



IRC'S APPROACH TO COMMUNITY-DRIVEN RECONSTRUCTION

*A basic primer for first generation programming
Designed for contextual adaptation*

Version 2

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OVERVIEW



INTRODUCTION

The following manual is the output of a year long study that analyzed IRC's community driven recovery and reconstruction (CDR) efforts from relief through early post-conflict. The study sought to understand the processes undertaken in IRC's CDR programs, distill lessons learned from these and from the broader literature, and develop a primer on best practice particular to the context in which IRC works. The broader aim was to map out a starting point for program design based on knowledge to date so that field staff did not have to reinvent the wheel. The study used four country programs as basis:

- *Afghanistan's National Solidarity Program* – initiated in 2003 and managed by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation, this CDR program aims to increase citizen participation and build local governance structures for socio-economic development. IRC works from an operating manual designed by the World Bank and the Ministry, but has the flexibility to adapt and innovate to achieve project objectives.
- *Azerbaijan's Integrated Community Development Programs* – initiated in 2000, IRC initially worked in IDP affected areas with local communities to build community capacity to drive their own development. Successive generations of CDR programs continue even today, supporting a range of communities, while connecting them with local institutions and capacity building leaders in an effort to create sustainable governance structures.
- *Kosovo's Community Action Social Services Initiative* – initiated in 2000 and ending in 2002, IRC implemented a CDR model that sought to increase community participation and dialogue between divisive groups, assisting people to work in unison through democratic structures in furthering their own socio-economic development.
- *Rwanda's Community Development, Good Governance and Decentralization Programs* – initiated in 1998, IRC implemented four generations of CDR programs over seven years through the Ministry of Local Governance to promote citizen participation and socio-economic development, ultimately supporting Rwanda's decentralization process.

Methodology for the study included literature reviews, analyses of proposals, reports and evaluations, post-facto field visits and stakeholder interviews, leading to four individual country papers, additional evaluations, a major findings paper, and a draft manual on implementing 'first generation' CDR programming. The latter was subsequently presented at an IRC/Stanford University sponsored workshop held at Stanford University, California where field staff, and IRC technical specialists discussed the findings. Academics from Stanford's Center for Democracy, Development and Rule of Law (CDDRL) furthered staff understanding on data collection and evaluation possibilities. The manual was subsequently revised and improved as a



consequence of this broad consultation, and later again revised based on new learning from IRC field work. The final draft edition is what follows.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY DRIVEN RECONSTRUCTION?

Community Driven Reconstruction or CDR is an approach derived from the *community driven development* work pioneered by the World Bank, USAID and others. It seeks to respond to the overriding problems evinced in most countries emerging from conflict: destroyed social and physical infrastructure; lack of citizen participation and lack of democratic systems; and trust and confidence broken between people, and between people and their institutions. It does this by supporting communities to develop or strengthen local democratic structures to plan and implement projects for recovery and improved services - in ways that foster renewed cooperation and trust among its populations. Thus, CDR has three overriding objectives: improved socio-economic recovery, improved governance and improved social cohesion.

A CDR approach can be used in sectoral interventions. For instance, in the water sector, communities may elect a water committee which is given a budget to improve services based on the input and expressed wishes of the population. This is a community driven approach and some of the steps outlined below and throughout this guidebook can serve as an excellent guide in this process. But for the purposes of IRC and this manual, CDR is something more comprehensive:

In the IRC contexts of fragile and rebuilding states, our CDR programs aim to respond to:

- 1) the need for a broader community governance system that fosters socio-economic recovery and social cohesion, and;*
- 2) the need for piloting such systems to inform the anticipated full-scale reconstruction and decentralization effort.*

IRC achieves these objectives by:

- First, helping communities address the causes and consequence of conflict by analyzing the landscape and issues that undermine their peaceful development (including return and reintegration issues);
- Second, bringing together all actors within the community, including local government, civil society and the private sector to identify priority problems/needs;
- Third, creating or strengthening democratically elected community (governance) structures from the base to the mid-local level;



- Fourth, supporting these governance structures to design recovery plans with community input, based on both the ‘needs’ and conflict analyses;
- Fifth, promoting a system responsive to rights and needs, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable and those most impacted by war (women, youth, ex-combatants) by ensuring their participation in the processes or projects;
- Sixth, ensuring structures are transparent and communities are participating in the process by having them endorse community plans, and contribute to projects;
- Seventh, providing block grants for community identified projects and assisting structures to contract works to the private sector, local civil society, the community and in rare cases the international agency;
- Eighth, ensuring viable monitoring by communities and civil society agencies who oversee works or projects and report back on progress;
- Ninth, supporting structures to report on financial transactions and account to the community.

Again, the process as outlined above supports the needs outlined in most conflict environments, that is: return and reintegration; establishing community governance structures and people participating in those structures able to drive their own recovery; addressing the overwhelming physical and social infrastructure needs; bringing distrustful populations back together to address community and conflict issues; and supporting vulnerable populations, and those most impacted by conflict, namely women, youth and ex-combatants.

HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

This manual is a first attempt to cull lessons on Community Driven Reconstruction (CDR), and as such is intended only as a guiding framework to help practitioners think through issues related to first generation programming and processes. It is generally believed that a ‘first generation’ CDR process as outlined above can only be conducted in a country (or a region) where conflict has ceased and stability is evident. However, an abbreviated CDR process may be useful in certain situations, which if implemented would better position a community as a peace process unfolds, and better prepare staff to support full scale community development/governance as the country stabilizes and a transitions begins.

Therefore, the full scale CDR program as outlined in this manual can be adapted (with caution) for implementation:



- In limited protracted conflict zones or when a peace process is underway – to assist in reintegration and recovery and to empower communities rather than provide direct services as an international agency, or through a local NGO group. Modifications may include limitations on funds to communities, holding of funds by IRC instead of direct transfers to communities, and abbreviated processes for more rapid implementation.

However in emerging post conflict zones, the manual as outlined would be more directly applicable as it assists communities to take progressive responsibility for recovery efforts by facilitating full ownership of processes, products and financial arrangements.

