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**DELIVERING WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE SERVICES
IN AN UNCERTAIN ENVIRONMENT**

**Resilience in the humanitarian sphere: stimulating
resilience for recovery**

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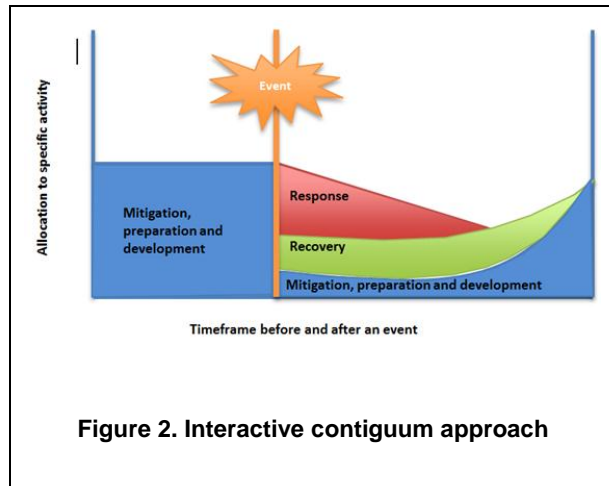
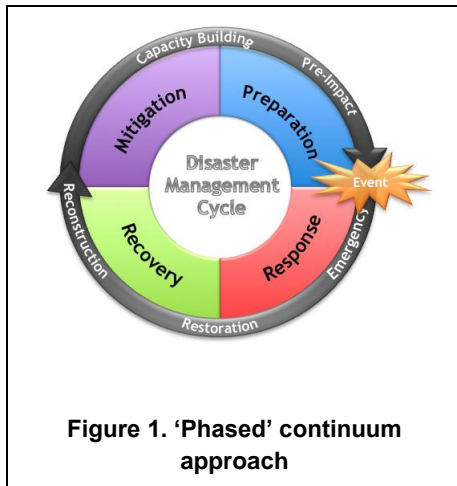
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Resilience is the current 'buzz word', the question is, is it just a trend and a re-hash of an old debate or can it offer solutions to much needed challenges? A resilience based approach in emergency operations has the ability to improve operations, stimulate recovery, ensure effective exit and transition mechanisms and leave sustainable solutions for rehabilitation; offering the ability to increase coherence between relief, recovery and development. The current financial and operational framework the humanitarian sector operates under sees these activities separated into 'phases' along a continuum with many agencies deeming any form of 'recovery' activity outside their mandate. But continual challenges with transition, exits, incidence of unnecessary protracted reliefs and consequential negative impacts on society, are a strong indicator of a need to re-evaluate the current emergency paradigm. It is argued that Resilience Building Initiatives (RBIs) have the ability to operationalize resilience in the post-disaster context.

Many post-disaster environments are finding basic relief can be provisioned, but ensuring the transition to a state of recovery is a constant problem (Amin & Goldstein 2008; Lloyd-Jones 2006; ALNAP 2010). This has hindered the success of response programmes and the ability of an affected population to regain a functioning, productive life (Buttenheim 2009). This issue can be termed the operational 'gap' between relief and recovery (Lloyd-Jones 2006).

The current 'phased' disaster management cycle exists on a linear continuum, which includes phases of 'response', 'recovery', mitigation' and 'preparation' (see Figure 1). But how clear-cut are these 'phases' in a post-disaster environment? Often recovery begins systematically with relief. Raising the question whether emergency programmes are supporting the real needs issued in a post-disaster situation? This current disaster management cycle paradigm has consequently shaped aid architecture and segmented operational expertise. This paradigm needs to be re-evaluated to allow operations to have the capacity and the flexibility to support real, contextual post-disaster needs of the most vulnerable in a timely fashion. Opening up the ability of disaster response programming to adapt to its context and utilize existing resources. An approach that is necessary if international humanitarian operations are to function at their most effective potential in context specific, volatile and continually changing post-disaster environments.

It is accepted that there is a link between humanitarian action, recovery and development and that humanitarian action should establish a framework for recovery (ALNAP 2006). However, the opportunities for building on international good practice as a foundation for long-term recovery and development in the early stages of the relief effort are often lost. The short-term mandates and the different interests of many international organisations involved have meant the link between immediate humanitarian relief and longer-term reconstruction is often poorly managed (Lloyd-Jones 2006). Do we need to start acknowledging within funding models and programme plans that the current dichotomy between the work of the humanitarian sector and development sector is not mutually exclusive?



