to be member-oriented and offer services relevant to members.

Main stakeholders – existing entrepreneurs, training institutions, government agencies, service/support institutions, community and target-group leaders, international actors – should be involved at all stages of MSE programmes. This allows obtaining information quickly, overcoming communication difficulties and distrust, reaching the informal economy, allowing swift reaction, and developing partnerships.

Partnerships with complementary labour market institutions such as employment services and training institutions, increase the outreach of MSE programmes.

Linkages with other crisis-response activities – Local Economic Development, infrastructure reconstruction, etc. create valuable synergies: selling them goods and services, using their facilities, etc.
Protracted support is necessary to improve enterprise survival chances, particularly given the crisis context and needs of the disadvantaged groups targeted. Besides, time is needed by business associations to become effective; by BDS to build up a reputation, create demand for their services, uncover markets; and by entrepreneurs to build ties with other enterprises/enterprise networks.

Monitoring/evaluation is essential, to allow corrections/reorientations linked to target group specificities and context changes – insecurity, inaccessibility of markets or supplies, population movements, changing institutions and rules. It should use multiple indicators: for physical achievement (number of trainers or potential entrepreneurs trained); technical results (material developed for sensitizing and training); financial progress (disbursements); and effectiveness (number of MSEs established, survival rate). This also helps design further support services and replicate the programme elsewhere.

ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS

- ILO: Crisis-affected peoples and countries (Geneva, 2001)
- ILO: Improve your business, Manual (Geneva, 1999)
- ILO: Guidelines for employment and skills training in conflict-affected countries (Geneva, 1998)
- ILO: Know about business, Training package (Turin, 1997)
- ILO: Manual on training and employment options for ex-combatants (Geneva, 1997)
- ILO: ILO and conflict-affected peoples and countries (Geneva, 1997)
Most disabled persons can and want to be part of reconstruction, if only given appropriate support and opportunities.

THE CHALLENGE

Crises are critical contexts for disabled persons: for those women, men, youth and children who already have a disability, as well as for those who become disabled as a result of crises. Both require special assistance to survive, recover and lead a decent life.

For the first group, the issue is how to ensure their safety and protection. This requires advance planning, down to the community level, to identify where individuals with disabilities live, the nature of their disability – mobility, sensory (sight or hearing), intellectual or psychiatric – and the type of special assistance each might require in the crises most likely to occur. For example, persons using wheelchairs or visually impaired may need help to evacuate their homes or offices, deaf persons may need assistance in sign language or in writing about what to do in an emergency, and those intellectually disabled may need special attention and reassurance in times of crisis. More generally, emergencies may deprive disabled persons of vital connections to attendants, family members, neighbours, and of the possibility to follow customary routines.

Emergency workers, including police, fire fighters, Red Cross personnel, etc. need specific training in providing the special assistance required. Most communities have agencies and associations already providing services or representing the interests of people with disabilities, which can help design crisis response plans and training.

Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods and storms may swell the ranks of the disabled. Similarly, armed conflicts and terrorist acts leave behind large numbers of injured civilians as well as combatants. Estimates about disabled ex-combatants alone in the early 1990s war between Ethiopia and Eritrea reached 18,000 and 45,000, respectively. The violent nature of many current conflicts and war tactics that deliberately target civilians, cause massive physical and mental injuries. Thousands of people are disabled directly, by land mines, man-caused mutilations, chemical agents, etc. All need urgent access first to medical care and medical rehabilitation services, including orthopaedic services and the provision of technical aids and devices (artificial limbs, wheelchairs, etc.).
Others are also disabled by crisis-related factors such as contaminated water, exposure to drugs and alcohol, and the breakdown of the medical infrastructure. Reduced health care often occurs just when these services are most needed. In addition, many people experience disabling terror and trauma as a result of living in deep and often protracted fear: fear of death, abduction, rape, torture of oneself and of family members. Memories of atrocities perpetrated in Cambodia, Sierra Leone, Lebanon, Guatemala, Former-Yugoslavia, for example, are still painfully vivid. Other disabling fears relate to loss of homes and livelihoods, social identity and social references, bringing hopelessness and despair. This reduces the chances of earning a decent livelihood, being self-reliant, productive, and contributes to growing poverty and marginalization.

Yet, experience proves that appropriate support allows disabled persons to become productive members of their communities. Indeed, most can and want to earn a living.

Perhaps the greatest challenge facing persons disabled by armed conflict in particular, is their social and economic integration following medical care. Participation in programmes for non-disabled persons is often possible and desirable to ensure integration. Some special programmes may nonetheless be required to provide adapted vocational skills, jobs or support for self-employment. Particular attention must focus on the specific training and related needs of disabled persons, including technical aids and devices that allow them to become socio-economically active and fully integrated in their communities. Among the hurdles that need tackling are disabled persons’ limited access to information and transportation and, particularly in cases of very long crises such as a protracted war, the little basic education and skills of some.

### ILO RESPONSE

The ILO and its InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) have focused particularly on disabled ex-combatants in a number of countries, including Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia, Palestine and Zimbabwe. Projects in these countries have assisted governments, agencies, local NGOs and organizations of persons with disabilities to provide vocational skills training, mostly in mainstream vocational training centres but also in special rehabilitation centres. In some cases, programmes are combined with counselling and rehabilitation, particularly critical for those more severely disabled or suffering deep psychological trauma. Whenever possible, projects seize the opportunity of infrastructure rebuilding to encourage making physical structures more accessible to disabled persons, for instance through construction plans to accommodate ramps, wider doors and other mechanisms permitting maximum access to labour market opportunities.

Technical assistance for all persons with disabilities is based on ILO’s 20 and more years of experience in this field. It concentrates on vocational rehabilitation and employment creation, the building of self-reliance, self-esteem and income-generation capacity.

### KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK

1. **Advance planning and specific training to ensure safety and protection of persons with disabilities should be part of all standard disaster preparedness efforts.** This includes identifying those who may have special needs, customizing awareness and preparedness messages and materials for special groups, providing disabled persons realistic expectations of service in an emergency.

2. **Communication is the lifeline in emergencies, particularly for disabled persons, many of whom may be unemployed, socially and physically isolated from society.**

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**Preparing disabled ex-combattants for reintegration in Namibia**

During the war for Independence led by the South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO), the ILO collaborated with the Government of Zambia to assist SWAPO in implementing two successive projects (1982-87 and 1987-91) for its disabled former freedom fighters, exiled and left idle in refugee camps in Zambia. It provided a mix of services, from basic education and English language instruction to orthopaedic and other medical care, vocational rehabilitation, skills training and job placement.

Some 240 SWAPO disabled ex-combattants received training in 14 vocational trades in 10 mainstream Zambian institutions, before returning to Namibia in 1990 upon independence.
Crisis-response programmes should include the special measures and resources that people with disabilities need to rebuild their lives, families and communities.

People with disabilities are not a homogeneous group.

Whenever possible, existing medical facilities should be used and expanded, if necessary, for the provision of services to persons disabled by crisis, rather than building costly, specialized, dedicated facilities which may no longer be needed once the emergency is over.

Many disabled ex-combatants and civilians can take advantage of the same programmes, services and benefits made available to non-disabled conflict victims, and should be specifically included when post-conflict programmes are designed and implemented.

National training policies should envisage vocational training for crisis-related disabled persons and standard practices to provide, wherever possible, this training alongside their non-disabled peers.

Specific programmes or services may be required for special groups of disabled persons, such as blind or deaf persons.

Specific measures should ensure access for women and girls with disabilities to skills acquisition and income-earning opportunities, as they often face additional barriers linked to cultural constraints and family responsibilities.

Helping disabled civilians and ex-combatants return to their communities and a sustainable livelihood as soon as possible following medical treatment, is essential to avoid developing dependency and reintegration difficulties. Thus, the priority is to provide early skills training, matching skills provided with those demanded in the community.