In a definitive post conflict zone, the manual would be adapted to a much more sophisticated form in an effort to bolster national programs of governance, often involving political, administrative and technical decentralization. In fact, in these settings, various bi and multi-lateral donors generally work with government to outline new governance structures and socio-political development systems to be implemented in-country. It is imperative that field programmers are cognizant of these processes and the intended timelines for implementation: they MUST not undercut or undermine what is in the pipeline, and hold on rigorously to ‘their’ program. Rather, programmers should begin plans with communities for revising objectives based on new policies, for dovetailing efforts with new processes, and/or redirecting efforts where unmet needs will be. Too often, NGOs miss this critical step and in the end, only serve to complicate the field environment and undermine the constituent populations they purport to serve.

The manual is presented in sections that list the aims and objectives of CDR programming, followed by the major components of implementation. Within implementation steps, basic tools used in the past by IRC CDR programs are listed which can be found in the attachments so that staff do not have to develop new materials from scratch. Please note that in some sections, there are optional ways for implementation based on context or possibilities in programmatic direction.

It cannot be stressed enough however that this manual is only a guidebook. It must be constantly adapted for use based on the local context and operating environment. Additionally, it is by no means comprehensive – there is a significant amount of literature and many tools within the international domain that can better performance of each step listed within. Staff are encouraged to conduct their own research and learning, and provide feedback on better approaches and tools throughout implementation to the Governance and Rights Unit in the IRCUK.



DESIGN



WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY DRIVEN RECONSTRUCTION PROJECT CYCLE?

IRC's basic CDR project cycle has approximately four phases: Program Design; Program Implementation which includes staffing, sensitization, governance structures, quick impact projects, community recovery planning, and financial allocation; Monitoring and Evaluation; Planning for Second Generation Programming. Details of key considerations within each domain are as follows:

1. Program Design

- What data should be collected?
- What sites should be selected for implementation?
- What is the size of the sites or target populations?
- What staff are needed and how many?

2. Program Implementation

Staffing

- How do we recruit staff?
- What initial training is provided and in what areas?

Sensitization

- What stakeholders exist, how much are they involved and in what capacity?
- What orientation is given for leaders?
- What information is provided to communities regarding the program and its potential?

Governance Structure

- What is the form of institutional structure that CDR seeks to create - formal or informal, and short or long-term?
- Are new groups selected or existing community groups worked with?
- Who should be included in community committees?
- If electing, what methods of elections to use?
- What are the criteria for voters?
- What are the criteria for candidates?
- What are the responsibilities of committee members?
- What are the mechanisms for transparency and accountability?



Quick Impact Projects

- When should these take place?
- What should they look like?

Community Recovery Planning

- Who is involved in participatory planning?
- What exercises are included in planning?
- What are the project eligibility criteria?
- How are projects selected?

Financial Allocation

- Who proposes, selects and is given funding for projects?
- Who allocates funds to implementers?
- What is the appropriate size of block grants and schedule of payments?
- What are the best accountability/transparency mechanisms?

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

- What mechanisms should be used for monitoring progress?
- What should the CDC and IRC's role be respectively?
- At what stage should reporting be undertaken?
- How are the community and funding sources informed of progress respectively?
- How can lessons learned be incorporated into the next phase of the project cycle?

4. Second Generation Programming

- What should second generation programming projects look like?



HOW DO WE SET UP COMMUNITY DRIVEN RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS?

Before the nuts and bolts of a project cycle is launched, prior macro-level considerations about where and how to implement need to be addressed.

1. Data Collection

Basic information specific to each context that informs design and implementation should include information such as:

- Existing governance structures, including information on line ministries and their reporting lines;
- A breakdown of population by demographics within each administrative unit, including by ethnicity and/or religion if applicable;
- Number of returnees and ex-combatants expected to reintegrate into communities over time, bearing in mind any contemplated disarmament process;
- Information on community structures, including any committees or councils that exist, details on genesis of formulation, how they make decisions and perception of community regarding their efficacy.

Conflict assessments are also an essential part of program design and should include an analysis of:

- How conflict impacted the region where CDR is proposed – from political, social, anthropological and economic perspectives;
- Potential conflict triggers within communities at present – what could cause an eruption of violence at local versus national levels;
- The receptivity of local populations and their leadership assets.

Combined, the data will dictate the program design, and more specifically the way interventions will be targeted and structured in each area. In addition, more sophisticated data collection, using surveys to understand levels of material welfare (socioeconomic), attitudes about governance and authority figures, and attitudes about reconciliation and recovery (social cohesion) are an excellent form of advance work (see section on Monitoring & Evaluation). However, budget constraints may dictate that this level of data collection be included as part of the start-up, rather than in the design phase.



It should also be noted that IRC may be designing a response as part of a larger nationally led initiative (for instance, under the World Bank) and as a result may be working from a pre-defined operating manual which has outlined structural formations and intervention strategies. Typically these procedures leave room for innovation, meaning there still is the need for solid understanding of particular country/field contexts and needs.

- *Tools:* *Contextual analysis (Tool 1)*
 Conflict assessments (Tool 2)

2. Site and Population Selection/Numbers

When selecting geographic focus for a CDR program, preference should be given to areas where:

- IRC has direct field experience – building on local knowledge, relationships and offices assuming need exists and there is no duplication of effort with other agencies or programs;
- High returnee and ex-combatant numbers – since in the earliest days of CDR, particular focus is placed on both target groups as a stabilization effort;
- Security – stabilized to a degree that staff can move within a region and mobilize communities without fear of violence;
- Access - is feasible and logistical support is possible, although equal consideration must be given to areas distant from center. (Too often, NGOs focus on sites geographically closer to field offices, over supporting generally well-off areas while under-serving areas of perhaps greater need and attendant willingness for collaboration.)
- Pilot - sites will be limited but attempts should be made to select a range of communities with disparate issues/needs where comparisons and larger learning lessons can be drawn in anticipation of a full scale program.

