**Recovery Strategy Principles**

- Respect the privacy of the needs of the families.
- Responsibility for recovery rests with the families and communities.
- Support of the authorities is essential for people to take recovery into their own hands.
- Devolve decision-making to the point of action.
- Recognize people’s organisations.
- Ensure security, protection, right to a “place to live”.
- Generate a process that would allow every family in need to build a basic secure home.
- Cultivate a spirit of peace-building and community coherence.
- Design the recovery investment to remain with the community as far as possible.

**Social Mobilization**

Social Mobilization is the primary step of community development for recovery from conflict and disasters. It allows people to think about and understand their situation and to organize and initiate action for their recovery with their initiative and creativity. Through mobilization, people can organize themselves to take action collectively by developing their own plan and strategy for recovery rather than being imposed from outside.

Social Mobilization is initiated by Community Mobilizers who visit the communities in the camps and their settlements and establish a rapport. They facilitate small group discussions dealing with specific issues and assist in the formation of Primary Groups as well as in the election and formation of the Community Development Council. Under a disaster and conflict recovery programme the responsibility of the community is strengthened by the establishment of representative Community Development Council (CDC). The recognition of the representative community organization by the authorities is crucial for empowering the community to be responsible for their own actions.

In a disaster or a conflict recovery programme, generally all the affected families are entitled beneficiaries. However, in this situation one would often find that families who were not affected trying to get into the recovery programme in order to draw on the cash and other benefits that will be provided. Therefore screening becomes important. The government official working at the local level may have the lists from the initial damage assessments. These lists need to be screened by the community in a transparent manner.

**Primary Groups**

A group of persons in a community affected by a disaster, who wish to address their common interest of recovery and reconstruction, can form a Primary Group (PG). The primary issue of common interest is rebuilding of the house, but they may have many others e.g. restarting their livelihoods, education, health care, savings and credit, enterprise community infrastructure, etc. Ideally the size of the groups should be 15-20 households.

**Community Development Council**

After the formation of PGs, the Community Development Council (CDC) is formed in each community to address the common development issues faced by the entire community. All group leaders and secretaries are the members of the CDC who elect a Chairperson, a Vice-chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer for a period to be determined by them. Either the chairperson or vice-chairperson should be a female member. To establish linkage among the CDCs, a forum or federation of CDCs can be established at city or district level.

**Community Action Planning**

I n the Community Action Planning (CAP) process people are considered to be the primary resource rather than the objects of development. This approach motivates the disaster-affected people to take the lead in the planning and implementation of reconstruction activities. The challenge in a comprehensive disaster recovery program is to provide shelter and basic amenities while addressing the livelihood and other related issues in very short time.

Disaster-affected communities are assisted in identifying their needs for housing reconstruction and community infrastructure needs as well as actions required to meet these needs. These communities implement their plans with the support of the Local Governments and other support organizations with the resources provided for reconstruction either by Government or partner agencies. Community Action Planning, which develops the capacity of the communities to take appropriate action for their own development, is the framework for the implementation of actions decided by the communities.

It is important that the community prepares the Community Action Planning itself. This helps in the communities to internalize the plans and to take responsibility for their implementation and maintenance. The planning process is carried out in the form of workshops, in which the CDC members participate.

**Community Contracts**

A Community Contract is a contract awarded to a community organization by a government agency, NGO or a project to carry out physical works that have been identified in the Community Action Plan. In most cases the community organization, which represents the community of a particular settlement, is a registered Community Development Council. The set of activities is usually the construction of housing and community infrastructure, a prioritized need in the community identified in the Community Action Plan. Over time however, Community Contracts have been used for a number of innovative activities beyond the construction of simple infrastructure facilities. It is important to note that Community Contracts emerge from a process, in which communities identify their needs, prioritize their problems and agree upon plans for their solutions.

Social and economic accountability need to be ensured in any participatory development initiative. Contracts were awarded not only to the central agency but to large contractors because they were believed to be the only trustworthy partners. However, experience has shown that community organization and other grass-roots organizations are accountable, not only to the funding agencies but also to the people that they represent and who they serve. The people are the best judges of any facility that they have been provided with: they give an excellent judgment, whether it is worth the cost and whether it is done to satisfactory standards.