Reintegration programmes should provide for the inclusion of disabled persons or members of their families in general employment-creation programmes (in agriculture, labour-intensive works, micro and small enterprise development, etc.), as well as through special measures.

Self-employment is often the best option in post-crisis contexts, for both women and men with disabilities; and small enterprise development programmes should specifically include and provide support for them.

Planning and implementation of general demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants should provide specifically for including disabled ex-combatants in each phase: encampment, transition and reintegration/resettlement.

Disabled people’s organizations should be supported and empowered, as they know best the needs of persons with disabilities, and how best to meet them.

Clear division of labour and coordination of action among the relevant actors (ministries and administrative agencies, NGOs, associations of disabled persons, international actors, etc.) is imperative for effective intervention.

Collection and dissemination of information about successful examples of training and reintegration of people with similar impairments is important to boost confidence (among disabled persons, but also their families, communities, implementing agents and donors), as well as to overcome the widespread belief that disabled persons cannot work or be productive.
ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS


For further information

- ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS)

  - 4, Route des Morillons CH-1211 Geneva 22 SWITZERLAND
  - +(41-22) 799-7069
  - +(41-22) 799-6189
  - E-mail: ifpcrisis@ilo.org
  - Web site: www.ilo.org/crisis

- Also see the ILO Programme on Disability:
  www.ilo.org/skills/disability

May 2003
(Re) integrating refugees and IDPs

Restoring socio-economic roots, dignity and hope to refugees, internally displaced persons, and their communities through decent livelihoods

THE CHALLENGE

Over 12 million refugees and 25 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) are scattered in some 50 countries worldwide. Wars, especially civil wars, and natural disasters, cause large-scale displacements, whose size and suddenness can be stunning.

Displaced persons usually suffer from family break-up, loss of family members, family and community references, as well as psychological and physical traumas. Besides, they often lose savings and means of earning a living, and face problems of adapting to new situations and cultural settings. Those on the road or living in camps, particularly the women among them, face further dangers such as human rights abuses.

Refugees cross borders owing to insecurity in their communities and persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, origin, political opinion, or to escape natural disasters. IDPs flee for the same reasons but remain within their country. They are harder to trace, because they do not cross borders and because waves of internal population movements may have occurred at various times and for various reasons; and often get less international recognition than refugees. Both refugees and IDPs need to be distinguished from (internal and external) migrants, who move in search of job opportunities and poverty relief; although after a while they too may need livelihood opportunities.

There is usually an expectation that refugees and IDPs will return to their area of origin. Therefore, programmes to attend to their needs – short-term humanitarian assistance and socio-economic support – are based on this assumption. Sometimes host communities may restrain the efforts refugees make to become economically active out of fear that they would prolong their stay.
Those living among the population of the receiving country or area often take advantage of available facilities and work opportunities, and upon return bring with them capital and perhaps new skills to their areas of origin.

Refugee camps are more constraining, although they offer opportunities too. Idle time, limited space and breaches in socio-cultural routines and patterns – particularly concerning gender distribution of socio-economic roles – can open the door for training, including literacy and numeracy instruction, skills and entrepreneurship training, and access to traditionally inaccessible economic activities; thus offering prospects of better living standards on return for them and their communities. Men and women are often resourceful and imaginative in organizing and proposing economic activities, that deserve support.

Humanitarian aid, training and work opportunities need to ensure equity in treatment of the different crisis-affected groups, as people in the receiving country or area may have needs no less urgent than those of refugees and IDPs, which if left unattended could cause animosity against displaced persons. Similarly, communication and exchanges between the latter and their hosts should be encouraged.

## ILO RESPONSE

ILO links short-term aid to longer-term investment in human and productive resources, by:

> Targeting individuals, but also the organizations representing them and their communities; by building up their capacity to organize themselves, identify and plan priorities, and negotiate with national authorities and international aid agencies.

> Lending technical assistance in the immediate context of exile and displacement, while developing technical, entrepreneurial, organizational, programme-planning and negotiation skills that would help refugees and IDPs when they return home in rebuilding their lives and communities;

The 1990s also saw ILO help resettling in Cambodia, where 770,000 persons had fled their communities during the tragic Khmer Rouge era and subsequent fighting. Its large, composite programme, ACLEDA, focused on the North-Western provinces where the displaced were concentrated. It used an integrated approach consisting of labour-based infrastructure rehabilitation, including the Angkor Temple Park restoration, small enterprise and informal sector promotion, and vocational training for employment. Over the decade, the nature of the programme evolved from emergency to rehabilitation, to development, becoming finally the main element of the Government's Royal Rural Development Programme.

Building peace and societies through displaced persons

In the 1990s, ILO participated in the major UN inter-agency programme PRODERE, for IDPs, refugees and returnees in six Central American countries; aimed at supporting the peace process in that region through the reintegration of displaced persons into their communities. The Programme had a well integrated approach in terms of beneficiaries, since activities were open to various vulnerable groups; and also in terms of fields and actors involved. It achieved valuable synergies among key fields – health, education, employment, human rights, regional planning, infrastructure, environment protection – within a strategy for sustainable development that was jointly conceived by major community organizations, public and private institutions and five international agencies – UNDP, UNOPS, UNHCR, WHO, ILO.

ILO concentrated on the credit and Local Economic Development Agency components and related training. These channelled funds from donors to small enterprises and cooperatives, reaching some 95,000 men and women. This approach also stimulated the emergence of local entities and spaces of dialogue and consensus among social sectors that had been antagonists for decades.

The 1995 Global Social Summit in Copenhagen approved it as a model for international interventions on displaced populations. ILO used it more recently in Former Yugoslavia – Croatia and Bosnia –, combining enterprise and entrepreneurship development, strengthening of skills training institutions, creation of associations and business clubs as well as support to municipalities, thus catering to thousands of refugees and their communities.
KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK

Programmes targeting refugees and IDPs must address their specific needs, but be part of larger packages open to other groups in the same area who also face difficulties. They work particularly well when they are part of a local development initiative, aimed at assisting the whole community and developing dialogue and cooperation among its members.

Women refugees or IDPs who are heads of households are particularly vulnerable and deserve special attention.

Programmes for IDPs, and even more those for refugees, must envisage their return to their area of origin. If return is expected within a year, skills development should focus on the kinds of work they could get there. If early return is unlikely, training should relate to opportunities in the host area.

Training must be linked to employability, and small-business creation to product marketability; both require prior information on these issues.

Socio-economic data on customs, values, norms and skill profiles of displaced persons are also indispensable to propose appropriate and acceptable support, and should be an integral component of the data usually gathered by UNHCR.

Training and small-business creation must be immediately relevant, so as to overcome displaced persons’ sense of a short-term horizon which could diminish their interest in such activities.

In the case of longer-term stays, governments and other interest groups need to be persuaded that refugees and IDPs without work who are left idle can cause problems to host communities but that, if given a chance to be productive, they can enrich them. It is useful to plan some forms of integration of refugees into the national economy.

If employment is not feasible outside camps, small-business opportunities should be developed within them. This is vital for combating a psychology of dependence on handouts and stimulating self-worth and productive socio-economic relations.

The economic activities promoted must be useful and viable. They should target basic needs – food, clothing, shelter, possibly be interlinked so as to support one another, use already existing skills (as there may be little time for full training), reflect market absorption capacity and the availability of raw materials and other inputs.

Selecting the specific skills-development and income-generation activities to be supported and their organization and support modalities needs close consultation with the target groups.

International procurement should avoid “competing” with the possible in-camp production of basic need items (e.g. soap and sleeping mats), which are the most potentially viable small businesses.

Developing income-generation activities demands a particular approach, as refugee and IDP camps constitute artificial “communities”. They are often temporary, largely separated from the outside world, with few or no social ties and structures to support community-based action.

