

## Call for Articles

### SPARK Newsletter

Do you have an article or idea of interest to CBNRM practitioners? This could be the push you need to get started! The SPARK Programme is currently soliciting articles for this newsletter. Themes for the last two issues of the year are:

The Role/s of LGUs in CBNRM (Deadline for articles is September 15)

and

Marketing and the Global Economy (Deadline for articles is December 9)

Submitted material should be no more than 800 words in MS Word Rich Text Format. It should include the author's name, organizational affiliation, and email address. Contributors should include photographs, graphs, and figures related to their article. Please save photos in jpeg format, 200dpi resolution, with an image size of around 4x5 inches.

For more information about the themes of the newsletter, you can email **Jocel Pangilinan** ([jocel.pangilinan@vsoint.org](mailto:jocel.pangilinan@vsoint.org)). Newsletter items may be transmitted through email or fax to **Mariel de Jesus**, ([marieldejesus@essc.org.ph](mailto:marieldejesus@essc.org.ph)), fax number (+632) 4265958.

The **SPARK newsletter** is a quarterly publication produced in Thai, Bahasa Indonesia and English aimed at practitioners of community-based natural resource management in Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. It is received by about 900 organizations in these countries. The newsletter is intended to serve as a networking tool to encourage the sharing of knowledge, experiences, ideas, and cooperation amongst different groups implementing CBNRM activities in the three program countries.

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#### ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

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Sharing skills  
Changing lives

Promoting community-based approaches to natural resource management in Southeast Asia

## Editorial

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## Rebuilding Lives After Natural Disasters

Natural disasters, such as floods, landslides and droughts, affect poor resource-dependent communities more adversely than any other group of people. But the events of 26 December 2004 had devastating effects on all levels of society. Rich and poor alike were affected by the tsunami that struck the coast of Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka and India. However, it is the poor who do not have the available resources to rebuild their lives and houses, or buy the necessary seeds and stock to replant and rebuild their farms.

This edition of the SPARK Newsletter takes a look at communities in the process of rebuilding lives after natural disasters strike. The lessons and insights in this issue will hopefully guide us in the future when we are planning sustainable development projects with natural resource-dependent communities, or when we are in the process of reconstruction after a natural disaster.

We have a range of interesting and in-depth articles from different areas within SPARK's target areas, all looking at the different stages of reconstructing lives and livelihoods after a natural disaster. Three of these articles focus on the response to December's tsunami--one from Aceh and two from Southern Thailand. The articles from Luzon on pages 8-10 focus on the causes of and rebuilding after the floods of November 2004. One article from Flores, Ende explains the rebuilding process there two years after a flash

flood struck the village of Rewangga, sweeping away many houses and at least 20 acres of land. The final article is a reflection from local people 10 years after a tsunami struck the town of Maumere in 1992.

### Empowered

As the articles on the tsunami recount, the emergency relief response to the devastation caused by the tsunami focused on giving food, shelter and clothing to those affected. The "Reconstruction of Aceh" article shows that when international NGOs scramble to a region and local NGOs begin to multiply, it is imperative that close coordination is maintained between these different organisations. It is also vital that gender is considered into the relief process and that all members of the community are involved in coming up with solutions to simple problems. The case of Muuk Island illustrates the unnecessary, and avoidable, offshoots of unsystematic and uncoordinated operations of international and local NGOs. It was felt that the emergency response and the inequitable distribution of aid and assistance decreased the feelings of solidarity and goodwill that had developed in the community.

In the reconstruction phase, as seen in the article from Ende, Flores, it is very important that local communities are enthused and empowered to rebuild their own lives using locally-available resources, if possible. In the long run, the road to recovery becomes sustainable if people begin to stand on their own feet and not depend solely on external aid.

The article from Luzon shows how the close coordination of the efforts of civil society, like schools and universities, and local government units can help facilitate emergency response after storms. The accompanying article on flooding in the Philippines shows the unfortunate reality that even after devastating floods, the communities still return to the old site of their village and rebuild upon the very same place. Although this can only lead to further misery, many of these communities are landless, and can only go where no one else wants to live or develop. The article highlights that some of these 'natural disasters' are often encouraged by human activity and requires political will and careful planning.

In the reflection of events 13 years after a tsunami struck Maumere, it is very clear that the moral support provided by the church and other community members during the disaster's emergency phase was vital to those

affected.

