

# Promoting People-Centred, Post-Conflict, and Post-Disaster Recovery **4**

*Prior to establishing its ROAP-Fukuoka, UN-HABI TAT had already been working on behalf of the UN system to help returning populations displaced by wars and civil conflicts in countries, such as Lebanon, Rwanda, and Afghanistan, to reconstruct their houses and settlements. Given the successes achieved in those earlier experiences, UN-HABI TAT's ROAP-Fukuoka has continued to expand its work in this field on the understanding that well-conceived rehabilitation approaches can also serve as a means of rebuilding trust and collaboration between and within communities affected by violence, civil conflict, and war. More recently, its services were called upon in response to the December 2004 tsunami and the earthquake in Pakistan, where the scale of destruction called for large-scale and prompt responses for reconstruction and recovery. By supporting a People's Process of Recovery, UN-HABI TAT was able to demonstrate that a seamless transition from Relief to Recovery can be achieved in a more effective and sustainable manner.*

With UN-HABI TAT's decades of experience working with the urban poor and their supporters, the ROAP-Fukuoka has developed various mechanisms to support community-based approaches to urban poverty. Because of the many similarities between poor urban squatters and slum dwellers, on the one hand, and refugees and disaster survivors, on the other, such as destitution, homelessness, and stressful uncertainty about the future, these community-building and -strengthening approaches have proved highly relevant and effective in post-conflict and post-disaster reconstruction and recovery work.



*Survivors of the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan had to seek temporary shelter in tents until their houses were reconstructed.*



*A key step in rebuilding housing and public services in Afghanistan was establishing Community Development Councils.*

## **Post Conflict, Community-Based Reconstruction and Recovery**

Supporting reconstruction in Afghanistan

UN-HABI TAT's assistance in Afghanistan in 1996, when virtual anarchy prevailed, involved working directly with the people in the cities of Kabul, Herat, and Mazar-e-Sharif where local governments had totally collapsed. In response to the wide variety of needs of the people in these cities, two types of activities were supported: Community Forums and Infrastructure Repair Programmes.

Community Forums were established for communities to identify their needs and address them directly. At a time when women were not allowed to go out to work and girls were barred from attending schools, the Community Forums became the central point for women and girls to carry out economic

activities and learning. The Community Forums managed and implemented improvements in water supply, drainage, garbage removal, and other urban services that immediately benefited people's daily lives. At the same time such activities also created employment in these economically- devastated communities.



*Improvement activities create gainful employment in devastated communities, accomplishing two purposes at once.*

In parallel, the Infrastructure Repair Programme supported repairs to priority medium-scale infrastructure, such as wells and drainage systems. This meant these activities that met people's most urgent needs were attended to at a very basic level, while the country was in a state of continuous war.

Following the establishment of the transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban, Afghani refugees living in neighbouring countries and internally displaced people (IDPs) returned in large numbers. This put growing pressure on the informal settlements areas of the Kabul municipality and made existing service deficiencies even worse, heightening tensions between the municipality and the returnees.

In Shomali Plain, just north of Kabul, which had been on the front line of the war, the destruction of housing and infrastructure had reduced the villages to piles of rubble and mud. In 2002, people started returning to Shomali Plain in large numbers to claim their land and houses. UN-HABI TAT assisted 3,300 families to rebuild their housing within just three months to shelter them from the onset of the harsh winter. More than 10,000 other families in the cities of Kabul, Kandahar, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Jalalabad were also assisted in rebuilding their houses with funding mainly from the Government of Japan.



*UN-HABI TAT assisted 3,300 families to construct houses.*

Under its Improved Shelter and Urban Governance for Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons project, UN-HABI TAT supported the re-integration of returnees and IDPs into the Afghani social, economic, and administrative system. It did this by tackling their desperate need for shelter and essential services through neighbourhood-wide participatory planning and through improving their practical day-to-day relationships with the municipality.

A key step of the project was to set up Community Development Councils (CDCs) to identify needs and to manage activities to meet them using funding from limited-block grants of about \$20,000 per council, called Neighbourhood Investment Funds (NIFs). To address inter-neighbourhood shared service needs, Area Development Councils (ADCs) were also created to draw on planned Area Investment Funds (AIFs) of about \$240,000. During the project's operating period (2001-2005), 30 CDCs and 5 ADCs were set up and 69 NIF and 17 AIF projects were planned and implemented.



*Providing access to safe water supplies was a high priority.*

This project paved the way for the World Bank-funded citywide Kabul Urban Reconstruction Programme (KURP).

Currently, the UN-HABI TAT programme in Afghanistan covers both urban and rural areas and provides assistance at a number of levels. At the central level, it provides advice to the central government through the Ministry of Urban Development (MUD) on urban land management, municipal law, capacity building for Ministry staff, and institutional restructuring of the MUD itself.

At the municipal level, UN-HABI TAT has implemented urban-upgrading projects in Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kandahar, and Jalalabad. One of the significant achievements of the upgrading programme is the regularisation of settlements and the granting of secure tenure to the residents. In Kandahar alone, 3,500 families have received land titles.

