

DECENT WORK, CLIMATE CHANGE *and* DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



Briefing Note No. 16 - ILO Note for the International Recovery Forum 2009

Kobe, January '09

Sustainable Livelihoods: a Concern at the Workplace is a Challenge for the ILO

In the wake of a disaster, social and economic disruption is a consequence and a dreadful reminder of how fragile human settlements and activities can be in the face of natural hazards. The losses suffered by households, and especially by the most vulnerable people, become a top-priority challenge for the affected countries and for the international community as a whole. One motto recurs among decision makers and practitioners worldwide: invest on *building back better*. One concern worries the families who lost their beloved, their possessions and their sources of income: *how and when will we have our life back?*

After all, life goes on. But, when it comes to recovery and reconstruction, the real question becomes: how to make it a better life, a more sustainable one, and at what price?

The condition of depending on someone else's assistance for meeting basic needs, at the pace, quantity and quality in most of the cases decided by others, is hardly bearable across the time. Moreover, it is often degrading for people's self-esteem and self-reliance.

People want to get back to work. As soon as they can, as early as they are allowed to do so. Having a job, sustaining a livelihood, make them feel alive, help them recover from the trauma of a disaster and, when the job is decent, represents a critical expression of freedom and self-determination.



In fact, not any job is desirable, not even after a catastrophe, and especially when the concern and the challenge is to reduce the risks generated by productive activities and individual and collective decisions. ILO promotes a work that is *decent*, which means productive, compatible with the local experience, vocation and tradition, and obtained in conditions of freedom, human dignity and security. Additionally, ILO advocate for the creation of job options that are environmentally friendly, the so-called *green jobs*.

DECENT WORK MATTERS IN CRISES

Crises constitute a major threat to Decent Work: they generate massive unemployment and loss of livelihoods, they disrupt soft and hard infrastructure supporting economic activities, they reduce security and they undermine ongoing development efforts and achievements.

If on one side, Decent Work is threatened by crises, on the other hand is a powerful rope to pull communities out of a crisis. The pre-existence of Decent Work conditions contributes to reducing the negative impact and the economic loss deriving from a crisis. It also help speeding-up and ensuring the good quality of the recovery process, since appropriate attitudes, institutions, procedures and frameworks are already in place.

The price of re-building what was there before is a dead loss. The price of building back better is, actually, an investment. It is departing from this belief that the ILO defends and promotes Decent Work across its Constituents (*States, Employers, Workers*) including in disaster-prone countries.

Furthermore, experience has shown that recovery and reconstruction activities themselves generate jobs. A challenge learned from past disaster responses is how to maximize these employment opportunities for local workers, in particular vulnerable workers, whose need for employment were urgent and at times difficult to fulfil. ILO stands ready to support nations in this effort.

This briefing note offers an overview of ILO's views and practice in the area of DRR towards building back better and greener.

When the Climate Changes, the ILO Goes Green

The climate change represents an increasing concern for the ILO and its constituents, considered the impact that this will have on employment and livelihoods. The extent of this impact is not yet predictable and measurable but, with certainty, will vary across localities and economic sectors. The sectors most likely affected are the ones most directly dependent on the weather, agriculture and tourism. This is a worrying reality, considered that agriculture continues to be the largest employer in the world, despite the trends in the economic structure worldwide.

"Green Jobs" are employment opportunities that not only reduce the environmental impacts of production and consumption to sustainable levels but also offer decent work and contributes to disaster-risk reduction at the same time.

In front of this perspective, flexibility and adaptation to new patterns of production, consumptions and employment become a must, in order to avoid possible losses and seize emerging opportunities. Options have to be explored, on the basis of the analysis of possible scenarios.

ILO is already investing in research and consultations to provide its constituents with adequate and timely advice on the matter. "Huge opportunities exist to create green jobs through energy and industrialization policies that reduce the environmental footprint" the ILO Focal Point for Climate Change says. "These jobs can provide decent work and incomes that will contribute to sustainable economic growth and help lift people out of poverty. They are central to the positive link that needs to be established between climate change and development. By the same token, the major investments to adapt to climate change could provide many new and better jobs for the vulnerable people who need them most."

Green jobs contribute to the adaptation to climate change consequences on human activities, to the reduction of disaster risk and to the mitigation of subsequent effects on livelihoods.

3 Words for Livelihood Recovery: Early, Locally-driven and Pre-planned

When intervening in response to a disaster, we should remind that choices made in its initial aftermath can determine options available later on for recovery and reconstruction. Likewise, we should work to facilitate a swift phase out from the humanitarian situation, in a way that temporary solutions do not become a longer-term reality on the ground. Planning for livelihood recovery must therefore be integrated in the emergency relief phase to facilitate solutions that benefit the community in the long run. Livelihood recovery cannot be an after-thought, or something we turn to only in due course.