Doctoral research has been undertaken by King (*forthcoming*) looking at post-disaster operations; understanding how the current humanitarian operational model translates on the ground to determine the efficiency of the emergency response to meet the relief and recovery needs of affected communities. An in-depth case study on humanitarian operations after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti has been undertaken, The scale of this disaster and the resulting response presents a case study that can reveal many of the underlying difficulties of emergency response that in other crises might not be so visible. The prolonged relief situation that transpired also offers the opportunity to assess the affect disaster response may have had on the resiliency of the affected society.

It is clear in the earthquake response in Haiti, as well as in many other disaster responses (UN Office of the Secretary-General's special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery 2005; Oxfam International 2006; UNDP 2011; DEC 2011) that the humanitarian approach under the current model disconnects relief, recovery and rehabilitation. Understanding post-disaster resilience at the community level offers insight into the real needs of disaster-affected communities and the operational opportunities to proactively stimulate recovery and re-engage relief, recovery and development. Ultimately improving the capacity of the emergency response, enabling rapid recovery and offering the foundations for rehabilitation.

The debate

This debate is not new, but its consistent revival within humanitarian debate is significant and its evaluation vital. During the 1990s there were discussions on aid in protracted crises that placed the idea of 'linking' relief and development on the agenda, with much of this discussion stemming from experiences in natural disasters. Early academic literature focused primarily on the challenges of linking relief and development strategies, where it became coined a relief–development 'continuum' (Harmer and Macrae 2004). The 'continuum' approach sought to identify complementary objectives and strategies in relief and development aid. The rationale behind the approach encompassed two dynamics, firstly, to use development aid to help reduce communities' vulnerability to the effects of natural hazards, providing investment, as well as enabling populations to build up assets on which they could draw upon in the event of crisis. Secondly, using relief aid to protect assets and provide the basis for future development work (Harmer and Macrae 2004). Implicit in the 'continuum' idea was that relief should be seen not just as a palliative, but also as a springboard for recovery and enable the development of resilient and profitable livelihoods. With this there was also a concern to ensure that the instruments of international engagement avoided creating dependency, particularly on food aid, and contributed to revitalising and protecting people's livelihoods (Lautze and Hammock 1996).

By the end of the 1990s 'developmental relief' had become the central doctrine of 'good practice' in humanitarian response (Bradbury 1998). But the concept of 'developmental relief' did not find the success and desired results it set out to, which was to develop effective links between relief, recovery and development. Both Bradbury and Macrae suggest that the 'developmental relief' approach has not worked as a fundamental concept and with the lack of success the idea of integrating such 'developmental' approaches in relief have been relegated and deemed as a failed concept (Bradbury 1998; Harmer and Macrae 2004). However, several factors need to be considered when evaluating this concept, firstly, the structure of this approach worked off the notion that there is a distinct 'phased' continuum, where 'developmental' approaches aimed to provide a basis for future development work as a part of the prescribed

'phased' continuum (refer Figure 1), rather than understanding relief and recovery needs and development progression as an interactive process (refer Figure 2). Therefore was the model conceptually flawed? Secondly, what compounded the inevitable failure of such an approach was the heavily institutionalized aid architecture that distinctly separated relief and development budget lines making it difficult to find the adequate funding to support the capacity needed to implement such an approach. Thirdly, this concept was broadly applied to function within natural disaster as well as conflict and post-conflict settings not distinguishing between these two differing political dynamics. Conflict and post-conflict environments bring a host of political complexities, which this approach had not adequately accounted for. Therefore, the approach under its current conceptual and theoretical framework could not function in the reality of the context.

