

VOICE - CONCORD position paper

Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD): Towards a more joined up approach enhancing resilience and impact

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Each time a large crisis strikes, the need to link humanitarian aid and development (LRRD) appears on the political agenda. At EU level, Communications in 1996 and 2001 aimed to improve this link but tangible progress remains limited. After the recent Horn of Africa famine, LRRD appeared again as a priority for the humanitarian and development departments in the European institutions and member states. Moreover, the EU is working on its long-term policy and funding priorities for 2014-2020, which should take LRRD into account. This joint position paper by NGO networks VOICE and CONCORD aims to explain why LRRD is important and how it can help deliver better aid to crisis-affected populations and vulnerable groups.

In order to achieve more effective aid via LRRD, the EU and Member States should:

- Ensure sustained political commitment for LRRD, developing an Action Plan which includes clear definitions and makes EU LRRD efforts transparent and progress measurable
- Ensure that LRRD, disaster risk reduction and risk management are integrated in development programming in disaster prone countries and protracted crises, and that the programmes are developed in consultation with civil society
- Establish concrete linkages between humanitarian aid and development cooperation programmes to ensure LRRD while preserving their specific comparative advantages, ensuring efficient use of funding with highest possible impact
- Improve donor coordination between humanitarian and development actors at all levels
- Ensure adequate funding for LRRD and funding mechanisms that are timely, predictable and flexible, using the different financial instruments available in a balanced way

A. Rationale of LRRD: What is LRRD? What can it deliver? What are the obstacles?

When disaster strikes....

...help is first of all provided by the local population and government, but also international aid may be required. In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, **relief/humanitarian activities** aim to save lives and respond to immediate needs (e.g. by providing food and water). In the subsequent **rehabilitation** phase, the purpose is to support suitable conditions for the permanent delivery of basic services and the re-establishment of social structures¹. The idea is to 'Build Back Better, Safer and Fairer'- seeing disaster response also as an opportunity to address root causes of vulnerability and future risk. Improved conditions will then allow for medium and longer term **development programmes**.

While the above is how the international aid system has engaged in crises for the last decades, this continuum-approach is often problematic in practice. From the perspective of affected communities, a disaster situation is not split into different 'phases'; it is part of an **on-going cycle of tackling shocks, risks and uncertainties**.

What is LRRD?

Through LRRD- sometimes also referred to as '*transition*'- the artificial gap between relief and development phases can be overcome. As the term states, LRRD is about **linking** relief, rehabilitation and longer term

VOICE (Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies) is a network representing more than 80 European NGOs active in humanitarian aid worldwide.

CONCORD is the European NGO confederation for relief and development uniting 26 national associations and 18 international networks.

development interventions, regardless of the size or character of a disaster (sudden, recurrent or ongoing natural hazards or conflict). When some areas of a country are strongly affected by a disaster and other parts are not, LRRD implies working in different ways in different areas at the same time (*'contiguuum'*). In the affected areas, some zones may still require food aid, while in other zones aid can be re-directed towards income-generating activities and assisting governments to set up legal frameworks for crisis preventionⁱⁱ. LRRD thus needs to be addressed in operations. However, it is more than a methodology. It is a culture, a way of thinking, which needs to be included in management, policy, funding, operational strategy and implementation, increasing coherence between policies and practiceⁱⁱⁱ.

Why LRRD: what can it deliver?

With the rise in numbers of disasters caused by natural hazards, as well as the impact of climate change and conflicts, LRRD has become increasingly relevant. This is particularly the case because groups of people who are already living in poverty and are at greater risk are often those hardest hit by the effects of disasters and least able to take preventive action. Effective LRRD can address the poverty that disasters and conflicts generate (or intensify) by **laying the groundwork for sustainable development** during humanitarian interventions. LRRD thinking seeks to ensure that humanitarian programming does not undermine development work and that development programming is building on humanitarian knowledge and results^{iv}. Better linkages, coordination and streamlining between development and humanitarian programming can ensure more effectiveness (including cost-effectiveness) and efficiency in all assistance efforts.

As such, LRRD provides a **means to an end** which both humanitarian and development actors support: **improving well-being, reducing vulnerability and risk, and increasing resilience of communities**, from the household up to the national level. In sum, ensuring LRRD would clearly be **smarter aid**.

