

Reasons for the Slow Pace of Reconstruction at Aceh Following the Tsunami Disaster

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Abstract

This study is aimed at researching why reconstruction development at Aceh post disaster and tsunami is so slow? It may be proven by so many refugees residing in temporary camps or barracks. Meanwhile, BRR as government agent may only spend fund around 20 percent from total budget allocated for Aceh reconstruction. Specifically, the results to be wished from this study is to analyze reconstruction obstacles factors in Aceh, identifying planning strategy required for successfully. This study uses on the spot survey methodology an interview community, public figures, donors, NGO from abroad and government officials either from state or local. As well as using data collection method by Focus Group Discussion Technique, Literature Study, Observation, Participation and direct Involvement to get data. Closely, the author had worked together with BRR in discussing problems and obstacles in the field to implement BRR programs in site. This study involve 50 respondents.

1. Introduction

The fact findings based on this research results is majority of community had not been satisfied with BRRs performance regarding reconstruction process yet, and it is proven by most of refugee prefer reside in refuges camps or barrack, although they had lived there for almost two years calculated since disaster and tsunami hit.

2. Factor Faced in Rehabilitation and Reconstruction

2.1 Lack of Communication among Government Agency, NGOs, BRR and Community

Meetings with government representatives and NGOs working in Indonesia led to an interesting finding – at present, there is a lack of communication between the two groups. Approximately 2000 foreign professionals are assisting with the relief, reconstruction and recovery process. Unfortunately, many authorities are not aware of where these people are working, and in some cases, the divide between foreign NGOs and Indonesian NGOs and both with the government has resulted in large amounts of time and money being wasted.

Some NGOs do not have the capacity to identify, monitor or address certain issues; in some cases, the governments need additional support for on-going or planned response and reconstruction efforts. Clearly, increased communication between NGOs and governments would benefit all of those involved.

The lack of communication between Public Works and the PDAM as to works planned and implemented was frequently reported by the PDAMs, while the Public Works departments stressed the lack of skills and qualifications in PDAMs to run large scale operations (BAIRG interviews, Minutes EASUR, World Bank, September 2005).

In one instance, new pipe work laid in one PDAM service area, was reportedly connected to the water treatment plant of another PDAM. An illustration of decision-making which created the opportunity for rent seeking was seen well prior to the tsunami in the decision of the provincial level Public Works Department to invest heavily in water treatment plants at a time when the existing plants were not functioning at full capacity (NCG, 2005, Background Working Paper, page:25).

The reason for this decision is not now clear, but it was reported that the lack of coordination with and involvement of the PDAM in the design or procurement or financial management of the contracts, disbursements, monitoring of quality of works, and the unusual technical decisions made were all indicators of processes which enabled corrupt practices to thrive. Another reported practice was the need for a payment to be made from provincial to national government to ensure funds moved smoothly from the central to the provincial level of government. The resulting delays in fund transfers combined with the common problem of 'use it or lose it' annual budgetary allocation led to significant misallocation of resources and leakage. Planned projects could not be implemented and then 'late' projects were identified and executed rapidly, without the time for proper assessment or coordination, often chosen because they were doable within the financial year. Local government capacity is particularly weak across Aceh (as it is in most outlying areas). Although there is little systematic data available to describe pre-disaster conditions, it is widely accepted that even prior to the tsunami and earthquake, *the human resource capacity in most district governments was thin; operating and management systems were frail; fiduciary safeguards were weak and bottom-up accountability systems were attenuated (World bank, 2005).*

2.2 Lack of Coordination among BRR, Local Government, Donors, Local Community and NGOs

World Bank Report (2005) on Aceh reconstruction and rehabilitation process and indicated that one of weaknesses in the recovery process in Aceh. It is a poor coordination of relief aid. The efforts of multiple institutions and organizations providing relief were not harmonized because of a lack of coordination among humanitarian and aid agencies, different levels of government, competing agendas, and lack of NGO accountability.

The unprecedented outpouring of domestic and international support for the reconstruction phase has brought literally hundreds of local and international NGOs, private sector actors, official donor agencies, and multilateral institutions to the affected regions and Jakarta to provide generous assistance, often on the basis of their own internal standards and guidelines. The challenge will be to translate these resources into results on the ground and to coordinate this multitude of actors around a common vision for the recovery of the people in Aceh.