Refugees, IDPs and aid agencies may have conflicting objectives that need reconciling. Thus, projects to reduce aid dependency require that beneficiaries at least partly forgo...
secure subsistence, for livelihood-earning activities involving some risk and taking place in an uncertain context. Dialogue and mutual trust are indispensable, but need time to develop and can be quickly destroyed.

- Particularly in camps, the approach needs to be very pragmatic and flexible, ready to be corrected or adjusted to changing circumstances.

- Sustainability requires building up national and local capacity, in terms of structures and skills to look after the needs of displaced persons. This includes strengthening the latter’s own organizations so that they may make informed decisions, and supporting members either directly or by lobbying with the relevant agencies. This critical element should be integrated into project design. After the emergency phase, sacrificing capacity-building of the community for quick results puts a project’s sustainability at stake.

- The ILO approach, that builds bridges between short- and longer-term concerns, among others through developing self-reliance, is a good complement to UNHCR and other relevant agencies, which tend to focus on immediate needs and seek to exit once the emergency is over.

**ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS**


- Revilla, V.: Critical review of ILO participation in the development programme for displaced persons, refugees and repatriated persons in Central America PRODERE (San José, ILO, 1993).

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**For further information**

- ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS)
  - 4, Route des Morillons
  - CH-1211 Geneva 22
  - SWITZERLAND
  - +(41-22) 799-7069
  - +(41-22) 799-6189
  - E-mail: ifpcrisis@ilo.org
  - Web site: www.ilo.org/crisis
Social dialogue is the strongest cement to (re)build crisis-resistant economies and societies

THE CHALLENGE

“… legitimate, independent and democratic organizations of workers and employers, engaging in dialogue and collective bargaining, bring a tradition of social peace, based on free negotiations and accommodation of conflicting interests”

Resolution concerning tripartism and social dialogue, adopted by the International Labour Conference, June 2002

Social dialogue includes all types of negotiations, consultations and exchanges of information among representatives of governments, employers and workers, on socio-economic issues of common interest.

The essence of social dialogue is addressing broad socio-economic concerns, democracy, transparency, exchanges, creating consensus, mobilizing resources and goodwill. All of them are key to defuse the risks of crises and, should crises occur, to attenuate their impact, rebuild countries and communities, and put them on a progressive, equitable and peaceful development path. In crisis contexts, social dialogue:

- **Gives a voice to society** – Channelling societal needs and expectations peacefully and constructively; detecting problem areas in time and helping address them swiftly;
- **Provides knowledge** – Bringing together the protagonists of the world of work, a core dimension for individuals and communities (that affords income, dignity, identity, social ties, growth and a future);
- **Promotes dialogue** – Facilitating transparency, constructive exchange and reconciliation;
- **Gives legitimacy** – Reinforcing a sense of ownership of and identification with ruling institutions;
- **Builds trust** – Helping restore confidence in ruling institutions, so society may consent sacrifices and efforts with the assurance that they are necessary and equitably distributed;

InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction

Recovery and Reconstruction Department
Yearly Consultative Meeting on Crisis Response

Every year, IFP/CRISIS, jointly with ACT/EMP and ACTRAV, organizes a tripartite consultation with delegates attending the International Labour Conference. This event is an opportunity for ILO constituents involved in crisis response to:

- Reflect on their activities and approaches
- Exchange experiences
- Review the impact of crisis-response mechanisms in different contexts
- Examine how to tackle decent work deficits in crisis contexts
- Consider how to improve the effectiveness of ILO strategies on crises

IFP/CRISIS considers it a unique chance to refine its strategy and programmes through participants’ vivid insights and recommendations.

Develops consensus – Narrowing divergences, defusing resistance, helping find mutually agreeable priorities for recovery and reconstruction;

Facilitates solutions – Finding acceptable outcomes and obtaining broad commitment to implement them;

Musters up energy – Pulling together and focusing the strength, ideas, goodwill and sense of community needed to match the formidable challenges of crises.

Complementary to this is employers’ and workers’ social responsibility, in particular ensuring that their behaviour does not increase tensions and that it helps defuse existing ones. They should clearly avoid discrimination, for instance; but also develop pro-active mechanisms to detect and defuse internal tensions, and others needed by specific crisis contexts: counselling and referral, security, transportation and housing support, flexy-time and flexy-place options, etc. This also boosts their image as peace-builders and credible interlocutors in crisis management.

Examples of the decisive role of social partners in crisis management abound worldwide: from South Africa, where tripartism helped quicken and smoothen transition from apartheid towards a modern, progressive society, to Central and Eastern Europe, where social partners were often the engine of transition towards democracy. In Korea (and other Asian countries), the crippling effects of the 1997-98 economic crisis were tightly linked to weak systems of social protection, themselves linked to weak labour and institutions for tripartite consultation. The setting up of a Tripartite Commission and signing of a Tripartite Social Accord early in the crisis was the basis of a strong response to contain its social costs. The Commission was later institutionalized, in recognition of its role. Thus, crises may constitute opportunities to strengthen social dialogue. The most recent example is in Argentina.

At the local level, social dialogue encompasses other expressions of civil society, including grass-root organizations, NGOs, local authorities, that enrich the social environment for reconstruction and reconciliation. Thus social dialogue becomes pivotal in local economic recovery strategies (through active involvement of employers’, workers’ and other civil society representatives in Local Economic Development fora and agencies); as it was in the 1980s-1990s in Central America, that was stricken by protracted conflicts and severe natural disasters.

Yet much remains to be done, often in those countries most affected by crises. Outstanding areas are:

- Government support to social dialogue, its mechanisms, actors and needs – including a safe and civil environment, legal and institutional frameworks, access to information
- Strong, independent workers’ and employers’ organizations
- The right to freedom of association and collective bargaining
- Reciprocal recognition and respect among all three parties
- Will and commitment of all three parties to engage in social dialogue
- Technical skills and dialogue capacity of employers’ organizations and trade unions
- Symmetric capacity and strength of employers and trade unions.

ILO RESPONSE

Tripartism and social dialogue are “ILO’s bedrock”, providing it a unique comparative advantage in devising crisis response and prevention actions articulated around them. Since its inception, in 1919, ILO has conducted considerable analytical and operational work, and produced important results, experiences and lessons, which it now uses to help:

- create an enabling environment – labour legislation, etc.
partners and representatives of civil society hosted a gathering of and particularly active in recent years in building economic crises in
workers' representatives to take part in national ILO often intervenes more directly:
response possibilities. ILO often intervenes more directly:
courage and preparing employers' and workers' representatives to take part in national crisis-response programmes, such as those set up to tackle the serious and repeated economic crises in Latin American countries during the 1970s and 1980s. It has been particularly active in recent years in building social dialogue in South Asia, Central Africa and Central and Eastern Europe. In 2000, it hosted a gathering of Colombian social partners and representatives of civil society that developed a peace-building agenda, and helped in its follow up.
Interventions of the ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) are strongly anchored in tripartism: relevant ILO Units – the InFocus Programme on Social Dialogue (IFP/DIALOGUE), the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) – are involved since the start, and the social partners of concerned countries are associated in them. Interventions also usually include social-dialogue elements, that strengthen results.

KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK

- Tripartite dialogue is essential at all stages, in all fora/institutions, and on all subjects of crisis prevention and response.
- Establishing social dialogue should take place before a crisis, both to try to avoid the crisis, and because it is more effective in crisis response (as it takes time to develop mechanisms, processes, capacities, and in particular a dialogue “culture”).
- Establishing social dialogue mechanisms and processes during a crisis is still possible and beneficial. It can also lead to appreciating their value, and institutionalizing and reinforcing them later.
- Institutionalization of social dialogue, through well established fora and processes, ensures commitment and stability to it.
- Strengthening social dialogue requires a conscious effort to ensure that there is a basic enabling environment, and robust, independent, responsible and constructive workers' and employers' organizations operating in it.
- Social partners' analytical and negotiation skills should include those areas particularly relevant for the types of crises most likely in their country and community.
- Social partners should be encouraged to broaden and deepen their organizational base throughout society, including in the informal economy, to give it fuller representativeness and effectiveness, and thus strengthen dialogue results.
- Involving a wide range of civil society bodies, especially at grass-root level, can provide important complements to social dialogue processes – new information, experiences, ideas, viewpoints – among these bodies, representatives of specific groups, sectors, communities and NGOs.