There is one common thread that runs through almost all the articles in this issue: the solidarity that builds up among community members after a natural disaster. It is vital that local and international emergency response to these events takes this into consideration and puts it to best use. Coordination with local community leaders and with each other will provide a much better service to those in need, so that *everyone* - not just the same people over and over again - receives care.

We hope you enjoy the issue and, if you have any input on the topic, please contact us.

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Peter Njoroge  
former SPARK volunteer

## As I saw it-- The Reconstruction of Aceh After the Tsunami

Two months after the December 2004 tsunami, I was on a mission to Aceh: to assist the NGO, Concern, in instituting procedures and systems that would ensure the participation of affected communities in decision-making involving the rehabilitation and restoration of their livelihoods.

As the plane approached Banda Aceh, the aerial view of the island made me realize the magnitude of the destruction caused by the tsunami, which was far worse than what was shown on TV. The sight of an airplane, which crashed near the airport while trying to bring in aid during the initial phases of emergency response, that greeted me brought me to the reality that I was no longer watching TV, but was actually involved. On the ground, as I carried out my tasks, the picture I got was one of chaotic efforts to cope with the aftermath of the tsunami.

Upon arrival, I went straight to work at the Concern office without formal preambles considering the vast work to be done. I immediately joined a staff meeting where I learned about Concern's multiple activities, which included assisting in the repair, rehabilitation and equipping of schools; construction of toilets; distribution of water to camps and barracks (improved semi-permanent wooden houses); distribution of tents and non-food items (NFIs); distribution of food (in Pulau Nasi) and health & hygiene kits; rebuilding of harbours; and assessments of roads and bridges.

A street in Banda Aceh, after the 2004 tsunami



photo: AP

To orient myself, I visited the UN liaison office and the offices of local NGOs involved in emergency response. It became clear to me that coordination was lacking among the local and international NGOs (LNGOs and INGOs, respectively), even among experienced INGOs, although the UN office had begun mapping the LNGOs and their

hit the same area dropping half the annual rainfall in less than a week. Consequently, this creates a level of soil saturation that separates the different geological layers and leads to over-land flow of disastrous proportions.

- Land identification for relocation necessitates political will and effective policy. Lives would have been saved if the predominantly poor people living along the banks were relocated to higher ground and knew to evacuate. Political will is still lacking, as even today, there is an increasing number of families settling along the flood plain upstream of the newly channeled river.

Only a towering flow gauge is there to remind people of the height of the potential floodwaters in Ormoc.

In 1999 and again in 2004, logging was blamed for the massive floods, shifting attention away from other more critical factors that caused the disaster. These, and other lessons, apply to the different coastal towns in many parts of the Philippines.

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## The Maumere Tsunami A Reflection 13 Years After the Experience

### Introduction

The people of the Sikka district in Maumere, Flores will never forget the incident of 12 December 1992. On that day almost 13 years ago, the Island of Flores shook in the grip of an earthquake and, moments later, the city of Maumere and Sikka district were struck by a tsunami. This article shares some community members' recollections of that natural calamity.

### The Tsunami

Before 12 December 1992, the people of the Sikka district had no memory of tsunamis hitting their area, not even through stories or information passed on to them by the elders. Thus, the tsunami came as a complete shock to them.

When the tsunami hit Sikka, the people were in panic, searching for some safe place to hide from the giant wave. Their only recourse was to go to higher ground. After the tsunami passed, people were still afraid to go back down from the hills.

The tsunami took the lives of many residents and livestock, as well as destroyed houses and farmlands. It left the people without homes, food or drinking water. The disaster cut deep into their lives and left them helpless.

Following the disaster, the Sikka district received aid from a number of sources. The church and the government were among the first to react, giving food, water and clothing. The church provided moral support and counseling, which the community felt was extremely important, considering the prevalent low morale and motivation of the people. Although the people were grateful for the external emergency aid, as this helped them survive the disaster, they knew that this was only temporary and they would have to rebuild their lives on their

own. Thus, the moral support they received was crucial in inspiring and empowering the community to start the reconstruction process.

### Learnings from the ordeal

Today, the community has managed to get back to what is almost a normal existence. The residents have been able to restore their livelihoods, livestock and their other small enterprises, which help them stand on their own feet. Today, 13 years after the disaster, many residents feel that they have recovered from the tsunami.