The number of sites or the size of the target population is a function of:

- Budget - allocation or anticipated allowance will impact site and size selection. As a guide, it is recommended that the *total* block grants equate to approximately 50% of the budget, in-country direct program expenses including training at 25% and overheads 25%. While some staff will balk at these presumed low figures for overheads, these are within reason. In fact, they will be revised even further down in second generation programming to allow for more block grant money as the situation continues to stabilize, communities are better versed, and logistics becomes easier.



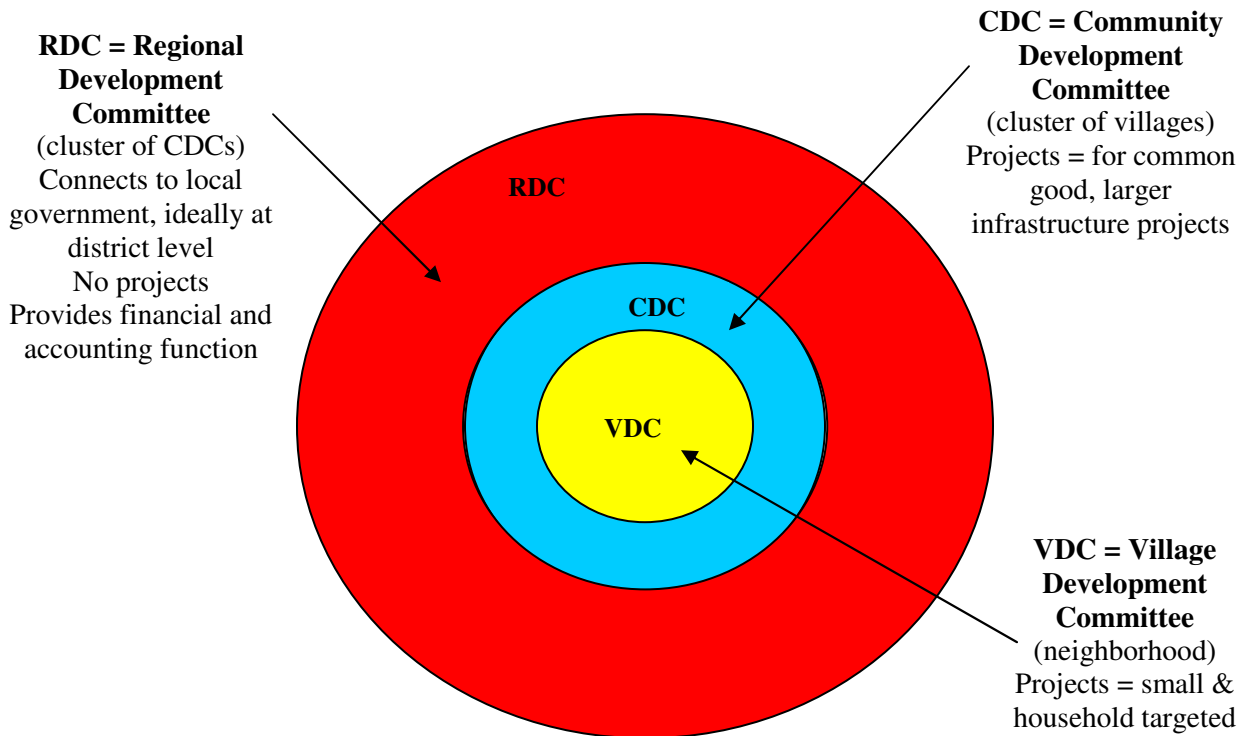
- The amount of money per family will vary against context and cost of living/reconstruction in-country. The rule of thumb is to ensure that dollar amounts per community will be sufficient enough to show some sort of peace dividend to the community through several versus only one project (although they can be small in size).
- Distance - Proximity of villages and distances to travel will impact numbers served: the closer the village the less costly the overheads and staffing. Communities should generally be kept in sync with local and administrative patterns.

3. Community Entry Levels

In terms of defining the level at which structures sit, it appears the most grass roots level (i.e. village) is optimal as it allows easier and fuller participation of the community, and provides the basis for instilling broad-based good governance practice. Communities at this level will form Village Development Committees (VDCs). However, VDCs should connect to a broader governance structure to enable larger needs to be met. Where local government is non-existent or far removed from the villages either in distance or population size, an intermediate layer, or community development committee (CDC) may be formed (in fact, many programs use this as the entry point, as budgets do not allow sufficient funds for both VDCs and CDCs). The advantages of CDCs are that by uniting larger populations, economies of scale in project choices are created, and access to external funding or lobbying at district, provincial or national government becomes easier. Where local government is non-existent or established but not fully staffed or functional, a third layer, or a regional development committee (RDC) can finally be formed, one that serves to make the links with local government.

Best practice thus far has shown that working at all three levels helps provide roles for all communities and establishes an inter-connected structure that meets household, community and regional needs. If this type of option is taken, the village VDC level (neighborhood) projects sizes are small and cover basic family household needs like seeds and tools, goat banks, etc. The community level (cluster of villages - CDC) will be larger infrastructure that is shared among villages such as schools, health posts, etc. The regional level should not be assigned even larger projects in first generation programming - it is far too complicated, too removed from the population, uses too much of the block grant and leaves less for local levels where the program needs to see its first changes. However regional committees can take on the role of ensuring linkages with government, and can be assigned as holders of the accounts but not decision makers on projects. This ensures an adequate role for the RDCs, and minimizes the financial training requirements for the lesser skilled CDCs and VDCs. Regional level projects can become part of second or third generation programming once the governance system and structures are stabilized and communities and committees are able to navigate the processes.

EXAMPLE OF GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE





4. Staff Positions and Numbers

Key staff members will depend on the size and type of program implemented (national, local, or pilot), its location and the country office set-up. Generally, CDR outlines five broad categories:

Management

- Chief Technical Advisor or Program Coordinator (generally expatriate)
- Deputy Coordinator or National Counterpart Coordinator
- Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
- Training Manager (optional)

Community Teams

- Community Facilitation/Mobilization Officers – based at the grass roots levels. Numbers will depend on distances between communities: usually 1-2 facilitator per ten (10) villages or communities is the rule of thumb.
- Social Organizers/Managers – supervisory positions that oversee community mobilization workers. Need depends on size of the program, but usually no more than ten (10) mobilization officers per manager.

