World Reconstruction Conference 3

Promoting Resilience Through Post-Crisis Recovery
Brussels, Belgium | June 6-8, 2017

PANEL SESSION

From Local Government to Civil Society, from Urban to Rural Settings: Making Recovery Inclusive

Monday, May 13, 2019, Time: 16:00 - 17:30, Room 1

Discussion paper

Introduction

The World Reconstruction Conference advances policy dialogue and global knowledge about disaster recovery and reconstruction efforts based on experiences and insights from in a wide variety of different contexts. The 2019 WRC4 has made its thematic focus *inclusion*, which refers to the active participation of marginalized groups, attention to differential impacts and outcomes of disaster for specific populations, local needs (privileging bottom-up approaches), and the need to build local government capacity wherever possible.

> *"The overall goal of the WRC4 is to build consensus and to renew and accelerate efforts towards realizing inclusive recovery processes. The conference will discuss the challenges and inherent biases in the process of recovery and the reasons for which certain population groups are systematically excluded.*

The management of disasters, international development, human settlement planning and climate change adaptation has undergone considerable transformation. The recent adoption of a set of inter-related international agreements have mainstreamed inclusion, Disaster Risk Reduction and resilience strategies in all aspects of international development action. These are:

- The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030) - March 2015
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development & Sustainable Development Goals - September 2015
- The Paris Agreement on Climate Change - December 2015
- The Habitat III New Urban Agenda - October 2016.

With these frameworks firmly in place and momentum towards the goals that each has set underway, we are supposed to move from statements of aspiration to direct implementation ("how" to live up to commitments made). We have made strides in recent years in recognizing the nature of marginalization, vulnerability and impacts that reverse human development gains, but when it comes to inclusive recovery, evaluations of current and past practice tell us we still have much to learn. This panel session offers conference participants an opportunity to discuss where we find ourselves today and what changes we must implement to turn words like inclusion into concrete recovery strategies and calls to action.

Inclusiveness in the Sendai Framework

The Preamble to the Sendai Framework states, "*there has to be a broader and a more people-centred, preventive approach to disaster risk. Disaster risk reduction practices need to be multi-hazard and multisectoral, inclusive and accessible in order to be efficient and effective. While recognizing their leading, regulatory and coordination role, governments should engage with relevant stakeholders, including women, children and youth, persons with disabilities, poor people, migrants, indigenous peoples, volunteers, the community of practitioners and older persons in the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards. There is a need for the public and private sectors and civil society organizations, as well as academia and scientific and research institutions, to work more closely together and to create opportunities for collaboration, and for businesses to integrate disaster risk into their management practices.*"

Among the Sendai Framework's Guiding Principles, inclusiveness is also highlighted:

- *Disaster risk reduction requires an all-of-society engagement and partnership. It requires empowerment and inclusive, accessible and non-discriminatory participation, paying special attention to people disproportionately affected by disasters, especially the poorest. A gender, age, disability and cultural perspective should be integrated in all policies and practices, and women and youth leadership should be promoted.*
- *While the enabling, guiding and coordinating role of national and federal State Governments remain essential, it is necessary to empower local authorities and local communities to reduce disaster risk, including through resources, incentives and decision-making responsibilities.*

In the Priorities for Action, inclusiveness is framed as vital knowledge to improve interventions and outcomes:

- *To empower local authorities… to work and coordinate with civil society, communities and indigenous peoples and migrants in disaster risk management at the local level;*
- *To ensure the use of traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and practices to complement scientific knowledge… and implementation of policies, strategies, plans and programmes, …which should be tailored to localities and to the context.*
- *Enhancing preparedness and to "Build Back Better" in recovery includes empowering women and persons with disabilities to publicly lead and promote gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches.*

Background / Concepts

The term inclusiveness, as used in relation to disaster recovery, points to the need to incorporate principles of social justice, equity and empowerment as the foundation for every recovery effort. Today, there is increasing recognition that recovery approaches that do not engage local communities and marginalized groups result in failure. Similarly, hard-won knowledge recorded by research scientists and expert practitioners demonstrates that local government leadership is critical for recovery success and building the capacity of local governments affected by disaster requires greater attention and serious investment. CSOs are also needed to play a transformative role in recovery management through community-based efforts, participatory methodologies, and advocacy.

> *"A better appreciation of what constitutes a disaster and a more effective means of responding to it will require the positive and intelligent participation of those most at risk or otherwise directly involved"* (Bankoff, 2001, p. 80).

Another interpretation of inclusiveness that has the potential to improve disaster recovery systems and practices places emphasis on wide and all-encompassing participation as a basis for achieving improved outcomes. Inclusive disaster recovery forces us to concentrate less on the creation of bureaucracy, hierarchy, specialization, and authority, and more on advocacy, participation and democratic processes that foreground what for government, international organizations and donors are often non-traditional stakeholders to the recovery decision-making and policy process. Success is dependent on stakeholder processes that rely on collaborative and transparent approaches to information, organization, procedures, damage evaluation and recovery finances.

Most recovery efforts put control of vision, strategy and process in the hands of a powerful few, which raises questions about inclusiveness and the political nature of recovery efforts. Stakeholders that are included in these processes tend to be sought out for their control of or access to specific resources, financial assets or technical capacities. This overlooks stakeholders that represent grassroots interests, such as civil society organizations and certain NGOs that represent the interests of civil society and can be called upon to advocate for the disenfranchised and enforce ideals of diversity, equality, and social justice. Additional stakeholders to any recovery effort include impacted populations themselves, who can positively influence outcomes by giving voice to local needs, identifying who has been left out and is suffering disproportionately, providing insights about indigenous / local knowledge and vital understandings about culture and context.