According to the Presidential Decision No.75/1993 on National Design Process that said coordination becomes an important aspect in the reconstruction, especially for the urban development. The system is the expression of design having been resulted, and the coordination in planning and implementation is must. The policy has been ruled also for reconstruction process in Aceh and the survey shown that there is lack of coordination among actor of reconstruction.

The survey found a lack of overall coordination international agencies and NGOs, and Local NGOs and the communities affected. We were told several times that many International NGOs and agencies display an unwillingness to share information and coordinate efforts with local NGOs and community groups. This problem is compounded by the fact that meetings are conducted in English, no translation into Indonesian Language is provided even after much protest from locals, and local villagers are expected to formulate project proposals for relief and rehabilitation services in English. Such practices lead to divisiveness. Some of the people we spoke with perceived international workers as acting superior to locals, noting that internationals have all the funding, and control decision-making. We found that this treatment has caused some villagers to distrust the international aid operation, and convinced some local NGO to prefer working on their own, refusing to work with or receive funding from international groups. The effective exclusion of affected communities at every level of decision-making and implementation renders information sharing, collaboration, and culturally sensitive approaches extremely difficult.

This lack of coordination has allowed international NGOs to pick and choose which villages they will work with, causing saturation of aid in certain villages, while leaving others with no services at all. These actions have led to a growing feeling among villages that they have to compete for resources against each other, and convincing the have-nots that they are regarded by the international community as unworthy of aid. We were told several times by local NGOs that the culture of handouts promoted by emergency-phase NGOs as turned communities into beggars no longer thinking of their future or self sufficiency but waiting for the next cash-for-work program or food drop. Local NGOs said this culture is very new to Acehese society which, although poor, never knew the phenomenon of beggars.

A senior manager from Oxfam said that one reason for the lack of coordination in Aceh is that there is a lack of any concerted pressure on the international agencies and NGOs to coordinate. In Afghanistan and the Sudan, military threats and political conflict compel the international agencies to create a united front in order to continue their work. By contrast, in Aceh the political situation is now more stable, agencies have tremendous budgets to spend, and there is little incentive for them to work together (Serambi, 2 July 2006).

The BRR and UN OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) are responsible for coordination avoiding duplication of services and gaps in aid. But the BRR is still a young organization and the UN has limited power. The BRR has recognized the lack of coordination and has prioritized 'working together' in 2006. But in the absence of pressure by donors and the media, there is little hope that greater coordination will materialize. Coordination is all the more important because of the huge number of agencies in Aceh, their lack of expertise in housing reconstruction in particular, and the high turnover in both staff and management. There are 124 international NGOs and 430 local NGOs. International NGOs in Aceh grew overnight from zero to offices with 400-600 staff (Depnaker Banda Aceh, 2005).

According to the BRR estimated figures, there are 67,500 people still living in one-year old tents, and 50,000 people housed in Government built temporary barracks. The barracks are made up of a series of individual rooms or 'units', as they are called measuring about 13 x 9 feet each intended for a maximum of five inhabitants. This setup has led to cases where families comprising more than five people are split up in different rooms.

2.3 Ineffective of Bureaucracy

The role of the state in development should be reduced and be left to the community. I have interviewed and got complaints from the international community, saying that it is very difficult to obtain licenses and permits to help

the survivors in Aceh. As a result, many countries, such as the U.S., have directly distributed their aid to the survivors and IDPs, because they do not trust our bureaucracy.

The provincial and local governments in Aceh and North Sumatra face two overriding challenges: (a) in the immediate term, returning affected communities and provincial and local governments to normal functioning, and (b) over the medium term, strengthening institutional capacity and accountability so that rehabilitation and reconstruction activities can be completed as efficiently and effectively as possible. Re-establishing basic public administration and security functions is the key issue, since there is significant potential for partial or structural collapse of law and order.

Based on the needs assessment, the immediate need for Aceh and North Sumatra is to reestablish a functioning administration that supports the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in the affected areas. A collapse of law and order would complicate the recovery and rehabilitation process, and dramatically weaken foreign assistance. Specific challenges include ensuring protection and security; helping refine initial estimates of loss and damage to human and physical assets; and restoring minimally required public services (cleaning up and disinfecting affected areas, extending health and education services; restoring communications; etc).

For the time being, the central government will continue to provide guidance and supervision on the ground. In the interim, the Ministry of Home Affairs has deployed a rapid assessment team to Aceh to support the leadership and collect data. The Aceh team comprises 382 officers including trainee civil servants from the Ministry's civil service training institute. This support will continue till end-February on a rotation basis. Other teams from central ministries are also making visits of shorter duration to the affected areas.

