

# **EMERGENCY - REHABILITATION DEVELOPMENT:**

## **Sequence or Detour?**

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### **Linking Survival Back To Development**

The idea that emergency relief should be linked to development assistance is one whose time has come in academic, NGO and governmental discourse but rather less so in systematic conceptualisation and least of all in significant resource allocation.

One reason for that shift is the rising share of emergency, and especially conflict related, assistance in total official development assistance. Linked is the fact that, especially in past armed conflict situations, the end of the conflict emergency demonstrably is only a necessary not a sufficient condition for livelihood recovery.

More generally it has become clear that extended single crises - and especially a series of them - whether natural calamities or human conflict catastrophes can create conditions well beyond household, community or national resilience levels and coping strategies. The longer the period and the higher the proportion of group members in need of permanent or temporary transfers from others, the more likely coping strategies are to erode or collapse. The downward spiral of many nomadic communities in the Sahel is an example as much as the conflict-linked catastrophic disempowerment evident in much of rural Angola or the mixed drought/war cases exemplified by Tigre in Ethiopia.

Coping - ironically - has come to academic prominence, like long rotation cropping, a decade or so after contextual pressures had begun to reduce its viability in many areas in which it formerly worked well. Restoring it - at least without at least partly externally (nationally and internationally) rehabilitation is a romantic illusion.

The case for emergency survival assistance incorporating elements (e.g. income generation, working capital preservation) relevant to household post emergency economic viability is a strong one. So is that for phasing from survival into rehabilitation (e.g. work for wages programmes to provide for physical reconstruction and living until crops are to hand analogous to the wages on agricultural enterprise would pay to rehabilitate a drought or war damaged estate and charge up to capital investment). In the longer run rural development programming needs to pay attention to the particular contextual access problems of small farming families as much as to those of - e.g. - female headed and non-standard crop (e.g. peri urban truck gardening) households. This is particularly true for pastoralists as rain usually brings dead fields back to life but - as Somali pastoralists regularly point out - not dead flocks and herds whose re-establishment poses major capital requirements which are often insurmountable if extended family loan in kind coping has broken down and no national analogue has been created.

### **In Reality**

At present the division between emergency survival relief and development assistance is wide in types of funding, eligibility/conditionality, institutions and styles and general approach to beneficiaries. Neither side looks to how its actions influence the other *ex ante* or *ex post* and - in recipients as well as donors but more in the latter - they often operate in parallel but isolated compartments. This is true from macro to project level, e.g. at best SAPs build on average or trend agricultural growth but never model in emergency output shortfall years or costs. Since droughts (much less wars) do affect other sectors by water and input shortages on the supply side and rural entitlements (demand) collapse on the demand side this is a non-trivial mis-specification.

Articulated development in relief through reconstruction/rehabilitation to continued rehabilitation in development programmes are rare albeit Mozambique and, in practice if not literal terminology, Ethiopia and Eritrea are exceptions. That is not unrelated to recovery

(often seen by donors as an excuse to hang on to emergency consumption aid) is about as well regarded at a Donors Conference as a pre-transformation Cinderella in domestic helper's rags would have been at the fashionable ball.

### **Some Complexities, Contextualities, Conundrums**

Survival - Rehabilitation/Reconstruction - Development is a useful heuristic sequence. But it cannot usefully be understood as a set of linear boxes nor as a recreation of the status quo *ex ante* nor of the previous growth dynamic. Certainly vulnerability reduction is a logical priority and does imply rehabilitation toward altered livelihood and development patterns. And some war destroyed physical facilities - e.g. state farms and settler villas are hardly priorities for reconstruction.

But many small farming households when asked (somewhat rare) do give top priority to "going home" (not to "being resettled"), to rebuilding of the schools-clinics-wells they once had and to restoration of market access both as to roads and as to traders and transporters. In general drought stricken ex-pastoralists have not shifted to ex-urban income scratching or to cropping by choice but because the capital for a core herd to rehabilitate their pastoral livelihood was unattainable.

Equally - as in almost any staged model of a dynamic process - the stages overlap as well as interpenetrate. One very strong case for early food (or work to earn to buy food) assistance during a drought is to enable households to stay on their farms. This has positive emergency health protection and housing cost reduction implications but it is also vital to enabling households to keep farms in order and to be ready to rehabilitate promptly when the rains return.