The past two decades have seen considerable discussions and research concerning the link between relief and development, but it has been argued little progress has been made (Bailey *et al.* 2009). Rigid funding frameworks, weak coordination, strategy development and leadership has hindered effective response programming, transition capacity and recovery, seeing international response agencies unable to meet the real needs of disaster-affected communities (ALNAP 2008; 2011a; 2011b). With continual problems encountered in emergency response the humanitarian sector is again re-evaluating its approach to operations (DFID 2011a; IFRC 2012). It has been recognized that there needs to be a more strategic approach to programme planning that can look ahead, understand its long-term impacts, be more demand driven, and that can build the capacity of the affected population and national entities (Tearfund 2012; IFRC 2011; Oxfam 2011). Consequently current debate has enhanced its focus around the effect of relief interventions on recovery. ALNAP (2008) highlighted the need to avoid compromising recovery during relief interventions, pointing out that agencies should consider the likely impacts of an intervention on recovery, and whether a different approach might be better for recovery. DFID's most recent Humanitarian Emergency Response Review (HERR) states there is a need to fund recovery from day one; recognizing that their split funding model (e.g. relief, recovery, reconstruction) has caused a false dichotomy between these activities. The review found that what affected populations want and need the most is an immediate start to livelihoods recovery and that the neat donor split does not work to meet this need (DFID 2011b). The continual revival of this concept over the decades reveals the necessity and potential in this approach, but also the misconception and lack of conceptual clarity and physical capacity to practically implement such an approach. There is a clear need to find coherence between the false dichotomy between humanitarianism and development.

Haiti and its recovery deficit

The epicentre of the 2010 earthquake struck some of the most highly dense urban centres in the country, including the capital Port-au-Prince (PAP), where a ¼ of the 10.2 million population live (Government of Haiti 2010). Over 220,000 people were killed (UN-DESA 2010) and 1.5 million made homeless (IFRC 2010). Thousands of INGOs flooded the country in the following weeks (DEC 2011). With an immense emergency response and substantial funding received many of the 1.5 million homeless were placed in 1000's of tent cities in and around PAP until 2012. With the lack of government capacity, security issues, political upheaval, a severe lack of coordination and strategy within the humanitarian community a transition from the relief phase was incredibly problematic, resulting one year on in a prolonged relief situation that significantly hindered effective and sustainable recovery (DEC 2011).

Haiti was a large-scale, complex urban emergency and this complex urban disaster presented a mass of new challenges for humanitarian organisations who have been more used to rural settings (OCHA 2010). Issues such as, building demolition, debris management, road clearance, settlement planning, land tenure, property rights for owners and tenants resulted in a particularly complex operating environment for humanitarian organisations working in sectors such as shelter, camp coordination, camp management and early recovery (IFRC 2010). What became clear was the lack of strategy and leadership within the response and a fixation on a response model too rigid in its financing and operation to offer the flexibility and innovative thinking to strategically meet the needs of the affected population and allow transition and exit mechanisms to exist. The result was a protracted relief situation that left 1000s of tented camps un-served and with limited option for recovery. With limited contextual understanding due to a 'needs alone' assessment approach, there was little comprehension of the working environment, national systems, local capacity and local needs. Along with a weak ability and motivation to engage with key parties, such as government, the private sector and LNGOs. This is a consequence of an institutional approach to relief delivery, resulting in opportunities for developing strategy and capacity for effective exit and transitional mechanisms for essential services being missed. Supplying water to camps in Haiti was a clear example of

this. Most agencies opted to truck treated water to camps, which is an expensive undertaking, especially on such a vast scale. The Haitian Ministry for Water and Sanitation (DINEPA) wanted agencies to exit from trucking water after 6 months of the emergency, but agencies struggled to find alternatives, lacking the ability to exit from or transfer services. As a result water trucking continued for over 2 years with many desperately trying to hand over to the ill-prepared Ministry or just dropping services all together due to the lack of funds, which left communities un-served. In Haiti a huge opportunity was missed, as pre-earthquake there had been a massive network of water vendors operating all over the city, many of whom still had substantial capacity to deliver and many who could start up their business with a little extra support. Oxfam recognized this capacity and in partnership with DINEPA invested in the rehabilitating water vendors, as well as existing public tapstands (Oxfam 2011). Early 2011 IFRC began a strategy to take services out of camps and place them close to neighborhoods. The strategy saw the identification of households (HHs) within the camps who would be prepared to run a reservoir as a business in their community of origin. These HHs were then trained and capitalized. Camp residents were provided a 3 week subsidy: first week offered free water, 2nd & 3rd week offered 3 gourdes per bucket, by 4th week owners could buy/rent their own trucks. IFRC managed to close all 66 camps for WASH by November 2011 (King *forthcoming*). Utilising existing capacity and introducing neighborhood approaches could have been achieved at scale far earlier in the response. This would have built up relief service provision, as well as allowing transition and exit mechanisms to exist and sustainable services to be supported. A consequence would have been the stimulation of recovery early and the building up of resilience at the HH level. Current operational approaches within humanitarian responses hinder the ability to exit and transition effectively and control for potential negative impacts. This is a major concern the humanitarian sector needs to account for.