Restoring the decentralized representative bodies is a high priority. Ensuring the participation of the local population in assessing local needs and priorities as part of the rehabilitation activities is an immediate and continuing challenge. For this to be done effectively, it is essential to re-build representative institutions of governance such as DPRDs and KPUDs. However, given the magnitude of the devastation, the central government will need to play a significant role in relief and rehabilitation, particularly for large infrastructure reconstruction. At the same time, Aceh is an autonomous province which has experienced a long-lasting conflict, including a secessionist movement. Hence, the management of the relationship between the national government agencies, sub-national entities of governance and civil society assumes great significance, calling for the restoration of the functioning of regional representative entities as a priority.

One option could be establishing a dedicated administrative body for overseeing rehabilitation and reconstruction, empowered to fast-track decision-making. In order to ensure transparency and efficiency, it would be desirable to agree clear rules and procedures in advance. The involvement of the general public in the entire process is essential. Building on international experience, a multi-tier institutional approach is proposed – to include the national government, the provincial government, representatives of cities and regencies

Requirement to create state administration system (government apparatus) is often regarded as part that cannot be separated of process in creating democratic national life, and also enforce law in real meaning. State administration is what the government do or by instrument, beginning from planning until evaluation. This state administration activity also include absorb society aspiration, to organize data/information and tell it to policy makers, also control and evaluate application of public policy. Wide scope of government administration can be seen from interrelate among state administration and other discipline science like economic, politic, sociology, law, physiology, social service, engineering and health.

Those are the importance of state administration, so there is opinion that whether it is well or bad of government work or government instrument firstly can be seen by knowing how the government or instrument administrate (organize resources and not just deal with administration problem) activity of public government and the building that should government do. The importance of this administration activity probably micro can be described with work of NASA (National aeronautic and space administration) United States that succeed to bring victorious of aeronautic space program of America which can defeat of Russian's program. Actually, the quality of Russian's program is not quite different from American's program but NASA empower the administration namely to organize and empower all experts in aeronautic space and other resources, so American's program is better than Russian's till now. "The American won because they had managers – public administrators- who were not necessarily more capable as individuals but decidedly more capable within their political, organizational, and cultural environment" (Shafritz and Russel, 1996).

World Bank indicated in its 2006 report on Aceh reconstruction and rehabilitation stated one of weaknesses on the process of reconstruction is inequities in aid distribution. There were multiple causes for mal distribution including withholding aid from certain ethnic, religious, or discriminated subgroups such as castes, inequities based on political influence, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and exclusion of specific groups based on government definitions of victim hood.

The corruption is not only in finance but also in authority, function and assignment, work time, etc. the critical that sent to the government apparatus

about a policy is ignored and less attention or attention without any reaction. Regarding that attention has been given by government apparatus become justification that the apparatus had involved society participation in making a certain policy. So, whether it is fast or slow the policy will not reach the target. Many kinds of policy that self decided without involving society found out in our government bureaucracy. It is like save a bomb timer that somehow will explode. This proven appears phenomenon crisis of trust from society to government apparatus of village to department, in a recent year many demonstrations from society toward bureaucracy and the leader of government bureaucracy. Even the society implies self-law enforcement for example the policy about night entertainment facilitation, robber in Jakarta and destruction to fisherman's ship that use illegal net in north Sumatra.

The corruption is only found out in developing countries but also in progress countries, even though it is little in quantities and qualities. The strength of control system instead of another systems (law or judicative, legislative and social society by many kinds of institutions) toward government bureaucracy and also the ruling party to "force" government bureaucracy and the ruling party in order to improve their works. If the government to do a little bit of mistake it will be a big issue and political issue, for example injustice in allocation of educational budget or social services often takes long time and bribery cases can be solved.

2.4 Lack of Community Participation

Lack of community participation is one of weaknesses that released by World Bank in World bank Report on Aceh Recovery (2005). Community participation rarely took place when decisions were made about reconstruction and rebuilding programs. In some cases, decision-makers discredited or ignored the views and opinions of local communities. Many survivors perceived the government as aloof and non responsive. Donors and aid agencies often prioritized timely outcomes over deliberative processes that allowed for community participation and discussion. Some agencies deliberately excluded certain groups because they were viewed as only serving "their own."