Technical Teams

- Engineers – numbers will depend on options available to community for using the block grant, but experience suggests that engineering projects top the list at about 75% in early recovery processes. Technical teams cover many areas providing backstopping support to communities, usually at cluster level (combined villages). The rule of thumb is approximately 1 engineer per 10 clusters.
- Agricultural Advisors, Health Advisors, Business Advisors, etc. - dependent on program sectors defined and allowable as part of the project.

Operations

- Finance Controller or Manager - with officers possibly located in field sites for large programs.
- Senior Operations, Human Resources Manager (optional) - if the program will be handling its own logistics, administration and human resources - again usually in the case of very large programs.

Special Advisors

- Community, Tribal, Gender or Religious Affairs Advisors - often desirable and can be the key to success dependent on contextual needs.

➤ *Tools: Illustrative Job Descriptions (Tool 3)*



IMPLEMENTATION



PHASE I: STAFFING

1. Recruitment

The first step in CDR is to initiate a staff recruitment process, generally done first with senior staff. This is because: 1) there is a great deal of planning work for the senior team in the early days and 2) in some instances, CDR type programming is sensitive, and it may therefore be helpful to get buy-in regarding the staff members who do the most visible work (i.e. community mobilizers). If the latter holds true for a particular region, programmers should discuss and agree on the selection process for recruitment with communities during the sensitization processes (see below), and seek input on the skills and requirements essential to the work of these individuals.

In some countries or communities however, this method would be considered inappropriate, a subversion of normal labor laws or processes, and standard job postings for an IRC conducted interview process are required. Additionally, in some countries, ethnic or religious separation by region is strong, and localized recruitment will not facilitate integration if this is an underlying social cohesion objective. Thus, bringing in staff from other regions and fostering mixed staff groups may go a long way to helping people promote notions of tolerance and reconciliation, at minimum within IRC staff.

Whatever process is used, keep in mind there is a need to ensure a proportionate number of females are represented, given both the importance of working with females in communities and the aspirational example it sets.

- *Tool: Interview Evaluation Form (Tool 4)*

2. Training

At the outset of programming, key training needs for staff include: an introduction to CDR as a genre of programming, a more general overview of the CDR project cycle, methods for sensitization, basic PRA methodologies and tools, learning by doing methodologies (an approach used in CDR), as well as basic M&E data collection and principles of operation. The total amount of training on these subjects combined can easily take one month for solid comprehension.

Staff then need intensive training on each subsequent phase of the project cycle - but only before the phase actually begins to ensure retention.

- *Tools: Operations Manual (in counties of national programs, where applicable)*
PRA Methodologies (refer to IRC's Program Framework Participation Tools, or see the following website):
<http://www.idealists.org/ioc/learn/curriculum/pdf/Power-Mapping.pdf>
Sensitization Training Manual (Tool 5)
Learning by Doing (see the following website):
<http://www2.glos.ac.uk/gdn/gibbs>



PHASE II: SENSITIZATION

1. Introductory Meetings

Optimally, a CDR program is designed with all key stakeholders, either at national or local levels. Too often however, the nature of the environment, time constraints and need for a quick peace dividend means that not all stakeholders have participated sufficiently in the design process. Therefore introductory meetings are an essential first step to get key stakeholders on board.

For CDR to be truly effective, linkage with government is essential unless the program is operating in unrecognized territories where security will be jeopardized. At national level, an introductory meeting with government may yield a desire for a more consultative role, particularly in the early days of a post-conflict emergency where busy officials seek only to be updated on progress. They may later become more involved as the situation stabilizes. Conversely, from the outset, the government will have, or may seek to have a key oversight or operational role. Whatever angle is chosen by authorities, it is the programmer's role to ensure that every effort to make linkages occurs with government at national, and at local level throughout the project cycle.

At the local levels, informational meetings should be held with key stakeholders of government, civil society and/or indigenous leaders, community and IRC. These meetings introduce the program as a partnership initiative between the government and/or leaders, IRC and communities as well as provide an overview of its planned staffing structure, activity schedule and budget, using for example the tools outlined below.

- *Tools:*
 - IRC Fact Sheet (Tool 6)*
 - Program Summary (Tool 7)*
 - Program Process (Tool 8)*
 - Program Organogram (as applicable)*

It should be noted that IRC may be the only organization implementing a broad based CDR program over a catchment area where other organizations are implementing more traditional relief efforts. Alternatively, it may be one of several partners implementing the program on behalf of the government/donor. Either way, a coordination group facilitates collaboration on policy and practice and fosters momentum for shared resources. It should be initiated at this point as well.

2. Program Orientation for Leaders

Following the introductory meeting, the next step is a follow-up meeting with the same local leaders to seek input on: refining program design; defining meeting guidelines and core values of the program for participants; and determining the criteria for village selection (unless it is already pre-defined).



Village selection can include a range of choices such as ethnically mixed areas, remoteness, level of poverty, demographic characteristics, evidence of self-initiative, concentration of returnees and ex-combatants, distribution of current IRC activities, proximity to existing CDR communities. It can also be done randomly which has proven surprisingly effective in a recent test case. In fact the community consistently cited randomized selection as the most transparent and fair process that they had evinced in conflict recovery programming.

Whatever the decision, best practice indicates that the leadership group rather than IRC should vote on criteria (although IRC can make certain stipulations based on contextual needs), and then apply criteria through a ranking or scoring system that is transparent to the community. This latter step is equally important – it allows the community to understand ownership of the process and the importance of transparency and open bidding from the outset.

Once completed, the group should develop Solidarity Agreements, the purpose of which is to demonstrate the partnership and commitment of each party to the project objectives and values. The groups should also agree on a basic activity schedule for mobilizing and obtaining commitments from communities to participate.