Examples of NGO work on LRRD:

- In Ethiopia, Save the Children implements a livelihoods programme which can be flexibly adapted if a crisis strikes (USAID crisis modifier). A Drought Cycle Management with four phases is applied: 'normal development & preparedness', 'alert', 'emergency response' and 'recovery'. Through-out all these phases, normal development projects in health, education and protection continue, providing complementary impacts^v.
- In Orissa (India), Handicap International has development projects as well as an Inclusive Disaster Risk Management (DRM) project since 2009. During the 2011 floods, urgency specialists provided guidance out of Paris to the India team to adapt the response to a humanitarian situation within the framework of the DRM project. A balance was sought between an inclusive approach towards all vulnerable populations and the specific needs of handicapped people. At the same time, people trained as community workers in the DRM project could immediately be involved in the response, in collaboration with the local authorities who already knew and trusted Handicap International^{vi}.
- In Turkana (Kenya), Oxfam combines humanitarian and development work. The programmes aim at reducing food insecurity through cash transfers, while at the same time advocating for better social protection of pastoralists by the state, and improving livelihoods through enhancing pastoralists' skills to negotiate better prices and become better at financial management^{vii}.
- CARE implements a multi-year "Regional Resilience Enhancement Against Drought" Programme in Ethiopia and Kenya. The programme provides evidence that efficient approaches to enhance resilience combine risk management, good governance and participatory decision-making, and rely on a combination of local traditional knowledge and science. Understanding the drivers of vulnerability will improve the success of resilience building and will improve the links between disaster recovery and development. Through inclusiveness and partnerships, a transition to more integrated resilience building in drought-prone regions can be achieved.

Obstacles to LRRD: why does this 'gap' between relief and development occur?

The gap occurs for a variety of reasons, including programmatic silos, bureaucratic hurdles, differing ways of working and conceptual problems. Relief and development are designed to be different in terms of their goals, institutions and timeframes, and these differences have resulted in separate aid architectures, different jargons, procedures and organisational allegiances that do not reflect the reality faced by families in high disaster risk areas.^{viii}

Moreover, since acute crises require different responses and skills, NGOs often have separate humanitarian and development departments. Funding constraints reinforce the gap, as donors may choose to only fund (a part of) one 'phase'. This can lead to projects which are suddenly discontinued because an 'emergency phase' is ending in the donor's view, or to long term programmes which no longer make sense because a disaster has completely changed the local situation in the 'development phase'.

Examples of the need for LRRD:

- In the case of the Pakistan floods in 2010 which affected 20 million people, many development programmes were suspended for 6 months, only to continue as planned after that period, without taking the changed situation into account.

- After the famine in the Horn of Africa in 2011, the Kenyan government recognised that their response is reactive and dominated by crisis management, rather than anticipatory and focused on preventive risk management^{ix}.
- In the Sahel, outsiders still see hunger as a result of a crisis (the drought), whereas research has demonstrated that many factors cause a spike in food prices, not just drought, and an increase in food prices correlates with increased child malnutrition: *“In light of this, there can be no complacency, no sense of normalcy, no lessening of the sense of urgency, once the rains have returned and the acute dimension of the food crisis subsides”^x*.
- 2011 evaluation of German humanitarian aid: *“Although exit strategies for humanitarian assistance are standard (...) they are, however, often unrealistic and inadequate to prevent extended operations in emergency mode. The necessary change of perspective, which would involve thinking about the follow-up (...) from the very beginning, has not yet taken place on the scale required”^{xi}*.

B. Creating EU programming and policy measures conducive to LRRD

At EU level, Communications in 1996 and 2001^{xii} underlined the importance of addressing LRRD at EU level, as did the 2007 European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid. LRRD was reconfirmed as a priority by EU institutions and member states in the mid-term review of the Consensus Action Plan in 2010. The debate came very much to the forefront again with the 2011 crisis in the Horn of Africa, which despite early warnings resulted in famine due to late response and lack of an LRRD approach. Despite these Communications, tangible progress remains limited, as also confirmed in the 2012 OECD-DAC peer review of the European Commission^{xiii}. **LRRD requires a mentality change** from development and humanitarian donors and their partners.

LRRD needs sustained political commitment over time, rather than only when a large disaster hits. It requires linkages, coordination and interdisciplinary work across various EU institutions and member states to come to a more innovative approach for a specific country situation. Whenever possible, it also requires a good dialogue and coordination with the government(s) of the country or region concerned. While this will not be easy, progress in this area is crucial for the effectiveness of EU aid and needs to become measurable.

The EU needs to **think long term and holistic when designing aid programmes**, rather than using a standard administrative approach which artificially splits a disaster response into various phases. As many crises are cyclical and predictable, or may be chronic realities, programming should be re-conceptualised by seeing a response as one process with ups and downs, taking into account the experience of the affected populations.