Four types of crises, four continents, one common approach: Social Dialogue

- **Tripartite planning to tackle drought in Southern Africa** – In 2003, IFP/CRISIS supported ILO field structure in a tripartite workshop to develop a sub-regional strategy as a response to the severe drought that is afflicting wide areas of Lesotho, Mali, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and is causing considerable job losses and destitution in an already vulnerable and crisis-affected sub-region. While focusing on employment-related initiatives, ILO took the opportunity to reinforce social partners so they can make valuable contributions in that recovery strategy.

- **Strengthening social partners for peace building in Palestine** – Extensive ILO capacity building is underway to enable Palestinian employers and workers to participate fully in government decisions and operations, and thus facilitate recovery, democratization and peace building. Among others, a Business Advocacy, Training and Service Unit was established in the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture; and a workers education project is ongoing in the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions.

- **Helping Serbian tripartite constituents ease transition to market economy and democracy** – In 2001, ILO launched an initiative to enable its constituents to resume their dialogue after some 10 years of authoritarian rule, international embargo and war. It included a first workshop, to sensitize all three partners to the key role of social dialogue in building consensus on socio-economic matters; a high-level tripartite conference, to identify obstacles to social dialogue and formulate remedies; the re-launching of a tripartite Social-Economic Council; and assistance to strengthen it and the social partners so they can play a meaningful role in its debates and in consolidating social peace.

- **Rebuilding Argentina's economy and society through social dialogue** – ILO mobilized to help Argentina recover from the economic and financial crisis that exploded in December 2001, and brought to the surface society's distance from and distrust of authorities. The Government, supported by the Catholic Church and the UN, organized swiftly a forum for Argentina dialogue gathering some 100 actors – employers, workers, and civil society organizations. An ILO response group, coordinated by IFP/CRISIS, lent technical support to one of its three dialogue groups, on Social, Labour and Production, and helped identify and launch work in emergency employment programmes, social protection and social dialogue. On the latter, ILO is to help develop institutional and technical capacity, support decentralization of dialogue, and revitalize Argentina’s tripartite Social and Economic Council.
Social dialogue should reach local levels, where organizations may be in direct contact with populations affected by a crisis, and may be easier to identify and support in recovery programmes.

The scope of social dialogue should be broadened, where it is limited to workplace issues.

The assistance and support of employers’ and workers’ organizations from other countries can strengthen and accelerate capacity building. Contacts within regions in particular can help develop approaches fitting both the types of crisis most frequent in a region, and the region’s socio-economic and cultural specificities.

Social dialogue and its crisis management role need to be recognized and supported by international players in crisis response and prevention.

**ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS**


Date-Bah, E. (ed.): Jobs after war: A critical challenge in the peace and reconstruction puzzle (Geneva, ILO, 2003)


**For further information**

- ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS)
  
  4, Route des Morillons
  CH-1211 Geneva 22
  SWITZERLAND
  
  +41-22) 799-7069
  +41-22) 799-6189
  E-mail: ifpcrisis@ilo.org
  Web site: www.ilo.org/crisis

- Also see the ILO
  - Bureau for Employers’ Activities (ACT/EMP): www.ilo.org/actemp
  - InFocus Programme on Social Dialogue (IFP/DIALOGUE):
    www.ilo.org/dialogue
  - Bureau for Workers’ Activities (ACTRAV): www.ilo.org/actrav

May 2003
Social protection against crisis vulnerability

**THE CHALLENGE**

Crises can leave individuals and societies destitute through unemployment, inflation, destruction of socio-economic infrastructures and assets, deteriorating safety and working conditions, public spending cuts, disruption of family and community support networks. Hardships could be more limited, recovery swifter and surer, and certain crises avoided, with social protection providing basic income and health security. Further, social protection reduces social exclusion and tensions; and is a trampoline for recovery, offering physical and mental strength, dignity, stimulating trust, a feeling of "belonging", a long-term outlook and will to invest in it.

Yet, over half of the world labour force still has no reasonable social protection. In low-income countries, only 10-15 per cent enjoys statutory social security, and in middle-income ones, 20-50 per cent. Many countries lack proper monitoring of working and employment conditions, which are often neither safe nor healthy. Discrimination against workers – HIV positive, migrants, women – is widespread. This compounds in crises, when the entire social protection system is also at risk, as social security contributions, tax revenues and overall governance levels can drop substantially.

The late 1990s economic crisis that swept through Asia after decades of high growth, was sudden, swift, deep, widespread and protracted. It caused much misery and imperilled socio-political stability. In Thailand, Indonesia and Korea, the worst hit, open unemployment rates multiplied two- to threefold, and poverty jumped by some 20 per cent. Its severity and social impact were seriously aggravated by lack of meaningful social protection.

Social protection is also crucial to consolidate peace after conflicts, particularly access to medical care, safety and health, basic resources and social (re)integration, both for civilians and non-civilians. Mechanisms may exist prior to conflict, but need adaptation to the changed needs of beneficiaries and new vulnerable groups – refugees, disabled persons, orphans, widows, etc.; to the disruption of social protection delivery structures, including banks and postal service; the decrease in value of benefits and funds; new forms of ownership in medical and social services; dismantlement of social services due to lack of financial resources, war destruction or ideological reasons; disruption in social dialogue due to changes in the credibility or availability of past social partners; and authorities’ lack of experience in new or more widespread needs – acute poverty, massive unemployment. Countries in socio-political transition too need considerable adaptation of social protection structures to the new set up, including general and sector-specific Occupational Safety and Health (OSH).

In violent crises, many recovery and reconstruction activities, such as caring for the sick, injured and violence victims, demolition, repair or reconstruction of buildings and infrastructure, expose workers to serious hazards. The volume of work is phenomenal; tasks may be highly dangerous – involving asbestos and other fibres and dusts, chemicals, radiation, undetonated explosives; the time,
Reintegrating returning migrants in South-East Asia

A side effect of the early 1990s Gulf war was the abrupt expulsion or escape of hundreds of over a million of migrants.

ILO eased the reintegration of some 100,000 returning to Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Services ranged from monitoring reintegration, to setting up registration centres; helping establish claims for compensation; organizing training for men and women seeking wage jobs or starting a small enterprise; and trauma counselling for women victims of abuses during Kuwait occupation. This was complemented by institutional strengthening; developing services and national migration authorities’ capacity to insure worker protection throughout their migration period, including return and reintegration. Most services are still ongoing and benefiting new migrants.

financial resources, protection equipment and trained persons are limited; and monitoring of basic working conditions is minimal. Natural disasters pose similar challenges.

HIV/AIDS is an additional difficulty. Some 80 per cent of the over 40 million people affected live in sub-Sahara, that is often also prey to conflicts and natural disasters. Crises accelerate HIV transmission and with it poverty and isolation, which further undermine crisis coping capacity; while destruction and disruption of health facilities and services makes it hard to check.

The complexity and magnitude of tasks require broadening the social protection partnership, to include central government, workers and employers, as well as local government, different ministries, associations of informal economy and low-income workers and vulnerable groups; and mobilizing them to design comprehensive, effective and efficient mechanisms. Setting up social protection in crisis response involves some key steps:

- Undertaking a poverty and needs assessment of the population – identifying groups most affected, the poverty line and its expected changes, present shortages and minimum needs concerning food, health care, education; designing appropriate policies to address them; determining costs and financing;
- Designing an emergency social protection package;
- Examining social assistance feasibility for those below the poverty line;
- Assessing to what extent the current statutory social insurance system is still working – pensions and other social benefits paid out, etc.;
- Identifying and supporting areas and occupational groups which could develop social protection schemes – health insurance, mutual aid activities – as well as savings and credit schemes;
- Developing mechanisms to ensure continued compliance with established rules and procedures on working and employment conditions, including OSH and environmental concerns.