- *Tools:* *Meeting Rules and Guidelines (Tool 9)*
 Village Selection Criteria (Tool 10)
 Solidarity Agreement (Tool 11)
 Core Values (Tool 12)

Best practice has also shown that a local Advisory Group is an excellent means to generate buy-in for programming as well as to provide a channel for information dissemination, particularly in areas where governance work or the notion of participation is unknown or suspect. It can be developed at this point by taking nominated names, who are tasked with a range of activities such as supporting trainers, conducting community mobilization and sensitization, negotiating with power brokers, etc., as outlined in the tool below.

- *Tool:* *Advisory Group Working Plan (Tool 13)*

Lastly, media is a useful tool, particularly in the case of larger programs where it is preferable to generate buy-in before staff and advisory groups go into the communities. Practice has shown using written program materials, features on radio, or a high profile program launch through workshops with TV and/or public personalities are effective means to promote the program, both nationally and locally.

3. Program Orientation for Participating Villages

Following the orientation meeting, the next step is to convene communities who have met the village selection criteria. The aim is to outline the essentials of program, providing enough information for them to decide whether they seek to participate – i.e. the project objectives, the core values, the rules of engagement, the general process, the budget amounts, etc. It is important



that the community itself decides whether it wants to engage, so they should be left with copies of the Solidarity Agreement, Meeting Guidelines and Core Value documents to consider.

In the event that the village agrees to participate, a further meeting is held to sign a Solidarity Agreement.

Where communities refuse to participate (due to leadership threats, ethnic divisions, etc.), two separate experiences have proven effective. First, staff have continued engagement with the community, with support from the Advisory Group to bring them into the process but at their own pace; and second, staff immediately accepted their decline, and moved on towards another village. Practice showed that each time, when the non-participating villages saw outcomes within neighboring villages, they subsequently demanded to join the program.



PHASE III: DEVELOPING THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

1. The Committee Composition

The next step is to develop or strengthen the community governance structure. In some societies, there may be pre-existing community committees, but it is imperative that they are considered representative and capable of administering on behalf of their population. If either characteristic is absent, staff need to work to facilitate re-election of new members on an existing structure. Where no structures exist and/or the existing structure is considered co-opted, corrupt or just generally not viable (*which is most often the case in IRC environments*), the program should facilitate creation of representative community structures.

In terms of defining the structure itself, IRC best practice indicates that the project should work with the communities through a series of rapid PRA type exercises to determine the actual composition of the committee. Communities should have a clear voice and dictate the process, unless this has been pre-determined in either the pre-planning or through a donor/government program. Whatever decision taken on the composition, it must be standardized across all communities, so that training and support can be administered uniformly and effectively.

Generally, approximately 7-10 people are considered a viable group decision making number, always to include a President, Secretary and Treasurer. Additional members have typically included the following:

- *Traditional/Elite/Religious Community Leaders:* Where these individuals do not yet have a role in process (e.g. a place on a local Advisory Group) but are considered respected members of the community or members who can subvert the process. They can be given an advisory but not voting/signatory role on committees.
- *Women:* Experience suggests that women have a unique role in peace-building, stabilization, recovery and reconstruction, and committees are their opportunity to have a voice in government as new structures are formed. It is a difficult question as to how many women should be represented, but it has been suggested that 30% is the minimum needed to tip the balance where women's voices are significantly heard. Women's participation may be introduced as a program requirement during orientation, made a component of the Solidarity Agreement, or it may be left until the selection of committees to be addressed.
- *Youth:* It is also clear that youth marginalization contributes to conflict and for the same reasons youth must be represented through electing their own representatives. Again, the proportions are up for debate, with no definitive number emerging to demonstrate effectiveness in increasing youth participation.



- *Technical Specialists:* Candidates with specialist functions may be stipulated for election to the committees, or appointed on an as-needed basis as consultants depending on project choices (i.e. business advisors, agricultural specialists, accountants, etc.). However practice does suggest that specialist CDC sub-committees are too onerous an option in this first generation of ‘conflict to post-conflict’ and should be avoided, except in the instance of monitoring their own sub-projects as delineated in Phase IV (below).

Candidate criteria also depends on context, but typically includes not only technical specialties, but that individuals are members of the community, at least 21 years of age, honest, willing to work voluntarily, not a member of local government, not self-interested and able to mobilize the population.

2. The Election Process

The next step is to support the community to conduct elections. In each village, a Community Election Team (CET) should be established by asking for the introduction of people who are honest and altruistic, who are content not to run as a VDC or CDC candidate. The CET candidates once verified and agreed upon by the community, are responsible for organizing the entire election according to regulation, with IRC serving as technical support.

Staff will orient the Community Election Team on universal suffrage, the need to select a site and time when most people are available, the election process (and in particular the notion of secret ballot), the need to verify the age and residence of all those who vote to ensure one person-one vote (unless recent elections have been held), the prohibition of candidature and electioneering, and the 40% quorum requirement. The tools below provide full details and should be reviewed carefully.

- *Tools:*
 - Election Guide (Tool 14)*
 - CDC Responsibilities & Candidate Qualifications (Tool 15)*
 - Election Requirements (Tool 16)*
 - CET Responsibilities (Tool 17)*
 - Election Information/Decision Form (Tool 18)*

The CET will initiate the election mobilization with an election announcement. Candidate nomination should occur via a culturally appropriate method in discussion with the community - i.e. people may nominate only others or also themselves; they may do this openly at a public meeting with people putting their hands up, at smaller meetings of neighborhood clusters of families, or by a secret ballot process (the preferred method). Limitations may also be imposed on the number of nominations necessary to qualify as a candidate. Whatever the process, it must be stringently monitored by IRC as corruption is typically at the nomination stage rather than the election stage.



- *Tools:* *Election Announcement (Tool 19)*
 Voter Registration Form (Tool 20)

The CET will then conduct a secret ballot election. Each candidate is represented by a different symbol or color given possible literacy problems. Voters are called one by one according to lists, voter identity is confirmed by the CET and each voter chooses which of these boxes to put their unmarked ballot into – all in closed (and dependent on context, gender-segregated) confines so as to prevent intimidation and opposition. Election counts are then conducted by the CET with IRC observing. A public announcement is made immediately afterwards.