Long term programmes may be in the best position to respond to forecasts of a crisis, as development NGOs are on the ground, have established links with communities and government bodies and have staff and partner organisations in place. If a crisis is upcoming, they can **act upon early warning signals** and adapt their programme where necessary. Their presence and knowledge should always be considered by actors involved in humanitarian response. Once a crisis reaches a certain threshold, a more substantial scale up- a humanitarian intervention- may become necessary. In order to make this happen, **more flexibility from development donors** is required. Development donors should introduce a kind of ‘crisis modifier’, e.g. by including scenario planning in their programmes that can be activated when early warnings reach a certain threshold. Moreover, development funding needs to be dispersed quicker in situations where LRRD is needed as the current practice is far too slow for this purpose.

Humanitarian donors need to think longer term, while preserving the specificity of humanitarian aid, including the humanitarian principles^{xiv}. There needs to be a **better predictability from humanitarian donors** on how long they will provide support and where the link with development donors can be made. When agencies start a humanitarian programme, emergency funding is by definition for a limited period of time (e.g. 6 months). This can lead to uncertainty about continued funding and difficulty in longer term planning. However, many humanitarian projects should not be completed without making links to rehabilitation and development programmes. If there are signs that a population is not yet able to cope with the consequences of a disaster or has not increased its resilience towards future disasters, the sustainability of the aid offered could be endangered. **LRRD therefore needs to have visible results for the beneficiaries**. If this link with development is made, LRRD could provide a way out for situations which experience a ‘donor fatigue’ (funding shortfall) after many years of ‘short term’ humanitarian projects.

Moreover, if the LRRD principles were followed, and all actors make efforts to include **capacity building for crisis response, disaster risk reduction and building resilience** into their programme^{xv}, then the move into humanitarian response (when necessary) could be smoother, as it would be intrinsic to long term programmes. Disaster preparedness will save money: *“It is much more cost effective to prevent and prepare for a crisis than to wait for it to happen. It is estimated that every US\$7 spent on responding to a natural*

disaster could be offset by US\$1 spent on preparedness and early warning^{xvi}. 90% of humanitarian aid is spent in 40 recipient countries, but only US\$ 3.7 billion was spent on DRR in these countries (from a total of US\$ 363 billion in development aid)^{xvii}. DRR is needed to protect investments made and results achieved. Climate change adaptation is also essential for reducing disaster risk, and should be integrated into aid programmes in order to build resilience.

Given that the EU is designing its development **programming for the period 2014-2020**, this is an **ideal moment to finally make LRRD work**. LRRD should be integrated in programming in disaster-prone countries, protracted crises and countries emerging out of a disaster, at EU institutional level, in member states and at Delegation level. Therefore it is of utmost importance that a dialogue takes place between the European Commission (including DG ECHO^{xviii}), EU delegations, national governments and other humanitarian aid and development actors- including Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), who are key actors in LRRD. Such a dialogue should continue through-out the programming cycle.

In order to ensure longer term programming for aid which takes into account recurrent and sudden shocks, continuous funding for operations needs to be ensured. Currently, EU financial support to LRRD is often insufficient and ineffective. There is a lack of follow-up of short-term funding cycles and a lack of flexibility in longer-term instruments. Flexible funding for LRRD needs to be available from the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Development Fund (EDF). In order to ensure this, **LRRD must be an integral component already at the early stages of programming design in countries where it is relevant**. Therefore we welcome that, as a first step, the EC is seeking to adapt the legal mechanisms to make LRRD easier in the future, for example by specifying in the forthcoming framework for EU external action that special measures may be adopted to ease the transition from emergency aid to long-term development operations^{xx}.

Some **positive examples** to build further on:

- In 2012, the EU started piloting programmes in the Horn of Africa (SHARE) and Sahel ('Agir Sahel') which aim to improve LRRD in close cooperation with the national governments of the affected state(s) with better resilience of the population as ultimate aim.
- Some member states seek to improve LRRD in-house and in the field. Sweden for example supports livelihoods, WASH and health programmes in Somalia that are financed from both the development and humanitarian budgets, making it possible for partners to adapt programming when the situation changes^{xx}.
- In Afghanistan, Denmark has ensured funding for LRRD in several regions, supporting NGO programmes in areas where DG ECHO left, actively advocating with partners for an effective transition to development on the ground.
- The Ivorian government, DG ECHO and DG DEVCO^{xxi} launched a "Partnership for Transition" in 2012, bringing together humanitarian and development partners with the relevant government services to ensure good LRRD. The Partnership is tailored to the Côte d'Ivoire situation where it is essential to maintain direct assistance to the most vulnerable populations while giving time to government and development agencies to restore functional government infrastructure for the delivery of basic public services. For each intervention, a Memorandum of Understanding will be sought between the government, humanitarian and development agencies, clarifying responsibilities for each, with clear milestones and indicators for monitoring. From the EU side, funds will be available both from the humanitarian aid instrument and the EDF. An example of a health intervention could be that the government funds salaries of health workers, while a development agency focuses on reform of the health sector and a humanitarian agency gives some short term support and training for staff.
- Using its political leverage, the EU aims to raise awareness of the need for resilience and LRRD worldwide through engagement in the 'Political Champions for Disaster Resilience' initiative; a first meeting in April 2012 was co-lead by the UK and UNDP. This initiative aims to develop a more appropriate global approach to slow onset crises (such as the recent famine in the Horn of Africa).

