



Rebuilding Homes - Rebuilding Lives



Rebuilding Homes - Rebuilding Lives Coastal Settlements Sustainable Recovery Program

CSSR

The People's Process: At work in Dedaye

Cyclone Nargis devastated over 42,194 households in the coastal township of Dedaye which was directly on the path of the Category 5 Cyclone when it made landfall on May 2nd, 2008. Over 98% of all households in the area were affected. Efforts by the humanitarian community and international agencies have since addressed the needs of approximately 10,749 of these households through provision of material support, cash grants and/or a small number of rebuilds. This leaves a gap of 31,445 houses belonging to the most vulnerable families that are yet to be supported with any type of shelter assistance. Traditional bigger agencies continue to operate in other townships in the Delta such as Bogale, Labutta and Pyapon, but only a few agencies continue to operate in Dedaye.

The "Rebuilding Homes - Rebuilding Lives" Coastal Settlements Sustainable Recovery (CSSR) program aims to help communities rebuild their own homes. The process begins when UN-Habitat's Community Mobilizers visit the affected areas to establish rapport within the communities. Then the Community Mobilizers help to organize a mass meeting during which residents are encouraged to understand the need to organize themselves. At this meeting, the community nominates the individuals to represent them on the Village Shelter Recovery Committee (VSRC) which is the body that will work directly with UN-Habitat during project implementation. The VSRC is generally comprised of 10 to 12 members, of which 4 members occupy the leadership positions of Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and Asst. Treasurer. UN-Habitat provides training to guide members in best practices for committees, such as ensuring representation of all village inhabitants, training on quality control, procurement, finance and bookkeeping. Selection of individual beneficiaries has to be a transparent process. The VSRC convenes a meeting with the entire community, during which beneficiaries are selected.



community-driven

Community Action Planning (CAP)

Rather than simply creating a "wish list" of what community members want in general, Community Action Planning (CAP) is meant to be a process through which the community learns to work together to understand their situation in the wake of the disaster, and the steps needed to move towards holistic development. The role of UN-Habitat is to support this process.

The vehicle for Community Action Planning (CAP) is the workshop where community members interact as partners with UN-Habitat staff to determine priorities and plan the implementation of a project. These workshops had already been carried out in the target villages when UN-Habitat's other Human Settlements Support programmes were initiated in 2009. Since in the CSSR program supported by USAID, the problem to be solved had already been identified - namely lack of adequate shelter- the remaining task was to sort out which shelters to categorize as "destroyed" (and hence in need of total rebuilding) and which shelters to categorize as "damaged" (meaning that they could still be repaired). These decisions were taken by the community and the VSRCs in consultation with UN-Habitat's engineers.

For the CSSR program, an additional step was to select the community carpenters. The carpenters receive a toolkit, and training from UN-Habitat in "building back better" with Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) building techniques. The carpenters must come from the beneficiary community, possess a strong sense of community spirit and service, not have any issues of dependency on alcohol or drugs, and be of good physical and mental health. They must already practice carpentry or similar trade as a livelihood activity. The toolkits provided also improve the capacity of the carpenters for income generation and ensure sustainability of transferred capacities and skills. Next, a market survey was conducted so as to select materials. Generally five factors need to be considered in the choice of materials: local availability, suitability for "building back better", environmental impact, quality and cost. For instance, timber may be the best all-round material but its cost is high and it may not always be available for purchase locally.

rebuilding communities



Home is not just a roof over one's head. It is a symbol of warmth, security and identity.

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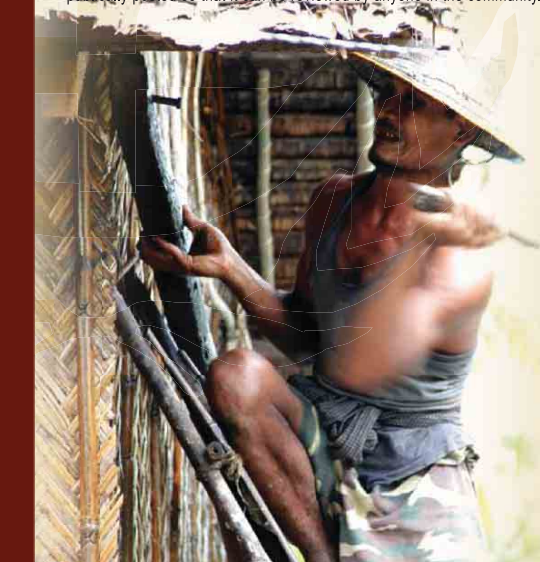
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No matter where we live,
home is part of what we are

Community Contracts

Once designs for house construction/retrofitting have been agreed upon, UN-Habitat signs a contract with the VSRC which specifies the work to be performed, its duration and the schedule of payments to be made by UN-Habitat. The allocated funds are disbursed in two installments; only 80% of funds are released at the inception. The remaining 20% is given once a benchmark of works stipulated by the contract is completed. The VSRC is responsible for paying the carpenters, other artisans and laborers, and for disbursing funds for the purchase of materials. In the interest of transparency, the amount given to each VSRC and then to each group of beneficiaries, is publicly posted so that it can be reviewed by anyone in the community.