Recovery is to a large extent a locally-driven, spontaneous process set in motion by the affected populations. All recent experiences concur in saying that international support should reinforce those endogenous efforts, improving the quality of the national and local response, without attempting to replace the work already done at national, local government and community level. In order to support endogenous, locally-driven efforts to plan and implement recovery, the International Community should provide "additional and complementary capability" through training and with the contribution of professionals experienced in socio-economic recovery; the objective being to support coping strategies for better resilience and job creation, which is a central pillar of post-disaster recovery.

Further to a disaster, besides the immediate losses provoked at its occurring, the affected areas experience the daily accumulation of losses due to the interruption or slow-down of productive and commercial activities. The slower is the recovery process, the higher will be such losses and the wider will be the damage to be controlled by the Government of the affected country. In order prevent this from happening, a disaster-prone country should set in place contingency mechanisms prior to a

disaster and pre-allocate resources to start and to bolster the reconstruction with no delay after the disaster has occurred. Such resources are both financial and human, and require commitment in investing on individual and institutional capacity building in all of the critical sectors and including among private actors. Effective planning requires coordinated mechanisms where legislative and financial regulations contribute to the end result. Predictable and sustained funding from the donor community is essential to support this process. In response to this matter, the World Bank has set up the Global facility for Disaster Risk Reduction (GFDRR).



©International Labour Organization/Crozet M.

From Words to Action: Working To Make a Difference

During the past few years, the ILO and the ILO International Training Centre have been progressively contributing towards mainstreaming the employment and decent work dimensions into disaster risk reduction, adaptation to climate change and recovery activities within the frameworks of the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction System (UN/ISDR), the IASC Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER), and the International Recovery Platform (IRP).

Training and capacity building For a more sustainable local development

Over the last years, the increasing concern about the magnitude of disasters and their impact on local communities worldwide, originated a demand for training on disaster risk reduction, particularly to target decision makers and planners at the local level. The ILO responded to such a demand by commissioning, in 2006, the development and delivery of a specific training package to its International Training Centre, the ITC/ILO.

The main result is a training course on *Disaster Risk Reduction within the Framework of Sustainable Local Development*, which has been conceived within the framework of the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015). Its development has involved the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) and the ILO Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction (ILO/CRISIS), and has benefitted from the participation of other UN agencies and international organizations.

Contribution of the ILO and the ITC/ILO to the capacity-building component of the International Recovery Platform (IRP), the training course stresses on the opportunities offered by the recovery and reconstruction phases for a sound reduction of disaster risk and an increased sustainability of local development strategies.

By enrolling to the programme, the trainees have access to an integrated training offer, including a two-week face-to-face course at the Campus of the ITC/ILO in Turin (Italy) and the support of a group of trainers at-a-distance, through the use of a web-based platform. Additional value added of the course are the post-training monitoring and follow-up activities which are facilitated in the form of a community of practice involving the participants and the disaster-risk reduction experts.

The core training offer is currently available in Spanish, while virtual libraries

and databases are already available also in English.

So far two editions of the training course in Spanish have been delivered in 2007 and 2008, targeting local-level public and private institutions of Central and Latin American. Around 80 participants have been trained across these two years.

The potential transferability of the training package to other Regions has been discussed during an Expert Meeting held in Chengdu, (China) on 12-13 November 2008, in the occasion of the broader event on *Global Dialogue on Wenchuan Earthquake Response: Challenges and Governance*. The experts have defined the selected target audience in terms of needs, expectations and potential role in the promotion of DRR policies and practices in their territories and countries; they have validated the strategic lines for contents adaptation and training implementation as well as the potential connections between the ITC/ILO project and the UN/ISDR thematic platforms and networks.

In the area of disaster risk reduction, the ITC/ILO has also conducted other capacity building-related activities, which consisted in the development of contents and tools and the organization of seminars on GIS and strategic planning, and on climate change and disaster risk reduction. These activities are implemented in partnership respectively with UNITAR/UNOSAT and with the UN/ISDR Latin American and Caribbean Regional Office.

The strategic approach of the ITC/ILO to optimize its reach-out capacity in the delivery of training courses and the dissemination of knowledge and know-how, consists in adopting web-based technologies and in building and strengthening partnerships with key Regional institutions, such as the Central American Federation of Municipalities (FEMICA). These are better positioned to reach and train the enormous multitude of local governments and authorities in disaster-prone areas.

WHAT'S NEXT?