- *Tools:* *Election Checklist (Tool 21)*
 Candidate Registration Form (Tool 22)
 Candidate Symbols (Tool 23)
 Ballot Count Verification (Tool 24)
 CDC Election and Composition Form (Tool 25)

If there are multiple layers of committees as recommended, i.e. VDC, CDC, RDC, there are a several choices for elections to occur from the VDC to CDC/RDC levels:

- *Option 1* – a general election is held where all communities within the area come together to replicate the VDC process for the CDC and RDC – although not highly recommended due to logistical and time constraints.
- *Option 2* – indirect election, where the VDC can come together to elect representatives up to the layer above, and the new CDC can come together to elect representatives to the RDC level. Useful because committees unite and begin to discuss around common issues and concerns.
- *Option 3* – indirect election where members of each position on the VDC can come together in a cluster to elect one of their numbers up to the CDC level, with a similar process for electing up to an RDC level. Useful because piers best understand technical requirements of individual positions, and will develop camaraderie that will be furthered in joint trainings in the future.



PHASE IV: QUICK IMPACT PROJECTS

Designing the community structure (outlined above) and the community plan (outlined below) are the next steps in the process. Both can take time and in the aftermath of war where needs are great, demonstration of a peace divided is essential. Therefore, as a show of good faith to the community and as a mechanism to prevent frustration with slow start-up processes, quick impact projects can be employed. These involve a small, relatively discrete amount of money from the total block grant that is immediately allocated for community wishes, bypassing normal procedural requirements to allow realization of some initiatives.

Quick impact projects may be implemented after the selection of the committees – unless the election processes are likely to take a long time, in which case they should be pursued after the Solidarity Agreement. Clearly timing will affect who decides what the money will be spent on: if grants are offered after committee selection, the committees will be able to take the decision – otherwise it will be the duty of traditional village leadership.

Projects can be implemented by IRC, partners or sub-contractors in much the same way as typical relief projects. Their adoption, however, does not justify lack of due consideration to participation, transparency, and accountability.



PHASE V: COMMUNITY RECOVERY PLANS

1. Participatory Preparation

As the primary function of the V/CDCs is to develop plans based on the needs of communities against a proscribed budget, analysis with the community on those needs must first occur. Generally, a series of PRA exercises are conducted such as community and opportunity mapping, problem identification and analysis, and solution ranking. The exercises do not need to take significant amounts of time in conflict and post conflict environments – overarching needs and priorities are seemingly clear to the community. But it is important that they are done with all communities, in a transparent manner so that all have a voice and take ownership for the process. Moreover special attention must be paid to helping the community identify the needs of the particularly vulnerable and those of women, youth and the ex-combatants in the region - with a view to understanding their role in supporting these groups and/or promoting their engagement.

Questions arise as to who should conduct the PRA exercises. In the cases of programs with rapid fire start-up and need to demonstrate immediate results, it is often better to have program staff or other local NGOs do the PRA type work. In the case where more time is available, it may be useful for the committees to learn and conduct the exercises themselves – although the utility of committees spending time on this exercise when they have other pressing learning needs is in question.

The outcome of the PRA work on basic needs may need to be supplemented by conflict analyses – which either look at the issues related to war or look at what conflict issues exist in the community today. The nature of the analysis will very much depend on the context and community's readiness for such work.

- *Tools:* *Participant List (Tool 26)*
 PRA for Community Planning (Tool 27)

2. The Planning Process

The combined results of the PRA and conflict analyses will provide the data needed for committees to begin developing a community recovery plan. The question is whether the community plans against the amount of the budget – or plans for the foreseeable future in order to have something from which to work at a later date. The rule of thumb is that plans are practical, fundable, do not create false expectations, are responsive to need, and pave the way for future opportunities. So far, experience would indicate (although not conclusively) that in first generation programming, a plan that outlines a handful of projects and prioritizes the top few against a budget - or a plan than prioritizes what needs to be accomplished of a period of two (2) years or less, is appropriate.

As indicated earlier, project sizes, types and funding amounts are a function of:



- 1) Context – i.e. cost of living and production;
- 2) Level of intervention – i.e. the village, community or region.

In terms of project menus, several options exist:

- *Primarily infrastructure:* The rationale is that infrastructure is a highly visible public good, as well as one of the greatest needs in reconstruction efforts.
- *Multi-sectoral with one sector intervention per level:* For example seeds and tools at the village level, infrastructure at the level above and economic development at the level beyond, (assuming a second generation program).
- *Multi-sectoral at all levels:* These can include projects such as seeds and tools, agricultural development, economic development, both physical and social infrastructure, etc.

Field experience suggests that at any one level, i.e. VDC or CDC, projects should at first be single or two sector, allowing sufficient focus on process. Trying heavy multi-sector approaches and capacity building is difficult for staff/government to administer and for communities to absorb in the early days, and are much better suited to subsequent years.

In addition to the broad based project work for all communities, additional options include:

- *Special Needs:* Making provisions for lump sum allocations or quotas within projects for special needs groups (i.e. women) or populations. This should be geared to deal with overriding contextual specific issues, not as a matter of course. In the end, the aim is for the whole community to join forces around community needs, and not make vulnerables or others a resented target population.
- *Conflict Specific:* In many areas, the residual effects of conflict can be seen and/or can have a devastating effect on the community. Assuming the population is ready to confront these issues, special project monies may be assigned to deal with conflict specific projects – i.e. drama, forums, human rights training, etc.

In terms of project criteria, additional factors aside from menu restrictions/options and dollar amounts can include items such as:

- Projects must demonstrate no environmental degradation
- Projects must be completed within a specified timeframe
- Projects must demonstrate equity in choice and no discrimination
- No funds to be used for political or religious ends
- No project funds to be used for sitting allowances
- Recurrent costs must be addressed before approval



Staff should then begin the process of training the CDCs and VDCs to conduct planning against the budget using a 'learning by doing' process. This means, the committees receive some basic classroom type training, but then immediately begin the process of developing the plan with staff providing backup support as teachers and mentors.