Adequate schemes do not necessarily require substantial resources. But they should be properly designed, financially viable and adapted to economic development levels and relevant labour market characteristics; well administered; and built on social consensus. This requires political investment.

Crisis are actually a time of opportunity, as they send through society electroshocks that can stimulate new ideas, motivation and partnerships, to set up appropriate social protection systems.

ILO RESPONSE

The ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) coordinates its works with specialists in the ILO Social Protection Sector at headquarters and in field Offices, who work to:

- Develop all aspects of social protection, with an emphasis on coverage extension;
- Adapt social security principles to the development level, socio-economic, cultural and other aspects of countries and communities, including crisis risks;
- Create tools to grasp trends and causes of socio-economic insecurity: socio-economic security indexes; an international database of socio-economic insecurity indicators; and “Voice Net”, a global network on labour initiatives and economic security indexes;
- Protect migrant workers operating in crisis areas: developing codes of conduct for contracting firms who bring in foreign workers, building structures, procedures and capacity of countries to manage international migration of nationals, including their return;
- Devise Strategies and Tools Against Social Exclusion and Poverty (STEP), a Programme reaching some 70 countries worldwide, that provides services enabling community-based and other grass-roots solidarity groups to develop their own social protection systems;
- Prevent or mitigate crises, for instance through information, advice and awareness raising at various levels, on the prevention of major industrial hazards, OSH in crisis work, etc. Also, an International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre (CIS) helps life-saving knowledge reach potentially hazardous contexts, with over 130 national focal points and a database of 60,000 references;
- Control HIV/AIDS in crisis contexts, by mobilizing workers, employers and authorities to act in workplaces; helping integrate workplace prevention and impact mitigation into crisis recovery and reconstruction programmes; intervening directly in countries, most recently in Sierra Leone, to help manage HIV/AIDS spread, plan and implement prevention.

KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK

- Immediate presence in the country in crisis is indispensable, to propose concrete measures, set up relief mechanisms, counselling, etc.
- Coherent social protection policies need to be designed in ILO member countries as part of a global crisis prevention and recovery approach; this should be made

1 STEP: www.ilo.org/step
Given the acute needs and dearth of available resources in times of crisis, the cost-effectiveness of social protection is all the more essential.

“Social budgeting”, the costing and budgeting of social protection, is a key tool in crisis management. To target interventions where they have greatest impact, it is indispensable to analyse accurately social protection needs; detail availability and performance of existing provisions; identify vulnerable groups and coverage gaps; select appropriate targeted benefits; analyse the cost and financing options.

Although unemployment insurance could also be introduced (in middle-income countries) during a crisis, it is much more effective if it is in place before it.

After crises, workers and employers should be incited to revive the classical social insurance relationship, including contribution collection.

Unemployment insurance should be complemented by support mechanisms for the un- and underemployed who do not have protected employment contracts, such as cash subsidies for poor families and employment-generation programmes.

Socio-economically disadvantaged and isolated groups need to be specifically informed of existing schemes, and encouraged and supported to access them; they are the most needy, but are often excluded by marginalization.

Safety and health protective measures should be integrated into recovery and reconstruction plans, including identification of key hazards, re-establishment of OSH law and regulations and labour inspection, information and training on OSH for national and international workers.

Social protection schemes should be tightly linked to active labour-market policies, to ensure both their sustainability, and their role as a "trampoline" to help those who can, (re)engage in productive work.

A formal agreement between national parties and ILO, confirms and makes visible to all the political will to tackle jointly the crisis, avoids misunderstandings, improves chances of high delivery, impact and visibility, and helps ensure continuity in action in case of government change.

A combination of interventions at the micro-, meso- (i.e. institutional) and macro- level, helps achieve greater impact and long-term sustainability of results. It should include relevant training.

A multi-partnership strategy needs to support the whole process. It also involves broad dialogue with all concerned parties, including target population groups, to grasp their needs and views.

Albanian Kosovars build up their social protection system

Following the late 1990s conflict, Kosovar Albanians solicited ILO assistance to set up their own health protection system, as their past exclusion from public administration and public enterprises limited access to social security. As the new context could not provide much improvement, solidarity-based micro-health insurance schemes started appearing.

ILO studied the existing social protection and needs for its extension; informal economy workers’ socio-economic situation, specific social protection needs and viability of micro-insurance schemes responding to them. It identified national and international partner organizations willing to set them up; provided relevant technical training; developed consensus in the Kosovar community – ministry departments, social partners, civil society organizations – on the new activities; and advocated with decision-makers for health and social protection reforms. A national conference reached a consensus on developing the first pilot micro-insurance schemes, and raised interest among UN agencies and donors about further social protection activities.

Social protection mechanisms to revive Argentina society

Under the auspices of ILO Director-General’s Cabinet, IFP/CRISIS organized a multidisciplinary crisis group to help tackle the major economic and financial crisis that struck Argentina in 2001-2002, when urban unemployment jumped to 22.7 per cent and household poverty to 55.6 per cent, causing major turmoil and political instability.

Within weeks ILO and national authorities sketched an intervention programme centred on social dialogue, employment and social protection. Priorities in the latter are the:

- Diagnosis and evaluation of pension schemes status, and assessment of crisis impact;
- Long-term financial projection of income and expenditure of the integrated system of pensions, to formulate more accurate policy choices and options;
- Design of short-, medium- and long-term guidelines to strengthen the pension schemes;
- Training of national professional staff on the elaboration of long-term projections, to enable regular monitoring.
ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS


For further information

- ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS)
  4, Route des Morillons CH-1211 Geneva 22 SWITZERLAND
  +(41-22) 799-7069
  +(41-22) 799-6189
  E-mail: ifpcrisis@ilo.org
  Web site: www.ilo.org/crisis

- Also see the ILO Social Protection Sector: www.ilo.org/protection

May 2003
Strategic partnerships

InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) is devoted to partnerships with UN agencies and other international institutions, the private sector, NGOs, the media, and of course ILO constituents and own internal structure. Connecting with the main actors in crisis response and building bridges among them is one of IFP/CRISIS’ trademarks.

Its targeted communication and advocacy are meant to achieve lasting partnerships with reliable players. “Match-making” among actors and resources is key to achieving the complementarities, synergies and multiplier effects indispensable to effectively tackle the complexity of crisis response.

Inscribing all actions in a coherent strategy, where elements have a logical place, are complementary and well articulated, while maintaining the specificity of one’s approach, technical expertise and projects

Acting in partnership affords:
- Synergies
- Greater impact
- Wider expertise
- Cost-effectiveness
- Efficiency
- Legitimacy, credibility
- Risk-sharing
- Better resource mobilization
- Local ownership
- Appropriate entry points
Outside ILO … partnerships at all levels, with the innumerable relevant crisis-response players

International level

IFP/CRISIS works in partnership with many international agencies to affirm the centrality of decent employment opportunities in crisis response. It negotiates with them to include employment concerns in all phases of the crisis management cycle: from prevention and preparedness, to humanitarian aid, rehabilitation, reconstruction, and then development interventions.

UN System – ILO and the other UN agencies need cohesion to achieve a real impact on crisis-stricken, vulnerable people and communities. IFP/CRISIS elaborates common strategies within the UN coordination mechanisms to build local and national capacities and satisfy the demand for jobs and decent livelihoods. It continuously develops and tests partnerships at headquarters and field levels, for direct collaboration as well as complementary inputs.