- 3rd edition of the **Spanish DRR training course** (March - Dec. 2009)
- Development of **4 training modules in English** on: DRR and sustainable development, strategic planning at the local level, pre-disaster preparedness and post-disaster reconstruction;
- Delivery of an inter-regional **DRR pilot training course in English** (August - December 2009) in collaboration with the UN/ISDR Secretariat within the LGA/DRR initiative.
- Consideration of the following requests for **tailor-made training packages**: (1) development of a package for **Pakistan**, in collaboration with the University of Peshawar, the GTZ Disaster Preparedness and Management Project and the Government of NWFP; (2) Adaptation of the on-going LAC region training offer for **Haiti** in French, in collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Civil Defence and UNDP.
- Integration of the **web-based database of capacity building available resources worldwide** for DRR and Recovery Management into the IRP website and/or UN/ISDR platform. The database can be seen at the URL: <http://irp-capacitybuilding.delnetitcilo.net/home>

China

The ILO Response to the Earthquake

In response to the earthquake that severely hit eight Provinces in Western China last May, the ILO has taken action by working closely with the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, the All-China Women's Federation, and concerned local authorities in the affected areas.

Two reviews of international experiences in disaster response programmes took place in June and July 2008. The first one was hosted by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security, while the second one, the *International Workshop on Post-earthquake Reconstruction Experiences*, was organized by the United Nations in China and the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China. In both occasions, the ILO presented several examples of international experiences showing options for an employment-sensitive response to disasters, which considers as well social security concerns.

In July, a field mission was conducted to review current emergency employment services operations in the earthquake-hit areas. During the same month, the ILO and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) jointly launched Emergency Start and Improve Your Business (E-SIYB) Project. The project provides targeted assistance to re-establishing at least 1,000 destroyed small businesses and setting up 700 new ones for those who lost their jobs. Activities started in July 2008 and will run for a period of 12 months, focusing on rural townships in the cities of Mianyang, Deyang and Guangyuan.

To know more about the **Emergency Start and Improve Your Business Project**, have a look at the video at the URL <http://www.cctv.com/english/20081227/>

ILO-WB Partnership

In post-disaster assessments

During 2008, the ILO has participated to four inter-agency post-disaster assessments in Bangladesh (January '08), Myanmar (May '08), Madagascar (February 08) and Haiti (October '08), undertaken in close collaboration with the respective Governments. ILO's focus was on the impact of the

disasters in terms of employment and livelihood losses, according to the methodology of the ILO-FAO Livelihood Assessment Toolkit.

The joint assessments are a critical step towards the harmonization of programmes and the optimization of the allocation of financial resources into post-disaster reconstruction interventions. In the mentioned cases, ILO's findings have been fed into the World Bank-led *Joint Damage, Losses and Need Assessment (JDLNA) report*, and into the inter-agency programming conducted within the framework of the *Early Recovery Cluster*, under the leadership of UNDP.

Thanks to these joint efforts, the figures produced by different agencies and in different sectors are consistent with each other and help formulating a more comprehensive and coherent vision of the global situation and a more effective strategic approach.

DISASTERS TRANSLATED INTO JOB LOSSES

Some Facts and figures

BANGLADESH. A total of 567,000 persons were affected in their employment by the impact of cyclone Sidr. This count includes 189,000 farmers and 4100 fishermen and their respective family members, forced to seek alternative employment; 78,000 wage workers in the agricultural sector (farms and fisheries) including 21,000 seasonal harvest workers; about 160,000 persons engaged in non agricultural establishments (owners, family help or wage workers); and about 134,000 self-employed workers (including their family help).

MYANMAR. In May 2008 the Cyclone Nargis has affected 60% of rice paddies and fisheries, thus generating a grave impact on all related livelihoods. One of the main recommendations stemming from ILO's assessment of the situation, has been to closely monitor the compatibility of post-disaster reconstruction efforts with international standards that condemn any form of forced labour. In fact, ILO detected a risk of incidence of forced labour and human trafficking as a consequence of the increased demand for workforce to sustain the physical reconstruction.

HAITI. The ILO assessments estimated that the total loss in employment provoked by the hurricanes and storms in August-September was about 20 million working days with a corresponding loss in earnings of 35.5 million US\$. Out of this figure, females experienced losses in earnings amounting to 10.9 million US\$. The largest job losses occurred in the agriculture and commerce sectors. Private businesses had to interrupt or reduce their activity for a varying length of time during and after the cyclonic events due to power cuts and loss of generator sets.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

ILO Crisis Response and Reconstruction Programme (ILO/CRISIS)

<http://www.ilo.org/crisis>

DELNET Programme of the ITC/ILO

<http://learning.itcilo.org/delnet/pg/index.htm>

ILO Office for China and Mongolia

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/asro/beijing/whatwedo/earthquake.htm>