By the same token Tanzanians have not chosen full rehabilitation of rural health-education-water (admittedly more fiscal than calamity or conflict impacted) as preceding new development. "We Shall Never Go Back" is in fact an affirmation of a new nearly national

community initiative/government personnel support/limited external finance package centred on nutrition and health (with a growing women's income generation component) but also a decision not to return to less bottom-up and more uniform programming.

One problem in linkage is in fact that emergency programming tends not merely to be top down internally (though both Botswana's and Tanzania's drought relief is largely domestic demand driven and local government handled) but also outside internationally. This means emergency practitioners often do not speak the same language let alone share the same concepts as development ones. More basically it means long run, high profile emergency programmes decapacitate domestic institutions in relief as well as development. In both Mozambique and Ethiopia national (decentralised provincial in the Mozambique case) domestic emergency capacity was co-opted, taken over, paralleled, bypassed and/or decapacitated by donors and their foreign NGOs to a degree virtually unheard of in the development field. In the Southern African 1991/93 drought and hunger case the UN's Humanitarian Office's initial presumption was that no national or regional institutional and operating capacity existed.

Therefore, linking survival relief through rehabilitation support to development assistance requires real changes of structures and attitudes as well as of programme design and instructions. In conflict situations local government capacity is normally an early casualty so that unless its recapacitation is made a domestic priority severe constraints on decentralised, participatory, contextual approaches will remain whatever donors, external NGOs and central ministries might propose and even desire.

The rehabilitation field - even more than development more generally - is highly contextual. What is needed and possible in one province of one country may be low priority or impossible not only in another country but also in another province (or district) of the same one. For example, in internally displaced person cases many districts will have substantial inflows and outflows whether the balance is positive or negative and even in the most war decapacitated countries the degree of physical damage varies widely. Grass roots input on basic data (not

least where the mines are unless one wishes a programme blow up) and on household priorities are a necessary condition for success even if collection is not on a sample survey basis nor the procedures fully participatory. That is one reason for recapacitating domestic central and local governments and social sector organisations who are closer to the ground and , at least potentially, more accountable than an external donor - international, governmental or NGO - can ever be or become.

### **Costs And Benefits**

Rehabilitation can in principle return double benefits. For example, wages for work augment household incomes this does meet survival needs but also restores (or adds to) infrastructure and provides demand to support the recovery of local market oriented food production and of the trader/transporters to validate it. Handouts do the first, not the second and have a negative impact on the third. Standard works approaches (unless very unusually labour intensive) meet the second and third tests but - if there is any financial or skilled personnel constraint - cannot do all of the first.

However, the real cost/benefit equations are more complex - and far from totally economic. Unless drawn up in advance and with local input emergency related, public works do not yield a value fully equal to cost, albeit there is no reason in principle why they should not. Further, they do require non-wage costs (including skilled personnel, e.g. foremen and design/supervision engineers) of at least half the wage cost, a fiscal problem even if the value of the works is well above that of the additional cost. Conceivably they also divert skilled personnel albeit if the projects are high priority rural works, that is far from self-evident.

And there is the parallel issue of "low potential" areas. Absolutely poor people tend to be a disproportionately high per cent of their population. The macro (or even household) opportunity cost of "high" to "low" potential shifts can be significant. But mass transfer programmes are rarely successful (partly because state auspices ones are rarely truly

voluntary) and are very expensive. Unless the alternative to rehabilitation/capacity raising is triage not relief, it is not self-evident that the output gain/incremental cost ratio for rehabilitation (versus pure relief) need be low.

Finally, massive rehabilitation (post war but also post massive drought) has multiplier effects. These cannot, by their nature, be captured at project level. In the Mozambique case five years of ex-emergency plus Mozambican refugees support could, including multiplier effects, double national output, cut malnutrition and absolute poverty by half and be self-sustaining on fiscal and external account in six to eight years according to calculations no worse than normal African macroeconomic projections. Ethiopia, Eritrea and probably Liberia are likely to be similar cases as is Angola abstracting from the petroleum sector.

### **Where Next?**

The workshop on which this volume is based and the papers in it, examine all of the foregoing and related issues in greater depth and complexity. Their broad conclusion is that while more conceptual, contextual and comparative work is needed, the highest present priority is probably what could be called action research. Enough processual and contextual knowledge and enough tool kits for action exist to justify a variety of substantial initiatives which - apart from their direct impact on lives, livelihoods and economies - would rapidly expand knowledge on what worked where, why, how far, in what contexts and how.