Having observed the success of the Community Forums, the Transitional Government of 2002 invited UN-HABI TAT to design the National Solidarity Programme, a nationwide programme to empower communities to elect their CDCs and to be responsible for the planning and implementation of projects to meet their immediate needs. UN-HABI TAT is currently implementing the programme in nine Provinces covering 3,010 rural communities.

CDC members plan and prepare local development proposals funded with small block grants of up to \$60,000. Additionally, UN-HABI TAT has been supporting these communities, and especially women, through training CDC and community members in literacy, as well as organising savings and credit groups. Currently, there are 900 savings groups functioning and it is planned to extend the programme to cover 3,500 communities.

### **Post-Disaster Reconstruction and Recovery**

Post-tsunami activities in Indonesia The 26 December 2004 earthquake and subsequent tsunami took more than 200,000 lives in Aceh province on the island of Sumatra in Indonesia.



*Total devastation in Banda Aceh caused by December 2004 tsunami.*

At least 150,000 houses were destroyed and another 40,000 damaged. Hundreds of thousands of survivors, numbed by the loss of their loved ones, their homes, and their livelihoods, were given emergency shelter, food, and medical assistance in rapidly set-up camps and temporary housing, or 'barracks', as they are called in Indonesia.



*Housing constructed through a process led by the tsunami survivors themselves.*

*Involving affected families directly is at the heart of the recovery process.*



Working with regional and local NGOs, as well as national government and international agencies, UN-HABI TAT in collaboration with UNDP started assessing the damage and exploring the best way to support survivors to restore their lives, families, communities, and economic activities. The scale and complexity of the disaster posed enormous challenges to fashion an effective response that would not compromise the rights and aspirations of the survivors themselves by, for example, forcing people to resettle in new housing sites far away from their former villages and neighbourhoods where they had lived and worked for generations.

From the start, UN-HABI TAT felt that the recovery could avoid such mistakes and use funds and other resources efficiently, if it was solidly based on sincere and equitable partnerships among survivors and the various agencies coming forward to assist them. UN-HABI TAT's Aceh-Nias Settlements Support Programme (ANSSP),

formulated in January 2005, is still being implemented in six districts of Aceh (Aceh Besar, Banda Aceh, Pidie, Simeulue, Nias, and Bireuen) and in North Sumatra.

#### **The ANSSP carries out:**

- Rehabilitation and reconstruction of housing and infrastructure
- Introduction of risk mitigation infrastructure
- Mapping of basic information at settlement level
- Provision of technical assistance
- Policy guidance to the Aceh Nias Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (BRR)

Rather than being relegated to the role of helpless, passive recipients, the programme's strategy ensures that the affected families are at the centre of the recovery process. The community-led planning and physical reconstruction approach helps survivors in communities to recover psychologically and socially, too, by enabling them to collectively gather information and make decisions on all critical aspects of rebuilding their settlements. This results in cohesive communities and families that are fully involved in regaining control over their lives and shaping their own futures.



*Working together to help each other, community members increase their capabilities and broaden their social horizons.*

A people-centred approach also draws on local wisdom and fosters innovation in resolving problems, including settling land disputes, determining village priorities, and sharing common resources, such as water and forests. As communities take on these responsibilities, they gradually regain their confidence and optimism, and begin to revive their networks of mutual support that are vital in times

of distress. Working together to help each other, community members, and especially women, expand their capabilities and their social horizons to achieve a full and sustainable recovery.

Two years after the tsunami struck, the people's own efforts had resulted in the successful construction of over 3,450 permanent houses.

## Supporting a People's Process of Recovery in Pakistan

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2005, an earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale devastated 30,000 sq km of two mountainous provinces in northern Pakistan: Pakistan-Administered Kashmir and the North West Frontier Province (NWFP). It left over 70,000 people dead, almost 70,000 people injured, and 3.5 million homeless. It destroyed or seriously damaged 600,000 houses in 4,000 villages. This amounted to the destruction of 76 percent of the entire housing stock of the affected provinces. In addition, local forms of livelihood were destroyed and services disrupted.

The Government of Pakistan established the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) to tackle the massive reconstruction effort. UN-HABITAT currently provides technical support to the ERRA in the housing sector and issues related to landlessness caused by the earthquake.

ERRA has adopted a policy of supporting people to rebuild their housing. Individual families rebuild their housing with Government financial assistance of

US\$2,800 for a destroyed house and US\$1,250 for a damaged house. The money is disbursed in instalments to households that rebuild in compliance with ERRA's earthquake-resistant building standards. To ensure the success of such an approach, UN-HABITAT, together with Pakistani and international civil society organizations, plays a lead role in developing the skills and capacities of those involved in rebuilding, helping them understand and apply earthquake-resistant housing reconstruction policies, principles, and techniques.

People affected by the disaster are placed at the centre of the process of recovery and reconstruction. In Pakistan, with a changed focus from building houses for people to supporting people to re-build safer housing by themselves, limited financial resources were used more effectively and enabled the remarkable levels of progress achieved by the people in rebuilding safer homes for themselves and their families.

These achievements confirmed the value of supporting a people's process for a seamless transition from relief to recovery.