The December 1992 tsunami, which exacted a heavy toll in lives and properties, was devastating for those who experienced it. Nonetheless, the incident also proved to be a major, though difficult and painful, learning experience. The people learned the value of determination, perseverance and the reality of having to struggle to successfully overcome the disaster and rebuild their lives through their own effort. Most importantly, perhaps, is the realization that the community cannot depend on external aid to survive such a catastrophe. With regard to aid, moral support is just as important as material assistance. Only when the community has regained its strength and morale will its members be able to rebuild their lives. On the occasion of the sharing activity, one community member said, "Every experience that a person undergoes has a certain meaning. The experience can be something fun, sad or painful. These experiences become our teachers that tell us something about ourselves."

*The experience of the tsunami was shared by the following members of the Sikka district, Maumere :*  
Mr. Gerardus Dolo  
Mrs. Anastasia Elizabeth Minoe  
Mr. Sabinus Iko Sarno

Peter Walpole, SJ  
Executive Director  
Environmental Science for Social Change  
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## Flooding beyond illegal logging

### Looking more deeply at the causes of and critical responses to predictable floods

In November 2004, four major typhoons struck Eastern Luzon in the Philippines. The storms caused major floods that wiped out over PhP6 billion in agriculture, fisheries, property and infrastructure, not to mention leaving over 1,500 dead.

The common belief is that illegal logging is the root cause of these massive floods. Yet, to reduce the problem to illegal logging oversimplifies the situation. Of course, illegal logging should be prevented, and every effort should be exerted to end it. However, the focus on illegal logging should not be used to divert attention from the other more central problems that affect the security of thousands of people and that need critical action.

Thirteen years ago, the floodwaters in Ormoc, Leyte killed over 7,922 people. The main victims were urban squatters living on the sediment banks along the river. The floodwaters jumped the turn in the riverbank and swept the people in its path out to sea, as the waters flowed down the main streets. This disaster was not attributable solely to logging, or land clearing, or the history of agricultural expansion for sugar. Nor was it due to a freak climatic event. Everything from decades past fed into the path of the disaster, compounding the event beyond imagination. Ormoc was a nightmare become real – the wake-up call of years of social and environmental deprivation that merged and interplayed across the landscape, exemplifying the mismanagement of Philippine watersheds. Unfortunately, the following lessons still have not been internalized by Philippine society:

- People should not return, and should not be allowed to return, to live in river beds. The village of Isla Verde in Leyte was wiped out during the Ormoc flashflood, yet just weeks after the floods, people went back to live there. While rehabilitation efforts were undertaken, these were done piecemeal. Serious rehabilitation occurred only six years later, through a Japanese project for flood mitigation, and only then were people living on Isla Verde given greater protection. Some were relocated, but not all were. As a result, people are living upstream in what may be Ormoc 2, under circumstances similar to those of the pre-1991 flood.
- Infrastructure should not over restrict river flow. At the end of Isla Verde, a right hand turn in

the river was cemented with steep sides. During the storm, the flow was too great and the water jumped the affronting steep land and flooded down a main street. To address these flaws in infrastructure, the Japanese flood mitigation project rehabilitated over 6 kilometers of banks with gradual incline, removing restrictive points and building a related series of bridges, silt dams, sluices and culverts.

- Plantations should not be allowed in flood paths. The coconut plantations along the flood path were wiped away and became debris, adding to the volume of the flow, restricting critical flow points, wiping out Isla Verde and forming a ramp at the turning in the river, hence, forcing the water to flow down the main street. Planned reforestation projects sounded necessary at the time, as a response to the forest loss in the upper catchment, although these would not actually make a difference. With regard to the reforestation plans, again, political will was lacking: the local government planted only around 30 hectares since most of the area is private land.

- The "unnatural rains" that triggered the Ormoc flashfloods are normal weather occurrences. They are rainfall events that happen, and should be expected, every 50 to 100 years. While Philippine society is prepared to face 20 typhoons a year, it has yet to learn to cope with this natural event where three typhoons may successively

A road in Eastern Luzon, after massive flooding in 2004



photo: francis caplatrano

activities. Owing to the lack of cooperation, there was uneven distribution of assistance in stricken areas. Some camps benefited much from repeated assistance, while others lacked access to aid as they were yet unregistered with the UN or with the government. NGOs conducted repeated situational assessments, causing further strain on already distressed communities and leaving them 'burnt out'. People visited the office every day with unanswered basic needs. It made one wonder what the hundreds of NGOs were actually doing.