Partnerships with UNDP, UNOPS, OCHA, UNHCR, WFP, WHO, UNESCO, UNICEF are particularly valuable. One example is the “Senior Inter-Agency Internally Displaced Persons Network”. Another is the “Working group on UNHCR-ILO partnership”, which meets regularly at headquarters level and has already created positive synergies for joint projects in emergencies, such as in Afghanistan and Somalia, and for labour and skills data collection. ILO and UNHCR are also elaborating a programme for the rapid redeployment of ILO experts to UNHCR-led field operations, and the preparation of livelihood- and...
employment-creation guidelines and other tools.

**Other partners** – IFP/CRISIS is also establishing partnerships with a variety of disaster-relief and development agencies, international NGOs and media. This includes regional and sub-regional institutions, bi-lateral and multi-lateral, technical and financial cooperation agencies – among them, the European Union, the World Bank and the African Bank for Development.

**National level**

IFP/CRISIS works closely with the ILO traditional tripartite constituency – crisis-relevant governmental institutions, and employers’ and workers’ organizations. But it also seeks valuable synergies with national NGOs, associations of crisis-affected and other concerned groups, the media and social institutions. Partnerships with academic institutions have proved equally useful, to build up mutual capacity in substantive fields such as poverty, vulnerable groups, employment and development strategies. Joint ventures with private firms are crucial too, as usually public institutions alone cannot handle the complex, multiple challenges of post-crisis contexts. Further, broader national partnerships also strengthen local sustainability of interventions.

Tight coordination with donors is clearly pivotal in crisis response. IFP/CRISIS is developing an ILO resource mobilization strategy, including sensitization of potential donors, appropriate ILO representation in pledging conferences, and close collaboration with development banks.

**Local level**

This level is essential, since often area-specific institutions are more effective than central state bodies in crisis response, as they know local needs and potentialities better, can move faster and are more directly “concerned”.

Partners at this level include NGOs, enterprises, local authorities and community-based bodies.

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**Sudan – In the line of fire**

- In 2002, IFP/CRISIS and the ILO Sub-regional office for North Africa joined the first UN inter-agency mission assessing the recovery needs of thousands of people displaced by war in South Sudan.

- This resulted, among others, in an ILO proposal to start activities supporting the peace process, including skill surveys, rehabilitation of vocational training centres, labour-intensive works, micro-credit and revolving loan schemes.
Within ILO ... substantial synergies worldwide

Technical Units – IFP/CRISIS has synergies with virtually all major ILO technical units, such as the InFocus Programmes on Knowledge, Skills and Employability, on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development, on Social Dialogue, on Child Labour; the Employment-Intensive Investment Programme and a number of others, on micro-finance, social protection, international labour standards, employment strategies, labour administration, statistics, migrants, gender; as well as with the ILO International Training Centre in Turin.

Management/liaison Units – Strong links also exist with the Bureaux for Employers’ and Workers’ activities, the Bureau of External Relations, the Department for Development Cooperation and, last but not least, the Cabinet of the Director-General.

Field Structure – Field-headquarters coordination is essential. Field Offices (some 65 worldwide) can contribute much to early warning, needs assessment, identifying opportunities for ILO involvement and a division of labour among ILO units, programme formulation, implementation and monitoring. They are also key to developing linkages with relevant non-ILO regional, sub-regional, national and local players; to advocating ILO role and approach in crisis response; and proposing projects to other agencies and the development community, for joint ventures, funding, etc. Increasingly, they are also called to build up local and regional capacity in partner institutions, prepare guides and other tools, undertake demonstration projects and promotional activities. Even when the nature of a given emergency requires IFP/CRISIS to lead the preparation and direction of ILO response, the field structure is systematically consulted and involved in operations.

A Crisis Focal Point Network – This crisis network, composed of over 70 officials working in ILO technical Units and field Offices, facilitates communication and coordination. Focal points receive training and updates on IFP/CRISIS activities and outputs. They are systematically gathered in roundtables, for instance to discuss the opportunity of a given intervention, its modalities, and the role of the Units that need to be involved.

For further information

ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS)

4, Route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22
SWITZERLAND

+(41-22) 799-7069
+(41-22) 799-6189
E-mail: ifpcrisis@ilo.org
Web site: www.ilo.org/crisis
**THE CHALLENGE**

Crisis ravage the socio-economic set-up of countries; they destroy both job opportunities, and the institutions and processes that provide people the skills needed to earn a decent living.

Training is thus the cornerstone of crisis response and reconstruction. It does not create employment, but can boost employability. It can provide the technical, entrepreneurship and work skills indispensable to earn a livelihood. But it is also basic to construct/reconstruct people’s dignity, self-confidence, social skills and to offer them a future, longer-term perspective as well as a stake in it.

Proper skills development work in crises also generates sizeable development boosts: helping revitalize and reorient the training system, to make it more market-relevant; widening the spectrum of skills provided and types of job perspectives, including self-employment and cooperatives; rendering it accessible to traditionally disadvantaged groups, and thus making it pro-poor.

Challenges of training in crisis contexts abound, in particular:

- The number of people needing training services can be phenomenal.
- A need to act quickly.
- Potential beneficiaries are not a homogeneous group (for instance in the level of schooling, work experience, household responsibilities, mobility, and crisis-related traumas), calling for adaptation in the substance and strategy of delivery.
- Existing training systems/facilities may be very weak, as a result of pre-crisis poverty and expenditure cuts, and crisis devastations/disruptions.
- Training may be difficult to access, precisely for those needing it the most; it may require minimum levels of education, may be located far away from potential beneficiaries, operate during normal work hours, and have curricula.

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**A “Work of Giants” in Cambodia**

Thousands of Cambodians were pulled from the devastation of war, economic isolation and totalitarian planning through ILO’s Employment Generation Programme, that combined skills development, small-business training and financial support, and labour-based technology. The first phase of skills development (1993-96) provided some 5,000 returnees and displaced persons (half of them women) with quick training in diverse skills, ranging from two-week courses on mushroom growing to four-month courses on building construction. The second phase (1996-98) concentrated on institutional capacity building and policy issues, besides skills training for a further 2,500 persons. Employment and self-employment success rate for trainees was above 80 per cent. Within those eight years, some 4,000 received small business training, with 3,000 of them (67 per cent women) borrowing to start or expand their business; hundreds of managers, contractors and government staff were trained in labour-based construction and maintenance, as well as business, accounting, language and computer skills.

At the heart of the programme’s economic and social success were the linkages between its three components. For its skills component, the salient elements of success were:

- matching training to income-generation and employment opportunities;
- mobile training (once enough people were trained in a given craft, training moved to another district to prevent craft saturation);
- special training entry tests, to ensure women and other disadvantaged groups received priority access to all courses;
- addressing the needs of the disabled, such as identifying specially adapted, available and affordable farming, road-building and other tools.
Training curricula are often ill adapted to market demand, and even less to modern, diversified skills and training methodologies; instructors may be few, ill-adapted and ill-motivated, lack technical knowledge and expertise in trainee counselling, and in orienting training to self-employment or market demand.

Training can be an expensive endeavour.

Training targeting, made necessary by the limited means compared to the needs, may create exclusion and fuel competition and animosity between beneficiaries, at a time when social harmony and cooperation are indispensable for crisis resolution and reconstruction.

Creating too high expectations among trainees of finding jobs, particularly scanty in crises, leads to disillusion, which could worsen tensions.

Reduced employment opportunities calls for developing a culture and skills for alternative routes such as own enterprise or cooperative creation.

Key labour market institutions and processes upstream and downstream of training – labour market information, employment services, small-enterprise support – and coordination among them, are often structurally weak or have been weakened by the crisis.