In PJP II (Indonesia short-term building II), with the increase of human resources and enterprise in their participation for urban development, the partnership between government and people should be increased. National construction in PJP II has to be put in partnership between government and people including enterprise. The main factor in the partnership in building infrastructures is the real policies for the building. Government, people, and enterprise should realize their own functions. Government provides basic needs for the people, means and services; enterprise use the incomes of the products

for the development and give product benefit for the people in the projects, including returning the payment of means by the government; and the people try to provide themselves by using the result of the construction.

The partnership between government and enterprise has run well by the establishment of KADIN (the Chamber of Commerce and Industry), BKPM (Coordinative Agency for Investments, and the partnership between enterprise and the people has not been optimum. Therefore, in the five-year Development Plan (Repelita VI), realization of prior constructions is developed.

What should be considered in partnership for the urban development is a connection among government, enterprise, and social activities. People are not only the object but also the subject. Government with the policies is responsible for the partnership, directly or indirectly. Indirectly, government explains the policy of development for the support of competent organizations to make a good environment. The survey have taken show that there are lack of participation of communities in the rehabilitation and reconstruction process.

2.5 Lack of Capacity to Implement the Programs of Reconstruction

A second core principle of the reconstruction strategy is capacity building of local government administration. The need for a strong and accountable local government to meet the challenge of decentralization and deliver much of the reconstruction effort occurs at a time when capacity is at its weakest: inadequate financial control systems, government structures and law enforcement pre-tsunami have been weakened further by the impact of the disaster. Nevertheless, the government has recognized that in the context of sub-national governance, the need for accountability close to the people and the need for strongly integrated development, local government must play key planning, implementation and financing roles in reconstruction activities, and they must be given the support to do so. *If funds are to be provided to local governments to undertake development – particularly if these local governments are to exercise significant planning discretion in the investment process, and if local procurement and financial management systems are to be used to manage the funds – resources need to be directed at building capacity in respect of these functions and of monitoring usage and project performance (World bank, 2005).*

In the current environment of local government however, the risks to the effective, efficient and non-corrupt usage of funds are intrinsic and substantial. In order to manage these risk of reconstruction effort will assist local authorities to establish sound management, develop rapid plans, program and implement

projects, improve the management of funds, and monitor progress and performance.

Significant resources are being allocated to ensure local institutions understand the participatory processes described above and make them eventually able to provide accountable services to their populations. The systematic strengthening of local governance is planned to address the chronic incapacity of district and city government, to develop capacity and incentives, and to establish performance measurement systems and accountability mechanisms. It is also recognized by central government, especially the Ministry of Home Affairs that this will take time, and the phasing-in of local government roles must match the development of capacity. Until these competencies are in place, the reconstruction agency (BRR) proposes to play a strong supporting and oversight role to local government. Consistent with best practice in efforts to improve accountability elsewhere, the government and supporting stakeholders appear to have approached the accountability question from both sides, making every effort to achieve a balance of conventional civil service reform issues (better wages, enforcement of rules, definition of roles) with governance measures external to the administration (support for stronger citizen voice, transparency etc).

The biggest contributor for Aceh reconstruction and rehabilitation is The Multi Donor Fund (TMDF) that consists of 15 donors: European Commission, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, World Bank, Norway, Denmark, Canada, Sweden, Asian Development Bank, Germany, United States, Belgium, Finland, New Zealand and Ireland.

The Multi Donor Fund currently has a portfolio of 16 projects, providing assistance to four under funded sectors for post-tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction: recovery of communities, infrastructure and transport, capacity building and governance, and sustainable management of the environment. It does so in close coordination with the BRR, local Governments, civil society, International NGOs and the United Nations (TMDF report, 2005). Five capacity building projects are being undertaken by TMDF including technical assistance to the BRR, to help the recovery agent implement its mandate, two projects to strengthen local government capacity, and civil society and private sector strengthening projects to help ensure that local government, civil society and the private sector will be ready to take over the work of redeveloping Aceh when BRR mandate ends (representing US\$ 93 million, including BRR co-financing).

Andrew Steer (TMDF Report, 2005), World Bank Country Director for Indonesia shared that *"The Multi Donor Fund was set up to support the government in the post disaster reconstruction by coordinating different sources of funding. Today we are proud to show the first year results of that partnership in which we*

empower communities to decide and plan by themselves how to recover their villages and houses. Further the Fund plays a major role in protecting and recovering the environment, builds local capacity and is now focusing on planning and rebuilding major infrastructure in Aceh and Nias."

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