Once the first draft is completed, relevant line ministries, NGOs working in the area and private sector bodies should be invited to review the plan. The aim is to solicit external support for priorities through money, in-kind materials, or technical advice, freeing up resources for additional community priorities. This also creates the proper linkages, ensures plans are in line with government requirements and ensures no duplication of effort. In fact, with projects requiring recurrent costs/staff, these must be dealt with up front by either requiring an MoU with the relevant line ministry to bear these costs in the future, or by making provisions for cost recovery schemes. In the event there is no proviso for handling recurrent costs or staffing issues (i.e. teachers in a new school), such projects should be disallowed.

Once the plan is developed, it is essential that in the interest of accountability and transparency to their constituents, committees publicly defend the plan and obtain their endorsement. Meetings should be monitored by IRC. Once finalized, the plans should be posted in a public place with budget items attached.



PHASE VI: FINANCE AND TENDERING

Once recovery plans are developed, committees should be trained on financial management. This is a critical and necessary step, but should be kept as simple as possible. Since committees are not permitted to expense costs and the flow of funds is restricted to block grant installments received from the funding body and disbursed to contractors, the bookkeeping should be basic.

The committees then receive a block grant for implementation in a number of installments, which can be split into as many as is deemed necessary, in increasing or decreasing increments. A bank account should be opened if possible. There must be multiple signatories that run accounts; a minimum of three are recommended. At no time should the signatory be an unelected official. Where there is no banking system, funds may come directly from IRC to those contracted for project implementation, such that the committee has control over the process of implementation but not actual fund disbursement.

In the case where multiple committee layers are in play, i.e. village, community and regional, best practice has shown that money is placed only at the RDC level. The CDCs and VDCs ensure completion of projects and request RDC transfers funds to contractors. RDCs comply assuming all paper work is correct. This provides a clear accounting but not decision making role for the RDC, and eases the burden of training far too many local CDC/VDC groups on financial management.

- *Tools:* *Disbursement Process Guidelines (Tool 28)*
 Signatory Authorization Form (Tool 29)
 Bank Account Application (Tool 30)

Once the plan is endorsed by the communities, and committees understand the basics of finances, technical specifications need to be developed and prepared for tender. The simple procurement package detailed below has proven so effective when implemented correctly that it has even been adopted by line ministries in the country in which it was modeled.

The appropriate committee completes instructions for tenders and technical information for each project and prepares tender packages. This includes a project definition, estimated budget, training needs, a basic work schedule, costs estimates - material and equipment, labor costs – operations and maintenance requirements and community contributions. The community amount is a flat rate, should never fall below 10% (as it negates the aim), should be as high as the community can handle, and can be a mix of cash and in-kind contribution.

A tender announcement is then made and interested organizations collect these packages from the committee, completing a Tender Receipt. In the case of multiple layers, the VDCs and CDCs can send the tender documents to the RDCs who will issue the calls. Bidding can be limited to private sector companies or local NGOs, or open to both. Potential bidders complete the contents



of the packages, keep one copy and submit the other in sealed envelopes. The V/C/RDC must evaluate them at an open transparent public meeting and select the best candidates based on agreed selection criteria – usually quality and lowest bid.

It is possible to limit applications to organizations that are from the local area in order to maximize the economic gain to the target area. However, a minimum number of bids should be agreed as necessary for contracting to begin – where this number is not reached, bids can be accepted from organizations further afield. In addition, it is possible to require companies, whether local or otherwise, to source labor from the locality for the same reasons. This can be done by including a list of local labor in the tender package.

Often, it is the case at VDC level that local needs are so small or unsophisticated that it is impractical to go through a full-scale or standard tender type process. This means staff must carefully work with VDCs, and devise alternative mechanisms to ensure transparent and accountable procurement.

- *Tools:*
 - Project Eligibility Appraisal Criteria (Tool 31)*
 - Project Proposal Summary Sheet (Tool 32)*
 - Project Technical Drawing (Tool 33)*
 - Gender Sensitivity Assessment (Tool 34)*
 - Tripartite Implementation Agreement (Tool 35)*
 - Project Manual (Tool 36)*
 - Tender Invitation (Tool 37)*
 - Notes to Applicants (Tool 38)*
 - Tender Delivery Receipt (Tool 39)*
 - Scope of Work (Tool 40)*
 - Project Implementation Plan (Tool 41)*
 - Qualifications Summary (Tool 42)*
 - List of Local Labor (Tool 43)*
 - Contractor Bid and Eligibility Declaration (Tool 44)*
 - Bid Form (Tool 45)*
 - Record of Site Visit (Tool 46)*
 - Offer Delivery Confirmation (Tool 47)*
 - Bid Opening Summary (Tool 48)*
 - Bid Evaluation Worksheet (Tool 49)*

Once the V/C/RDC has arrived at a decision in its public meeting, it notifies both successful and unsuccessful organizations in writing directly. The V/C/RDC then signs a contract with the selected contractor, and makes a block grant request from the funding body, attaching the contract and technical specifications.

A sub-project monitoring group should be then formed, unless a natural one already exists – one that is either the recipient of the works (i.e. water committee, PTA) or one with a vested interest



in oversight. This eases the burden on the V/C/RDC, allows for a more steady oversight of the implementation process, and generates ownership and more understanding by expanding the number of people directly involved in the project. To ensure community participation, the group can use a small book at the project site for members to sign in and make comments, and report publicly through announcements or the display of reports.

- *Tools:*
 - Letter of Acceptance (Tool 50)*
 - Notification of Unsuccessful Bid (Tool 51)*
 - Block Grant Request (Tool 52)*
 - Contract and Goods Received Slip (Tool 53)*
 - Contractor Information Form (Tool 54)*
 - Community Contribution Form (Tool 55)*

Once the monitoring groups stipulates that services are received and satisfactory, they notify the V/C/RDC (or in some cases IRC) who disburses first installments, to the contractor. IRC MUST monitor and audit this process, which continues until the final payment is authorized by the V/C/RDC using the goods received slip attached to the bottom of the contract.