Resilience in the humanitarian sphere

The main components of resilience at the community level are the strength of relationships (i.e. with family members, friends, CBOs, community leaders, government representatives etc.), access to assets (i.e. house, bike, car, tools etc.), access to services (i.e. health facilities, water supply, sanitation etc.) and livelihood opportunities. In a post-disaster environment these are the crucial factors disaster affected populations need to ensure for their own survival and recovery, and building their resilience should be inherent in the emergency response model and supported by the humanitarian community. Resilience is inherent with survival and should be conceptualized in the emergency model. It is also intrinsically linked with humanitarian assistance, as humanitarian assistance heavily influence the resilience status of an affected community and therefore it needs to be evaluated and become apart of the discussion of resilience (Levine 2012). Resilience needs to be distinguished from concepts such as Build Back Better (BBB) and early recovery. BBB is an idolized concept, which requires heavy investment and huge capacity, but this is not the priority at the start of a response, the priority is to stabilize and recover. BBB can warp a realistic, contextually driven and devised approach; it misses a step. A step of a rapid, stabilized and sustainable recovery that would help achieve such BBB results. The concept of 'early recovery' sees its initiatives relegated to a 'phased' approach that comes into play 3-6 months after the disaster; recovery should be considered from day one and not as a stage along an operational process. Resilience is about survival – getting a HH back on their feet. Resilience should be seen as the missing building block to the stimulation of recovery and allow concepts, such as BBB to be achieved. The concept of resilience in the humanitarian sphere offers the ability to increase coherence between relief, recovery and development (ALNAP 2012). Issuing the need to conceptualise and mainstream the concept of resilience in its practical application in the humanitarian sphere.

Resilience Building Initiatives (RBIs)

Resilience Building Initiatives (RBIs) are operational approaches that could be undertaken by agencies in their emergency response to support community level resilience. Below gives a few examples of RBIs that can realistically be undertaken as a part of the response model:

- **A business model approach, which** looks to help reinstate previous and foster new service provision (i.e. water kiosks, public latrines, health services), help develop local markets through cash and voucher systems, foster local partnerships, and create funds that support entrepreneurs. **An example of a business model intervention- rehabilitating local water vendors:** first assess pre-existing service provision for water supply. If there is local capacity locate this capacity in the areas of operation. Assess capacity needs and supply support where necessary, this could be rehabilitation of a reservoir, delivery points, capital or subsidy for the purchase of chlorination products, containers/bags etc. A small level of support will significantly scale up capacity to deliver a water supply locally and sustainably.

- **A neighbourhood approach**, which localises interventions by either supporting affected communities in their place of habitation, rehabilitating place of original habitation for a rapid return and/or supporting host families. This moves programmes away from the default camp model. Depending on scale of displaced persons and the operating environment this approach can be integrated to varying degrees. The approach offers an alternative strategy for shelter and basic service provision that builds resilience by allowing relationships in the community to stay strong, the opportunity to develop sustainable services, as well as the creation of livelihoods. **An example of a neighbourhood intervention- cash transfers for host families:** in many crisis events affected people rely heavily on support networks like family and friends many of whom will host affected persons. Supporting host families to maintain the extra people in the HH will ensure an alternative strategy to reliance on camps, supporting affected people whilst they pursue their own recovery strategies.
- **A demand-led approach**, this approach aims to build strong community participation from the beginning allowing HHs to become informed decision-makers, develop ownership, manage expectations and make the most of peoples skills and strengths. This approach will allow for more sustainable, transferable service options, options that can develop local business, bringing a cost-recovery mechanism in that will naturally scale up, and provide longer-term services and livelihoods. **An example of a demand-led intervention- HH latrine construction:** this can take place in a camp or neighbourhood setting, where the community are consulted to understand their sanitary needs, gauging skills available. If sufficient skill capacity exists HHs will be given tools and materials or in applicable situations a voucher system (to stimulate the local market), along with technical advice if necessary to construct their own HH latrines. Quality of construction will be checked and HHs supported. This intervention allows for significantly more latrines to be constructed in a short time, HHs develop ownership for latrine maintenance, which moves responsibility away from the agency, and it offers skills training in construction and maintenance methods HHs can use to sustain latrines in the future.