I gained enlightening lessons by listening and talking to the people who visited Concern. The pre-packed distribution kit, though a noble idea, was limited in addressing the wide range of needs of communities. For instance, the kit did not include personal items for women, such as underwear. To better target the needs of women, I suggested that three women representatives be selected from each camp to do assessments for women's specific needs and, subsequently, to distribute the necessities to them.

The barracks were well-designed though wanting in some aspects. Building the toilet next to the kitchen, given the poor drainage, posed a high risk of disease incidence. To avert this, the WATSAN engineer of Concern was tasked to improve the drainage system and to hire health and hygiene promoters for Concern-assisted barracks. Unwittingly, I had become an expert in toilets and drainage design by the time I left.

Besides extending direct emergency support, I was charged to identify LNGOs to partner with Concern. As the INGOs had predicted, post-tsunami development programs increased resulting in turfing by assisting organizations. Hundreds of LNGOs, claiming pre-tsunami existence, had mushroomed after the tsunami. They had no documentation to show, claiming that their legal papers were destroyed by the tsunami. In conducting an emergency partnership assessment, one almost had to develop extra-sensory power to detect and separate the 'rice from the chaff'. This required intense probing and the VSO bahasa training proved to be essential.

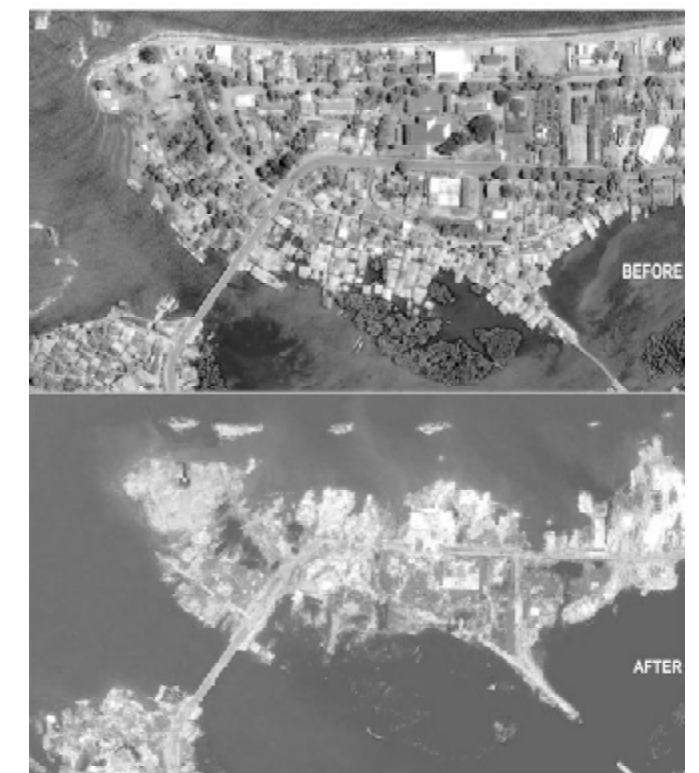
Competition and lack of cooperation marked the relationship among the NGOs. This confused the local government. I saw the need to organise a meeting between INGOs, LNGOs, local government and local community leaders operating in same kecamatan as Concern. The Red Cross and ICR helped make this meeting possible. During the meeting, NGOs – both international and local – presented their plans. They had disagreements and intense debates but, in the end, they agreed on the difficult decision of assigning INGOs and their LNGO partners to areas of operation, based on their expertise, capacity and actual activities on the ground. The INGOs

also agreed to hold future meetings for sharing information and updates. However, only Red Cross, IRC and Concern attended the first meeting.

Before I left, I visited Pulau Nasi in northwestern Banda Aceh, which was then a Concern-assisted area. In one of the five villages, Pasi Janeng, not one resident had returned. I met with the Kepala desas and community representatives who identified permanent resettlement, land ownership and housing as priority issues facing the communities. I discussed with them Concern's commitment to pursue a participatory decision-making process that would involve all community members at every stage of the process. Concern's participatory approach would include ensuring the social inclusion of women, who are now increasingly performing the duties as head of the household, and the voiceless poor. Toward this end, Concern would facilitate and monitor a communication system wherein these marginalized sectors would be allowed to participate and openly discuss their issues without taking advantage of each other.

