

Response to Conflicts and Disasters

The Challenge

In the wake of a crisis, whether a catastrophic event or a conflict, social and economic disruption is an unavoidable consequence and a dreadful reminder of how fragile human settlements and livelihood activities can be. Rebuilding communities and the livelihoods of those most vulnerable becomes a top priority for decision-makers and local administrators. In post-crisis reconstruction, creating decent jobs is an immediate and central need. There is a need for crisis victims and their families to get back an income, as well as dignity, self-confidence, hope, and a stake in the reconciliation and reconstruction of their communities. Employment contributes to short-term stability, reintegration, economic growth and sustainable peace. It can: *i)* support ex-combatants and returnees while sustainable reintegration efforts are being put in place; *ii)* bring home the peace dividend to communities most affected by conflict; and *iii)* provide the groundwork for a new development trajectory.

The ILO Response

The ILO was established in response to a crisis as part of the reconstruction and peace building after World War I. Its work on crisis response intensified in the 1990s with the setting up of a programme on the reintegration of demobilized ex-combatants and another on skills and entrepreneurship training for countries emerging from armed conflict. By 2008 the International Programme on Crisis Response and Reconstruction had been established to spearhead the ILO's response to natural disasters and post-conflict environments. Since then the ILO has been working in several conflict-affected countries including Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka, as well as disaster-affected countries such as China, Indonesia, Madagascar, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Haiti following the 2010 earthquake.

The role of the ILO in crisis response focuses on "framing" or "influencing" the design and implementation of internationally supported programmes on crisis response and reconstruction so that they explicitly take account of decent work concerns. Acting as a facilitator for preparedness, initial response, capacity building and strategic partnerships, it is responsible for supporting its field offices in iden-

tifying entry points for livelihood recovery and providing the analysis needed for a meaningful contribution to the "one-UN" response. It focuses on:

- **knowledge management and capacity development**, including the development of tailor-made tools and guidelines;
- **support to country-level activities in crisis response and preparedness** including:
 - initial livelihood assessments;
 - policy advice to constituents and interventions in the immediate aftermath of a crisis; and
 - technical cooperation on employment creation and decent work post-conflict or post-disaster;
- **strengthening strategic partnerships and participation in core crisis response coordination frameworks** with other UN and non-UN organizations.

It does this through:

- **Post-conflict employment creation, income generation and reintegration**: in 2009 the programme helped develop and launch the UN Policy for Post-Conflict Employment Creation, Income Generation and Reintegration and its Operational Guidance Note, now being rolled out in selected countries. Under this framework, specific initiatives to foster employment to support peace and stability in the Horn of Africa and in Northern African countries began in 2011 in partnership with the African Union and regional intergovernmental organizations such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. Moreover, the programme is working towards the establishment of a Global Facility for Employment Creation in Fragile Situations in coordination with World Bank, African Development Bank, UN Economic Commission for Africa, UNDP and Peace Building Support Office. The Facility aims at promoting common approaches and joint programming for employment generation in fragile and conflict states with a view to reducing the duplication of efforts, maximizing synergies and impact.
- **Reintegration of ex-combatants, refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) into the community**: the ILO provides a policy framework and practical technical guidance on how to provide opportunities for decent work to ex-combatants and their community members to enable them to move on from a war-torn past to a productive future.

- **Local economic recovery:** in collaboration with the UN established Early Recovery Cluster, the ILO promotes employment recovery opportunities at the local level where reintegration ultimately takes place. Key programmes in this area include:
 - capacity development of local stakeholders, including the private sector;
 - local economic recovery programmes developed in consultation with local stakeholders, aiming at the expansion of the private sector and direct employment-support services.
- **Preparedness for livelihood recovery:** the ILO, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the World Bank-Global Fund for Disaster Risk Reduction partner to better prepare countries at high risk of disasters to reduce vulnerabilities of livelihoods at risks.
- **Assessing the impact of a disaster:** within the framework of the UN-World Bank- European Union approach to post-disaster needs assessment and in close collaboration with the respective governments, the ILO focuses on the impact of disasters in terms of employment and livelihood losses and needs. Joint post-disaster assessments are a critical step towards harmonization in allocating financial resources for post-disaster reconstruction to help people get back to work. They represent a robust platform for the next step – the joint elaboration of strategies and projects, in both rural and urban areas, to restore local production, re-establish economic and trade networks and revitalize local markets and the demand for local services and products.



Key Tools and Resources

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