ILO RESPONSE

Training is a pivotal component of most ILO crisis response interventions – in Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Congo, Ecuador, India, Kosovo, Korea, Lebanon, Mozambique, Palestine, Serbia, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Thailand, Ukraine, etc. ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) builds on two previous ILO Programmes – on the reintegration of demobilized ex-combatants (1994-95); and on skills and entrepreneurship training for countries emerging from armed conflict (1996-97). It also operates in partnership with the ILO International Training Centre in Turin and with ILO training specialists in headquarter InFocus Programme on Skills for Employability (IFP/SKILLS) and in the field.

ILO work on training is wide-ranging. Its subjects span a variety of technical, work-life, management and entrepreneurship skills. Its delivery modes go from a few days to several-month courses, and from courses in training institutions to others in mobile vehicles, in refugee camps or distance learning; from single courses, to modular training, to training in a set of skills as part of reintegration packages, as for demobilized soldiers; from direct training, to training of trainers, development of pedagogical materials and approaches (including specific training in crisis contexts), training programmes, policies, institutions, monitoring and evaluation techniques.

The three key common threads are:

- employability – ensuring a tight link between training and employment opportunities, among key labour market institutions upstream and downstream of training, and addressing trainees’ needs and aptitudes;
- sustainability – preparing the long-term continuation of skill-building activities, through building capacity and commitment of trainers, training institutions, decision makers, as well as social partners, NGOs and other relevant national and international actors, and limiting costs;
- decent work promotion – integrating into training work, guidance on occupational safety and health, HIV/AIDS, non-discrimination, social dialogue, etc., and stressing their link to productivity, growth and peace building.

KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK

Training: Strategy and engineering

- Training programmes need to articulate well with employment-creation, for maximum synergy.

- Training should be strictly need-based and demand-led. Thus, bridges are essential with the various labour market institutions and processes: labour market information, employment services, public works, credit and other support to small enterprises, unemployment and social support services, etc.

- Training should provide skills for activities that are potential engines of economic and employment growth.

- Training services for existing enterprises, to upgrade/reorient technical skills or develop management capacity can help stimulate their labour absorption, avoid retrenchments and facilitate redeployment of retrenched workers.

- Training needs to be a means of social integration and social healing, including life skills on peace, reconciliation, alternatives to violence, crisis prevention/preparedness, as well as reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, drug and alcohol abuse awareness.

- Activities must be culturally appropriate. Promoting self-employment and micro-enterprise or cooperatives, for instance, may fail where there is no tradition of similar associations or group work.

- Training should adopt gender “lenses”, and take into account the strategic changes in gender roles stemming off crises, such as the increase in female-headed households following armed conflicts.

Modular training

ILO’s “Modules of Employable Skills” (MES) have proved most valuable in crises. They aim at quick matching of specific skills demand and trainee needs, ease in setting up and delivering training, and full flexibility in terms of entry, learning pace and exit. They use “learning elements” – self-contained instruction booklets on specific technical skills. The subject matter covered is small, but it is clear and fits that skill precisely. Each element specifies the learning objective, tools, equipment and aids required, and provides easy-to-read and illustrated instructions and exercises, as well as a progress check at the end.

MES now cover a variety of occupations relevant in crises, including building construction, mechanical and electric engineering, plumbing, etc.
A balance is necessary between inclusiveness and targeting a group of beneficiaries. In general, inclusiveness is appropriate where very few escape absolute poverty and where the target group is already viewed negatively, such as ex-rebels. Some targeting may be necessary, to offer opportunities to groups with special needs or to the traditionally disadvantaged. Mixed groups can be useful to promote exchanges, for example between ex-combatants and civilians, and social integration.

Training should start as early as feasible. Refugee camps, for instance, offer many opportunities and advantages, such as large numbers of people concentrated in a small area, and idle.

Successful training strategies use a two-stage approach. “First-line action”, lasting 8-12 months, provides emergency training to limited numbers of beneficiaries, for income-generation activities and sectors/enterprises needing labour immediately such as construction, transportation, education, health and security; it allows methods to be tested and preparation to be completed – including simplified surveys on the labour market, and community/sectoral potential and needs. “Short-term action”, spanning 2-3 years, builds on this work to strengthen and expand it to a larger scale and to more sectors and occupations with high growth and labour absorption potential. It includes moves towards a development perspective and national responsibility.

A middle ground is important between skills levels, course length and sophistication of instruction material/delivery, so training is both effective and affordable.

Accelerated skills training should be limited to the specific skills level sufficient to enter into employment/self-employment, but providing a foundation for further skills development.

Developing strategic partnerships with intervening international actors, donors, as well as national training institutions (public, private, linked to NGOs, etc.), traditional and community structures and authorities, employers’ and workers’ organizations, helps avoid duplication, allows appropriate programme design, complementarity, a division of responsibilities (for instance among training suppliers or to provide apprenticeships and other support to trainees), smooth implementation, maximum effectiveness and cost-efficiency. Such links also contribute to local ownership and sustainability.

Donors are keen to invest in employability and thus in solid, well integrated training programmes.

Prudence and selectivity are necessary with NGOs, to ensure working with credible partners.

Training strategies should include monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, to allow refining activities and learning lessons for future ones.

Exit strategies of training interventions need to include policy and institutional development.

**Training: Delivery**

Training should be tailor-made for the target trainees, in terms of location – bringing it to trainees if mobility is problematic, etc.– duration, scheduling, level and style of delivery. For those lacking formal education, it could include “catch-up” programmes in basic literacy and numeracy.

Instruction needs to be practical, lively, supported by visual aids, and be combined with hands-on experience, to show its direct relevance, and with group works, to help develop social skills.

Trainers need careful selection and training. Besides the usual trainer profile, they need to be sensitive, motivating and flexible – for instance to adapt to the specific needs of physically/mentally disabled or traumatized trainees, provide prospects and orientation on the world of work, recognize and teach new skills in demand, etc.

Counselling is critical to help trainees recognize their professional potential and aspirations, provide longer perspective, discover unconventional work paths, moderate unrealistic expectations, identify obstacles, grievances, tackle crisis-related psychological problems, disorientation, and help trainees gain self respect, self-confidence and independence.

Raising hopes and expectations is indispensable to motivate trainees, but must be in line with the realities of the post-crisis environment.

Distribution of a kit of tools at the end of a course for a symbolic price to destitute trainees, encourages them to start their own business.

Post-training monitoring of trainee progress and support are important to ensure that trainees do become self-sufficient, and learn lessons for training others.

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**Developing employability for Angolan ex-combatants**

Training for self-employment and income generation is the pivot of ILO assistance to war-stricken Angola since the mid-1980s, supporting in particular the reintegration of ex-combatants. Its main steps are:

- identifying skills demanded in potential growth sectors of post-war reconstruction;
- selecting some for training focus, such as construction, transport, repair and maintenance of equipment;
- forming a network of 37 training centres, concentrating on their capacity and that of their trainers, their equipment and didactic materials;
- agreeing on specific training programmes for each centre and on their monitoring and evaluation.

ILO intervention in Lebanon helped compensate the massive emigration of skilled labour during the 1970s-80s civil war, while providing employability to youth and the displaced. Its three-pronged approach aimed at:

- rehabilitating a training centre, enabling it to offer an employment-oriented training programme in several fields in high demand;
- building the training capacity of the Ministry of Labour;
- assisting the setting up of a National Coordination Committee for Skills Training, comprising representatives of all concerned bodies.

**Rebuilding skills in post-war Lebanon**

Angola since the mid-1980s, supporting in particular the reintegration of ex-combatants. Its three-pronged approach aimed at:

- rehabilitating a training centre, enabling it to offer an employment-oriented training programme in several fields in high demand;
- building the training capacity of the Ministry of Labour;
- assisting the setting up of a National Coordination Committee for Skills Training, comprising representatives of all concerned bodies.
ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS

- ILO: Gender guidelines for employment and skills training in conflict-affected countries (Geneva, 1998).
- ILO: Guidelines for employment and skills training in conflict-affected countries (Geneva, 1997).