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are addressed to EU institutions and Member States and their partners, in order to make LRRD work at all levels, particularly in the field:

Developing national and regional strategies

- **Effective LRRD can only be realised when local communities, local authorities and national governments participate actively** in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of **programmes**. Donors and agencies should take this into account, in respect of the Paris Declaration principles of ownership and alignment.

- **National Development Strategies must be drafted in consultation with local and international civil society actors**, including women's groups, who often have the most valuable and vast knowledge and experience on emergencies and LRRD. The EU has decided that as of 2014, an alignment to National Development Strategies should become the norm and Country Strategy Papers the exception. If in any given country a Country Strategy Paper is still developed by the EU, civil society actors must also be consulted.
- **In protracted crises or disaster prone countries, regular risk assessments and the need for LRRD should be included in the Multiannual Indicative Programmes.**
- **For regional, cross-border disasters, a regional strategy and funding are needed.** LRRD should be integrated in all instruments under the DCI and EDF, including geographic and thematic ones, and it should be carefully assessed which instrument is in the best position to support action. The proposed Pan-African Instrument could for instance support LRRD actions which have a regional impact.
- It should be possible to use this regional and thematic funding to **assist populations in middle income countries prone to disasters or conflict**; this is important since several middle income countries will no longer receive bilateral EU development funding.

Donor coordination

- **There is a need for better donor coordination at country level in the field, in between EU donors as well as between the EU and other donors.** From the onset of a disaster, early dialogue and a shared focus are needed between DG ECHO and the EU delegation, as well as joint analysis and coordination on programming, agreeing on respective responsibilities. This should happen in countries with Humanitarian Implementation Plans (HIPs), but also for sudden onset disasters (in non-HIP countries). **Depending on the situation (protracted crisis; disaster prone county; all other countries), a corresponding level of coordination needs to be ensured** (highest for protracted crises).
- Joint lessons learnt from SHARE and other pilots should inform and improve future cooperation between EU institutions, member states and other donors.
- Even where there is no EU development cooperation or where a certain sector (e.g. health or food security) is not prioritised by the responsible governments and/or EU delegation, LRRD should be possible through a linking between DG ECHO and EU member states or other donors (e.g. USAID, World Bank etc.), as well as of course the government and local authorities of the country, permitting DG ECHO to exit.
- **At EU institutional level, in Brussels, better dialogue and joined up planning is needed between DG ECHO, DG DEVCO and the European External Action Service (EEAS).** The recently established 'Inter-service group on transition' is a welcome step in this direction. Likewise, the working groups in the Council, uniting the experts of the member states on humanitarian aid (COHAFA), development aid (CODEV) and particular regions, should regularly exchange on country situations requiring a joined up approach.
- **In order to make EU progress on LRRD measurable, an Action Plan has to be developed** with clear definitions and concrete measures that will improve LRRD at EU level and in the field, increasing the transparency and accountability of the EU on this topic.
- **On top of programming and funding, LRRD has operational implications.** Even if LRRD will be done differently depending on the context, it needs to bring visible results for affected populations. This will require coordination between humanitarian and development actors (donors and partners) on operational and geographical aspects (methodology of assistance, target population etc.)

Coordination within and among NGOs for LRRD

- Development actors should always consider how their actions can foster a potential future humanitarian response and according to their resources and competences assist in building local capacity to respond to emergencies. When development programmes follow an emergency, the programme should build on humanitarian knowledge and results, and take into account the disaster risk factor of each situation.
- Humanitarian actors have to think beyond the emergency phase, as without that broader view, there may for example not be a sustainable increase in resilience, or relief might result in dependency on external assistance^{xxii}.
- Multi-mandated organisations (engaged in both humanitarian aid and development) have a particular responsibility to ensure internal coordination, adapting their mode of operation flexibly to the context.

Funding for LRRD

- **EU response strategies must be backed by a funding mechanism which maintains an envelope of unallocated funding.** This unallocated funding can then be used flexibly prior, during and after disasters to ensure that no gap between relief and development occurs. Both the DCI and the 11th EDF should include this possibility in the corresponding Regulations and their programming guidelines. As such provisions are foreseen in the draft Regulations, we call on decision makers to

enforce this in the final legislation. DG ECHO, DG DEVCO and the EEAS should ensure a transparent allocation of these funds, based on agreed criteria for prioritisation. An evident criterion is that money should be foreseen for protracted crises and disaster prone countries: **the higher the vulnerability of a country to disasters and emergencies, the more LRRD funding should be foreseen.** For sudden-onset disasters in all other countries, some provisions from the regional level should be foreseen.

- **Humanitarian donors** have to link up with development donors to ensure that the vulnerability of populations to future risks is decreased, **improving predictability of funding for operations.**
- Activities which support **LRRD should remain eligible** and encouraged under the **Humanitarian Aid instrument**, enabling the transition to development programmes while keeping up with the 'do no harm' principles.
- **A larger investment in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in development programmes is an essential component in LRRD**, and more importantly in reducing the need for emergency responses. At the same time, DRR mainstreaming and activities which lay the ground for DRR in development should continue to be supported under the Humanitarian Aid instrument. DRR in development should also be closely linked to Climate Change Adaptation measures.
- **In order to improve the flexibility and speediness of development funding for LRRD, there are currently various opportunities to further simplify the financial rules for the administration and implementation of EC funding:** the work on the implementation rules of the EU Budget Financial Regulation and the Financial Regulation to the EDF, as well as the regular updates of the 'Practical Guide to contract procedures for EU external actions'. This will at the same time diminish the administrative burden which EU regulations impose on implementing partners.
- **During the Structured Dialogue process which culminated in May 2011, a wider range of development funding mechanisms for NGOs beyond the call for proposals-procedure were introduced** (e.g. direct grants, core funding etc.). Some of these could potentially better support effective LRRD. **It is important that such mechanisms are included at all relevant legislative levels for 2014-2020 and in the Common Rules for the Implementation of the Union's Instruments for External Action.**

ⁱ VOICE & CISP (2001) '[Linking Relief to Rehabilitation and Development](#)' (booklet), p.12

ⁱⁱ Example from ECHO brochure 'Managing the transition to recovery after a crisis'

ⁱⁱⁱ See also CONCORD & VOICE (2005) '[Tsunami one year after, NGO aid intervention and future challenges](#)'

^{iv} OECD-DAC (2012) '[Towards better humanitarian donorship: 12 lessons learnt from OECD-DAC peer reviews](#)'

^v Save the Children and Oxfam (2012) '[A dangerous delay](#), The cost of late response to early warnings in the 2011 drought in the Horn of Africa', p.19

^{vi} GRET (2012) '[Les ONGs de développement face à l'urgence: enjeux et stratégies d'adaptation](#). Journée d'étude, 9 février 2012

^{vii} A dangerous delay, pp.18-19

^{viii} Macrae, J. (2012) 'The continuum is dead, long live resilience', in [VOICE Out Loud 15](#), p.8

^{ix} A dangerous delay, p. 16

^x Sahel working group (2011) '[Escaping the Hunger Cycle: Pathways to Resilience](#)', p.8

^{xi} Channel Research (2011) '[German humanitarian aid abroad](#)', Joint evaluation, p.8

^{xii} EC Communications on LRRD of [1996](#) and [2001](#)

^{xiii} [OECD DAC peer review](#) of the European Commission (2012), pp.90-91

^{xiv} "The EU is firmly committed to upholding and promoting the fundamental humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence" ([European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid](#), art.10)

^{xv} As also committed to in [Council Conclusions 'Increasing the impact of EU development Policy'](#), 14 May 2012

^{xvi} Minister Costello (2012) 'Joining the dots: Ireland's Approach to DRR and LRRD' in [VOICE Out Loud 15](#), p.14

^{xvii} Development Initiatives (2012) '[Disaster Risk Reduction: spending where it should count](#)', p.2

^{xviii} The Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department of the European Commission

^{xix} [Draft Regulation](#) establishing common rules and procedures for the implementation of the Union's instruments for external action, Title I, article 2

^{xx} Örneus, P. & Magnusson, H. (2012) 'Sweden's flexible approach to LRRD' in [VOICE Out Loud 15](#), p.15

^{xxi} The Development Department of the European Commission

^{xxii} VOICE & CISP, LRRD booklet, p.13

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