- *Tools:*
 - Micro-Project Monitoring Report (Tool 56)*
 - Record of Site Visit (Tool 57)*
 - Contract Amendment (Tool 58)*

Before projects can be handed over from contractors to committees or groups, they need to receive training in sustainability. While each project proposal contained a basic plan for operation and maintenance, this training provides specific guidance on how to set up a sustainability fund and organize other solutions to ensure micro-project benefits endure.

- *Tool:*
 - Sustainability Manual (Tool 59)*

Once complete, a meeting to signal finalization should be held. The contractor, local government and the committee must be present to ensure that each acknowledges its role and responsibility for any problems going forward. A certificate of sub-project completion should be issued by the dominant project authority.

- *Tool:*
 - Sub-Project Completion Form (Tool 60)*



MONITORING AND EVALUATION



HOW DO WE MONITOR AND EVALUATE COMMUNITY DRIVEN RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS?

The monitoring and evaluation program should be designed:

- directly with the community to evaluate viability and effectiveness of process, procedures and systems in place, allowing for consistent revision and modification on site;
- with representative stakeholders including IRC, local authorities, committee members, select community representatives and staff to understand dynamics at play, viability of relationships to achieve project objectives, and direct project outputs;
- internally by staff and the appropriate technical units at headquarters to ensure project lessons learned, tools, and methodologies from other country programs are adequately adapted to the context, to support the implementation of the program throughout its life cycle, and to design follow-on interventions in line with broader governance or second generation programs;
- with the donor, the Governance and Rights Unit and the Research and Evaluation Unit to measure project effect or impact, and to gain lessons learned for best practice both internal and external to the country programs. (Since some donors will be unfamiliar with the realities of CDR programming, regular visits to witness the process first-hand throughout the course of the project has proven extremely valuable. It provides a good notion of the rate at which things progress and the balance of process versus output, enabling them to better understand implementation patterns.)

IRC has developed a basic framework (see tool below) that will help guide in outlining key indicators for success of the program. The framework details a range of indicators that taken together will measure program effectiveness and impact, but NOT output indicators such as numbers of participants trained, which are left to field staff to determine.

On the framework, the impact/effect indicators are divided into two separate columns. The column entitled ‘field compiled and documented indicators’ are used to demonstrate what is more readily attainable by staff based on field work. The column entitled ‘externally acquired indicators’ will require a level of sophistication to gather – meaning skilled surveyors or research agents must be contracted to do this work. It is imperative that staff without adequate skill sets do not attempt to gather this information - IRC has witnessed countless efforts by well intentioned staff lacking expertise gathering data which in the end does not hold up as valid.

➤ *Tools: IRC Framework for CDR-Type Programs (Tool 61)*



SECOND GENERATION



WHAT ARE SOME POSSIBILITIES FOR 'SECOND GENERATION' PROGRAMMING?

Once the initial project cycle has been completed, there are many possible ways of deepening work that has been started with original target areas or expanding the initial work to other communities.

Some of the possibilities for follow-on programming are as follows:

1. Additional Projects

As V/C/RDCs are more stabilized, more capable of administering projects and understand the value of the processes, new areas of intervention aside from the primary infrastructure can and should be added to the portfolio of options. This responds to needs on the ground while paving the way for learning related to community approaches or decentralization that is more sector specific.

Generally there is a tremendous call for economic development programming to be introduced. It should be noted however that an FAO IRC study on the economic benefits of the CDR process and the building of infrastructure have proven to be significant. That aside, IRC has experimented with a range of direct economic recovery project interventions, although to date none has demonstrably been earmarked as the most effective strategy. What we have learned from less than satisfactory results in some programs is that:

- A specialist skilled in small business or agricultural development is required to map out strategy in coordination with skilled community development specialists. Staff should not undertake economic efforts on their own volition. It is recommended that at an appropriate point, a consultant is employed who can assist in mapping out this next tier related to economic recovery, supported by the IRC's Economic Recovery Unit. An example of a TOR that aims to achieve this objective is provided. Micro-credit (as in many highly specialized fields) should not be undertaken by community groups or communities, but rather should be contracted out to specialty organizations that have expertise in implementation.
- As well, increased efforts in the areas of gender, the environment and human rights/civic awareness can be introduced. However, keep in mind that while training for awareness raising is important, it should be attached to a 'learning by doing' strategy that embeds learning in a practical output.

➤ *Tool:* *TOR for Economic Development Consultant (Tool 62)*



2. Local Governance Development

As stabilization and recovery gets underway, local governance structures generally become better established. It is the programmer's role to understand how to work with these structures, perhaps building capacity not only of the V/C/RDCs, but of local government, or at least helping to create and forge better linkages between the two. This can occur in a number of ways, and again requires a specialist governance/public policy expert who understands local dynamics and the planned interventions underway by government and bi-laterals to map out an effective, contextually appropriate strategy. An example of a TOR that aims to achieve this objective is attached.

➤ *Tool: TOR for Governance/Public Policy Consultant (Tool 63)*

3. Capacity Building

The aim of a CDR project is always to capacity build partners to assume greater and greater responsibility for their own socio-economic development. As V/C/RDCs stabilize and grow, more demand for more support will be encountered. Some will be introduced through the pieces outlined above. Other means that have proven effective include:

- *Exchanges:* Study tours have been shown to be a highly effective method to develop non-partisan interaction and networking between program participants, not only helping define better programming through shared learning but also as a means of facilitating reconciliation or social cohesion between diverse fabrics of society. Typically these should be held regularly with rotating host communities/target areas, bringing together government and/or indigenous leaders as well as program participants in broad-based consultation, sharing of issues and celebration of achievements.
- *Mentoring Other Communities:* This strategy has proven effective in allowing CDR communities to cement the skills they have acquired, replicate the program methodology at low cost and high speed, and build horizontal linkages between previously isolated communities.
- *Partner NGOs to Implement CDR:* Capacity building local NGOs is an important mechanism to undertake either from the design phase or as soon as the program is grounded. Local partners can assume the entire process, or select pieces of work dependent on capabilities.