For further information

- ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS)
  - 4, Route des Morillons CH-1211 Geneva 22 SWITZERLAND
  - +(41-22) 799-7069
  - +(41-22) 799-6189
  - E-mail: ifpcrisis@ilo.org
  - Web site: www.ilo.org/crisis

- Also see the ILO InFocus Programme on Skills for Employability (IFP/SKILLS): www.ilo.org/skills

May 2003
Youth in crises: from victim to protagonist

Young people become protagonists in crises. Jobs determine whether they are:
■ Destabilizing, as violent protestors, combatants, etc.
or
■ Key actors for reconstruction and development

THE CHALLENGE

Youth (15-24 year olds) are among the hardest hit by crises. In normal times, they face various disadvantages such as unemployment (at least twice as high as the average), underemployment and HIV/AIDS. Young women are further disadvantaged by gender-based discrimination (see the Fact-sheet on “Gender in crisis response”). These vulnerabilities affect their capacity to earn a living as well as their psychological well-being and social integration.

Crises aggravate the vulnerability of youth. Young people are often the first to be laid off and the most unlikely to find work; they may become idle, frustrated, and resort to subsistence work in the informal sector and resort to subsistence work in the informal sector. Education and training programmes are sometimes disrupted for long periods. Furthermore, crises lead to a loss of social references and guidance, as family and community networks may disintegrate. The accumulation of these factors push young people into the vicious circle of poverty and social exclusion.

Yet youth frequently emerge as important social actors in crises. They are among the most visible members of society, often at the forefront of social movements. By denouncing injustices and demanding changes, they can be key representatives of society in crisis response. However, if left unattended, they can become more radical and disruptive. Youth is easily influenced and manipulated, making it both a highly vulnerable and dangerous group, that may precipitate, fuel or prolong crises. For instance, youth may join armed groups either through forced enrolment or ‘voluntarily’ (having a choice between joining the violence or being a victim of it), in turn perpetrating violence and destruction.

Crisis response must therefore deal with youth as victims, as well as potential instability factors and key elements in reconstruction. Their energy and ability to mobilize themselves and other sections of society should be channelled towards recovery and reconstruction.

Youth must be integrated in reconstruction, peace-building and long-term development of society. Their needs and potential must be properly understood and tackled both in normal circumstances (as prevention) and in crises.
Professional orientation and training (in technical as well as life skills), matching skills training with labour market demands, boosting job opportunities and assisting small-business creation are central to ensure youth’s full involvement.

ILO RESPONSE

The ILO InFocus Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (IFP/CRISIS) addresses youth concerns through various activities. A traditional focus has been youth in armed conflicts, and more recently youth in economic crises and difficult social and political transitions. IFP/CRISIS assistance includes:

- Developing expertise on the reintegration of war-affected youth, including child and young soldiers, youth internally displaced or living in conflict areas (see the Factsheets on “Reintegrating child soldiers” and “Jobs for ex-rebels and soldiers”).
- Collecting and making available data and other information on crisis-affected youth, for instance in Argentina, Burundi, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lebanon, Mozambique, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka and Uganda.
- Preparing and disseminating studies, manuals and guidelines, based on direct experience in crisis response worldwide.
- Raising awareness of roles and problems of youth in crisis amongst stakeholders, and encouraging them to take action to protect youth and offer them alternatives.
- Supporting the design and implementation of policies and programmes to reintegrate conflict-affected youth through training, employment creation and peace education.
- Helping to develop employment services and activities so as to orient youth in the labour market and build the necessary links with training, jobs and self-employment.

Emphasis on collaboration with the relevant ILO technical departments and field structure, as well as national and international stakeholders working with youth in crisis situations, sharpens IFP/CRISIS products and interventions.

MAINSTREAMING YOUTH

Reintegrating Ex-Combatants into Civilian Life in Sri Lanka

Ex-combatants, including the disabled, women, youth and children are the beneficiaries of a recent ILO programme aimed at building peace in Sri Lanka through socio-economic reintegration of ex-combatants.

Its three specific objectives are to:

- Strengthen national capacity to design, implement, monitor and evaluate Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes and facilitate coordination between the main actors;
- Help improve and expand reintegration services in job-placement, vocational counselling, adult training, local labour market assessments and psychosocial assistance;
- Assist partners providing reintegration support to current and future ex-combatants.

TARGETING YOUTH

Youth Employment Network in Latin America

A new ILO initiative focusing on youth employment in eight Latin American countries, will have projects covering:

- Policies on youth employment, including the creation of a youth employment policies network, a youth component in employment programmes and education for work, training and youth employability;
- Creation of productive organizations and development of small enterprises amongst youth in the informal sector;
- Interventions in specific sectors, such as new information and communication technologies, energy resources, finance and tourism;
- Improving social dialogue and youth visibility.

IFP/CRISIS is helping design and implement the project in the context of the Argentina economic crisis. This is one of the most comprehensive initiatives targeting youth unemployment and underemployment in Argentina, with implications for its immediate emergency as well as long-term development.
KEY LESSONS FROM ILO WORK

- Sensitize and mobilize key actors in governments, workers’ and employers’ organizations, international agencies, relevant NGOs as well as other central social partners, including youth organizations and religious groups on employment challenges affecting young people in crisis contexts. Encourage main actors to play a role (especially the private sector) in training and sponsoring activities for youth, to reduce levels of conflict.

- Analyse systematically the impact of macro-economic development, the labour market, education and the training system as well as crisis-related factors on youth employment.

- Account for the specific needs and challenges of the most vulnerable sub-groups of young people, such as women, ethnic minorities, the disabled and the war-affected.

- Assess the special needs of conflict-affected youth with psychologists or trauma therapy specialists, and develop broader employment and training programmes that include peace education, trauma therapy, HIV/AIDS prevention and components to improve self-esteem, confidence, social responsibility and dignity.

- Create demand-driven training programmes for youth, taking into account the specific crisis context; include labour market orientation programmes and develop skills demanded locally, to provide income-earning rapidly and facilitate their socio-economic integration.

- Increase the completion rate of programmes and improve employment prospects, by ensuring that training is adapted to young people’s abilities, interests and needs; for instance, visual material and interactive techniques can be used in areas with high rates of illiteracy, and be complemented by basic literacy classes.

- Ensure that short-term objectives of employment-promotion activities (in the immediate aftermath) are coherent with medium- and long-term employment goals.

- Foster willingness and enthusiasm of young people, as they are essential for successful programmes.

- Where possible integrate youth with special needs (for example ex-combatants) with other groups of youth to facilitate integration.

- Promote new dimensions of intervention using alternative tools (such as sports) to reduce the impact of psychological trauma and tensions on youth and to provide positive role models and opportunities.

- Account for changing roles and new skills developed by young women during crises.

- Where possible, integrate young women into mainstream training and employment programmes, while addressing their particular gender-related needs.

- Set up monitoring and follow-up mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes and to provide youth with longer-term support in making the transition from education/training to work, finding and keeping employment or starting up their own business and keeping it viable. Protracted guidance/support helps compensate for their lack of experience and the complexity of crisis contexts.
ADDITIONAL ILO READINGS


For further references on youth in armed conflicts, refer to the bibliographies of the Factsheets on “Reintegrating child soldiers” and “Jobs for ex-rebels and soldiers”.

For further information

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  - 4, Route des Morillons
  - CH-1211 Geneva 22
  - SWITZERLAND
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May 2003
IFP/CRISIS reading materials

- — : Coping strategies and early warning system of tribal people in India in the face of natural disasters (New Delhi, 2002).
— : One and a half years of implementation – September 1999-June 2001 (Geneva, 2001).
— : Programme for employment recovery and reduction of economic vulnerability: A response to the floods of Mozambique (Maputo, 2000).
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Reintegrating young ex-combatants into civilian life (Geneva, 1995).

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