> *"Resiliency also applies to the process of recovery planning in which all affected stakeholders – rather than just a powerful few – have a voice in how their community is to be rebuilt"* (Berke & Campanella, 2006, p. 193).

In the past, recovery efforts have chosen to define stakeholders to the recovery process narrowly, repeating a pattern of exclusion and marginalization that silences the voices and perspectives of those directly affected by disaster. This has, in part, been brought on by the need to make decisions quickly and respond to situations of great urgency in a timely manner. Yet, over decades of experience, we have measured the outcomes of rapid decision-making during recovery and found that the exclusion of relevant stakeholders has led to resistance, frustration, and a sense of dispossession that can hinder progress towards recovery priorities.

The exclusion of critical stakeholders can also include local governments, whose governance structures, institutions and capacity are impacted by the event. Community services may be curtailed at precisely the time when they are most needed due to personnel shortages, worker displacement, loss of life, damage to government facilities and equipment, or the destruction of public records.

> *"After a disaster, local government may be incapacitated, morale may be low, and there may be shortages of resources, skills, and leadership. National and international assistance may be needed and government may need to work with external actors, including the military, inter-government agencies, and social and community leadership structures"* (Local Disaster Recovery Framework, p. 5).

With local government leaders trying to cope with roles and responsibilities that have taken on a new sense of urgency, they will need uncommon levels of support and instead of being excluded from recovery planning processes due to a lack of capacity, should be provided with resources and technical assistance to enable them to carry out their functions.

Issues Related to the Topic

Participatory processes can create the conditions for success by building relationships of trust and cooperation between national, provincial, and local governments and their constituents. When recovery priorities are crafted in an inclusive manner, policy makers can win broad-based support for recovery and rebuilding priorities that emerge from these processes. Authorities tasked with recovery planning and implementation will garner a more nuanced understanding of the needs within local communities or among the members of specific groups.

While participatory processes introduce new layers of complexity in already difficult recovery landscapes, research and performance evaluation on these efforts has repeatedly shown that inclusive planning processes produce social cohesion around a shared set of goals. Participation increases inclusiveness and allows those that usually have little power a voice with which to express their perspectives and priorities related to policies and programmes that might affect their well-being or ability to recover. Inclusive recovery processes increase the quality of projects, as well as their equity, far-sightedness, and sustainability. They build capacity by creating new skills and opportunities for constituents and create widespread ownership and support for programming.

The outcome of the relationship-building work that is the foundation of any inclusive process leads to support for government priorities, builds communication channels that can be used to raise awareness about changing conditions and the need for reforms, and capacity for public dialogue. Open channels of communication prevent the marginalization of certain groups or households, disparities in services, and inequitable outcomes.

Panel Members

Mr. Kiyoshi Murakami
- Special Representative of Mayor & Senior Executive Advisor for the City of Rikuzentakata - Iwate, Japan
- Special Advisor to President and Visiting Professor, Iwate University, Japan

Mr. Shinichi Takahashi
- Vice Mayor, Sendai City, Japan

Mr. Bijay Kumar
- Executive Director, Global Network of Civil Society Organisations for Disaster Reduction (GNDR)

Ms. Mino Harivelo Ramaroson
- Africa Regional Coordinator, Huairou Commission

Ms. Fatouma Awaleh Osman
- Mayor of the Capital and President of the Council of Djibouti City

Moderator

Dr. Laura Olson
- Associate Faculty, Royal Roads University School of Humanitarian Studies
- Distinguished Affiliate Faculty, Jacksonville State University, Emergency Management
- Co-Chair, Training & Education, Culture & Disaster Action Network (CADAN)

Questions / Challenges to be Discussed

Each panel member worked with the moderator to define two questions that they prepared answers to in advance of the panel session. They are listed here:

- *Insert questions when they are finalized.*

Conclusion

Disasters are increasing in frequency and intensity, exacerbated by climate change, and are impeding progress towards sustainable development. While there is strong agreement that every recovery strategy must have a strong participatory methodology that allows those implementing recovery to capture the viewpoints, vision and clearly articulated needs of local peoples and empower local government leadership, inclusiveness in recovery remains a challenge.

Yet, learning "how to" design and implement inclusive recovery processes will be worth the effort. Open, inclusive planning builds civic mindedness and trust in government officials, and an understanding of disaster from the viewpoint of those affected can lead to the design of greatly improved recovery programs. Human needs in post-disaster environments include gender equity, human rights, social justice, dignity, decent work and sustainable livelihoods, health and well-being, and people's desire to be agents in their own recovery. Recovery efforts that exclude local people, vulnerable populations, and civil society organizations, and which fail to provide needed support for local governments will exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities and increase level of risk.

References / Reading Material

- Bankoff, Gregory (2001). Rendering the World Unsafe: 'Vulnerability' as Western Discourse. *Disasters, 25*(1), 16.
- Berke, Phillip R., & Campanella, Thomas J. (2006). Planning for Postdisaster Resiliency. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 604*(Special Issue: Shelter from the Storm: Repairing the National Emergency Management System after Hurricane Katrina), 16.
- GFDRR (2019). Local Disaster Recovery Framework Guide: Consultation Version to be launched at WRC4.
- GFDRR (2019). WRC4 Concept Note: Inclusion for Resilient Recovery. https://www.gfdrr.org/sites/default/files/WRC4%20Concept%20Note.pdf
- UNISDR (2015). Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction: