

"Human security is improved by a seamless transition from protection to empowerment and from relief to development, thus reinforcing the process of both social and state (re) construction so severely needed in conflict affected areas"



Monitoring

First hand "on the ground" discussions, meetings with target communities and other local level stakeholders as well as careful inspection of the ongoing projects on-site were some key activities during the field visits. After the completion of every visit, a mission report was prepared and shared among all concerned staff. Significant outcomes and achievements, key recommendations and follow-up actions were some major contents of the mission report.

Meetings of local level monitoring committee took place, which helped them to keep track of quality and quantity of progress on the ground. In the process of institutionalizing this system of regular monitoring, project managers developed a practice of meeting CDC chairpersons and discussed the activities and progress of projects on the ground. The project's systematic and transparent reporting and monitoring system proved reliable and productive in the interest of the local communities. The outcome of this useful system was very tangible on the ground.



Impact and Achievements

By addressing the demand for better living conditions, the three programmes contributed to mobilizing the communities on a much wider range of issues. In particular, it paid great attention to the social dimension of human security and provided the communities with the capacity and skills necessary to ensure CDCs proper functioning. Women were organized in specific committees where they received literacy and training courses providing them with new skills and income generating opportunities.

The proper identification of the needs of various social groups has shown to bolster their contribution to local development and human security. As the awareness within communities is seen to increase through resident's contribution to maintenance work and hazard prevention, a lesson in the importance of community involvement can inform international aid work throughout the field.

An open and effective dialogue between communities and local institutions strengthens their respective roles in sustainable local development. On one hand, local governments provide the technical support needed by most communities to select and implement local projects, as well as to mobilize international aid. On the other, the formal recognition of CDCs gives them legitimacy to negotiate with central and municipal governments on community needs and priorities. In addition, by acknowledging their role as full urban actors, CDCs are driven to adopt a broader urban perspective and to sustain the process of institution building.

Therefore, community approach appears to be quite successful in enhancing reconciliation and institution building within conflict affected societies by promoting the interaction among different aspects of human security.

Restoring Security

The contribution to human security in Afghanistan, North East Sri Lanka and Phnom Penh is grounded primarily on two parts: a) the trust to address the different aspects of vulnerability in war affected areas with a multi-sectorial approach and, b) the seamless transition from a protection based model to an empowerment centred perspective.

Linking physical upgrading with social development is essential in fostering community mobilization, particularly among women. In fact, raising community awareness is very important to help communities to shift from a short-term emergency approach to more development oriented perspectives. Through its organizations, entrusting the community itself with collecting the necessary information to identify needs and priorities is also crucial and can be much more effective than using traditional surveying approaches.

Coupling infrastructure construction with the provision of services the communities themselves identify as priorities is also an essential part of any programme focusing on human security. In this framework, community grants are effective in supporting projects that may be small in scale but in fact address critical community needs.

CDCs or similar community organizations play a fundamental role in conveying the sense of dignity on which human security rests. Various CDC members stressed how the different forms of contribution provided by the local population were a clear sign of the stronger sense of projects ownership.

Despite the distinct social and cultural contexts, the UNTFHS experience highlights the critical role CDCs have in institution building. Bridging the gap between people and government, CDCs are largely welcomed by local authorities as an opportunity to better focus on community needs.



Afghanistan



Cambodia



Sri Lanka

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Enhancing Urban Safety and Human Security



Human Security

As security challenges become more complex and various new actors attempt to play a role, a shift in paradigm is necessary to bring security to people. The focus must broaden from the state to the security of people to human security. Human security complements state security, enhances human rights and strengthens human development. It seeks to protect people against a broad range of threats to individuals and communities and further, to empower them to act on their own behalf. Human security connects different types of freedoms - freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to take action on one's own behalf.

Promoting democratic principles is a step towards attaining human security and development. Human security starts from the recognition that people are the most active participants in determining their well-being. It enables people to participate in governance and make their voices heard. It builds on people's efforts, strengthening what they do for themselves. This requires building strong institutions, establishing the rule of law and empowering people.

Empowering individuals and the community to take human security issues into their own hands is increasingly important. Experience shows that when empowered to identify their needs and priorities, communities contribute to implementing the solutions that best fit their capacity and know-how.

"Safety from the constant threats of hunger, disease, crime and repression and protection from sudden and hurtful disruption to the pattern of our daily lives whether at home, in our jobs, in our communities or in our environment"

Protection and Empowerment

In March 1999, the Government of Japan and the United Nations Secretariat launched the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS), which main objective is to advance the operational impact of the human security concept particularly in countries and regions where the insecurities of people are most manifest and critical, such as in natural and human made disaster areas.

With the growing urbanization of the population, human security as protecting "the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment" increasingly means providing the conditions of livelihood and dignity in urban areas. Adequate and stable living conditions are crucial for human security, since an inadequate dwelling, insecurity of tenure and insufficient access to basic services have a strong negative impact on the life of the urban population, particularly the urban poor. Through spatial discrimination and social exclusion, the rights to the city and to citizenship are limited or precluded.

In this framework, the UN-HABITAT Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific has coordinated three UNTFHS programmes in Afghanistan, North East Sri Lanka and Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia, on informal settlements upgrading. On the assumption that community empowerment is crucial for the reconstruction of war affected societies, all programmes adopted the Community Action Planning (CAP) method, a community based consultative planning process, and established Community Development Councils (CDCs) as the most effective approach to improving living conditions in informal settlements.