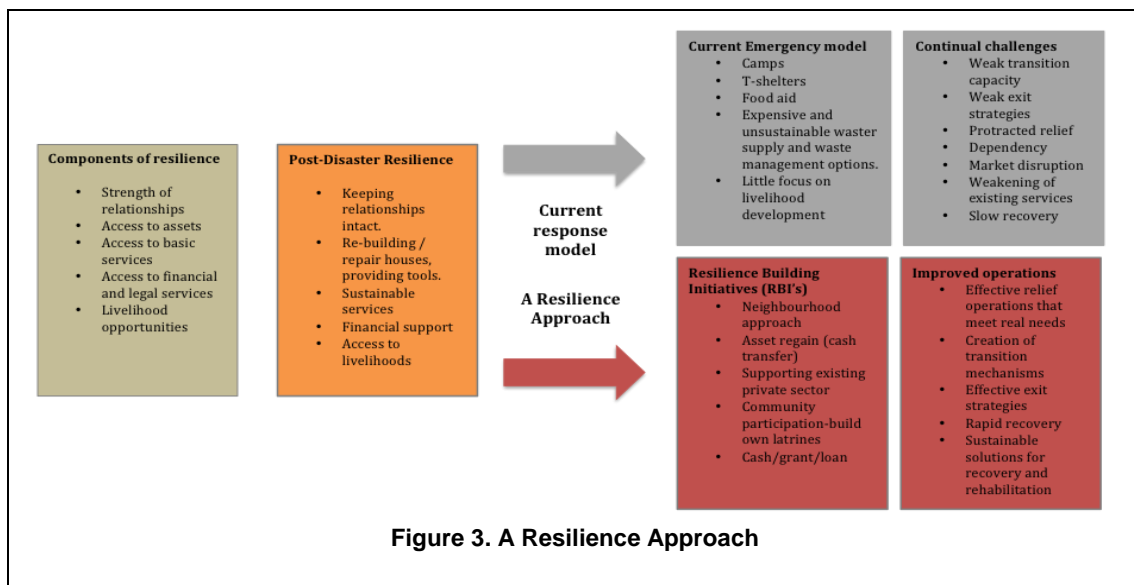


Figure 3. A Resilience Approach

Mainstreaming resilience

To allow RBIs to be undertaken there is a need for strategic changes at the programmatic level and at the sectoral level. Innovations need to be found within the funding framework, i.e. the provision of flexible funding to allow for a variety of necessary interventions to meet needs at the correct times along the emergency response. Enhancing coordination capacity, i.e. aligning activities within and between clusters to enable programmes to support rapid and inclusive outputs. Develop strategic capacity, i.e. optimising the use of the Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) at an inter-cluster level to offer the capacity to evaluate and prioritise activity for both relief and recovery. SAG under this capacity could offer a longer-term vision disseminating strategic ideas to donors, the government and response agencies, offering much needed operational strategic guidance. Many structural and operational areas need to be evaluated and re-designed if we are to see the true optimization a resilience approach could bring to emergency response operations (see Figure 3.).

Conclusion

A resilience approach can offer the innovative strategies to meet the continual challenges experienced by the humanitarian community; improving the ability of response operations to meet the real needs of the affected communities to which the sector is mandated to support. Through the integration of RBIs in response programming recovery will be stimulated from day one and a legacy of sustainable options will be left by response agencies to support rehabilitation. Offering the link and coherence so desperately needed between relief, recovery and development. Many areas need to be re-evaluated at the programmatic and sectoral level, as this approach looks to re-define the current operational paradigm, including areas such as, funding architecture, the humanitarian operational framework, coordination capacity, strategic capacity, assessments and programme planning. A resilience approach within humanitarian operations offers the insight and strategy needed if we are to find the solutions to the continual problems being faced by the humanitarian community.

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