Holistic Community Interventions

The CSSR program builds upon projects already implemented by UN-Habitat in Dedaye Township. UN-Habitat has been operational since 2008 in Dedaye. It now has a field office and dedicated support staff successfully implementing major Settlement Support Programmes (Water Sanitation and Hygiene Education or "WASH", Infrastructure, Livelihoods and other DRR activities). This gives UN-Habitat a comparative advantage since its Community Mobilizers are already known to the communities concerned. Also, the CSSR program is benefiting from the improvements to roads and bridges undertaken under the other programs.

The fundamental difference between the CSSR and previous UN-Habitat programs in Dedaye, is that CSSR targets individual households, whereas previous interventions targeted community infrastructure projects such as ponds and cisterns for rainwater harvesting (potable water). The programs, while financially and administratively separate, complement each other, providing more holistic rehabilitation for the community and its inhabitants.

Supporting the Most Vulnerable

UN-Habitat first selected the 50 worst affected villages in Dedaye for community-wide interventions. Of these 50 villages, 22 were selected for the CSSR program, based on damage assessments perceived vulnerability to future cyclones and flooding due to their low-lying locations and/or proximity to the sea. Their selection was also based on the experience of Nargis and even more recent storms. Finally, the villages selected are located in relatively inaccessible areas and hence have benefited the least from aid and recovery efforts by other humanitarian organizations during the two years following Nargis.

Within villages, the community members themselves have selected the individual beneficiaries. The basic criterion of selection has been to choose those families and individuals who are not capable of repairing or rebuilding their own homes. This includes elderly and differently-abled persons that have no family support; women-headed households with low income levels; widows; laborers with low income levels who do not possess any shelter and who do not have any fixed income; and poor households that are caring for orphans and homeless families. Priority has been given to such people currently living in structurally unsafe dwellings such as tents, camps or makeshift huts precariously constructed from weak, low quality and/or temporary materials like tarpaulin roofing. These dwellings are unsafe because they will not withstand future storms- indeed many such makeshift huts have been washed away by subsequent monsoons. All of these families and individuals have faced acute water and sanitation problems that in many instances have already been addressed by UN-Habitat interventions. There is still a need however, as some villages and many individual households within villages are still lacking basic facilities.

Expected Accomplishments

The program will ensure that a total number of 1,650 households will be direct beneficiaries of safer disaster-resilient shelters, with access to safe water and sanitation. The program will target the the vulnerable and most vulnerable groups within the community, as identified by the criteria for selection.

- 800 of the most vulnerable families supported with NEW disaster resilient and safer shelters

- 850 additional families provided with structurally strengthened and RETRO-FITTED safer shelters.



ABC
principle

Anchoring
Bracing
Continuity

Crosscutting Issues

Rebuilding with DRR Principles

96 Community Carpenters, Masons and other Artisans are trained specifically in DRR construction techniques. They receive one day of classroom training, and four days of training in the field, building a model DRR shelter for a beneficiary. One of the concepts conveyed during training is the "ABC Principle" or Anchoring, Bracing and Continuity. Anchoring means that every part of the shelter must be fixed to the structure's frame. Bracing means that every part of the structure must use diagonal bracing to keep it rigid so that it cannot tilt, slide or rotate. Continuity means that the structure must be interconnected and secured to the ground with footings embedded at least 2 feet into the ground. Organization and sensitization of the community, along with the formation of VSRCs is vital for Disaster Risk Reduction. Thus, if there is another cyclone or similar event, the community will be in a better position to respond and organize quickly for recovery.

Rebuilding in Environmentally Sustainable Manner

Potential environmental impacts are considered during construction planning, so as to have the least negative impact. During the construction process, UN-Habitat takes all necessary precautions to minimise environmental disturbance to the project area and surroundings and to prevent the escape of polluting substances into streams, water courses, and groundwater. There are no protected areas in the program area.

Gender Mainstreaming at all Stages of Projects

UN-Habitat stipulates that 50% of the VSRC membership must be comprised of women. VSRC formation provides an ideal opportunity for women to engage, not just as participants, but also in community leadership roles- it is also stipulated that of the four leadership positions in the VSRC (Chariman, Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer), one must be a woman. This can be a hugely positive component of post-disaster recovery. While the women of this region do not normally derive their livelihood from carpentry, masonry or other related construction trades, they can acquire the skills necessary for monitoring of basic construction activities if given quite simple training.