Given my brief assignment in Aceh, all I wanted was to leave behind workable procedures, systems and processes that would ensure that affected communities were involved in decision-making on crucial matters toward the reconstruction of their lives and livelihoods. As I accomplished this task, I gained a lot of realizations of on-the-ground realities that should be taken into consideration in future similar circumstances.

Aerial views of Banda Aceh, before and after the tsunami



aerial photos: Cyber2000.org

Oy Sirisook  
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## Forging NGO Networks For Long-Term, Participatory Post-Tsunami Rehabilitation

The catastrophic tsunami that struck six coastal provinces – namely, Krabi, Phang Na, Rhanong, Satun, Phuket and Trang – along the Andaman Coast of Thailand on 26 December 2004 left 30 villages of small-scale fisherfolk completely devastated. These villages are predominantly Muslim, with a smaller percentage of Buddhists, and a minority of sea gypsies called Moken and Uwak Iawoi. The giant waves wrought total destruction on houses, fishing boats and gear, and farming areas in these 30 villages. It also caused comparatively moderate damages to houses and fishing equipment in 124 other communities. In all, the giant waves affected 186 fishing villages in 18 districts and 1 sub-district in the said six provinces along the Andaman Coast.

In response to the crisis, NGOs, which had been working with the small-scale fisherfolk prior to the tsunami, organized and deployed several task forces in affected areas during the critical period, between 26 December 2004 and 4 January 2005. These groups provided rapid assistance to the affected communities, particularly in providing refuge, establishing temporary shelters, mobilizing people, searching for missing persons, and organizing funerals. On 28 December 2004, 34 NGOs from the North, Northeast and South were mobilized and they convened "The Collaborative Network for the Rehabilitation of the Andaman Community and Natural Resources". Before the tsunami, six other NGOs based in Southern Thailand joined forces to form "The Save the Andaman Network". These two NGO networks have been collaborating and coordinating with each other through the Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF), which serves as the networks' legal entity. The SDF has the following objectives:

- highlight problems faced by marginalized groups (namely, the small-scale fisherfolk, children and migrant laborers) as a result of the tsunami;
- provide immediate relief for small-scale fisherfolk and facilitate the process to ensure appropriate, immediate and long-term rehabilitation of community and coastal resources through people's participation; and,
- provide direction for government relief policies that are conducive to community's needs, through the participation of different sectors: the community, government and academic sector.

### Who are the members of The Save Andaman Network?

1. The Federation of Southern Fisherfolk (FSF)
2. The Community Development Institute (CODI-Southern Office)
3. Community Development Project in Southern Thailand (Dab Ban Dab Muang – Rien Ru Dee Tee Pak Tai)
4. Friends of Andaman
5. Health Public Life Project
6. NGO-Coordinating Committee on Development (NGO-COD)

### What has The Save the Andaman Network done so far?

For the small-scale fisherfolk, The Save the Andaman Network has been a key implementer in the rehabilitation process. It responded immediately after the tsunami, by providing communities with food and shelter. More importantly, it organized the communities to facilitate collective action and solidarity among the community members. Village committees were formed. These played important roles in conducting survey of damages and in formulating a tsunami rehabilitation plan. The Network supported field processes and gave advice to the communities, but planned and implemented activities with the people's participation.

At the field level, the Network collaborates with the village committees to build temporary, permanent or mobile boatyards and facilitates repair activities of fishing boats and equipment in target villages. To date, 30 of 35 boatyards that the Network planned to put in place have been completed. The objectives of building boatyards are twofold: (1) to provide common venues for repairing boats while promoting sharing of responsibilities and cooperation; and, (2) to enhance the boat-building skills of affected fishing communities. To ensure sufficient manpower for this activity, the Network tapped the skills of volunteers recruited among students and community members from nearby and distant areas (as far as the Gulf of Thailand). The volunteers trained community members in the affected areas to repair damaged boats themselves.



The floods rendered roads virtually impassable

photo: paul watts

Aurora province was already hit by a major tropical storm when typhoon Violeta struck on 23 November, followed by typhoons Winnie and Yoyong in the next two weeks. The provincial capital was without electricity for over a month, with drastically limited fuel for generators. The entire province was isolated due to impassable roads. Massive floods and mudslides affected all eight of the provincial municipalities with Baler, San Luis, Maria Aurora and Dinagalan most devastated. Over 6000 houses were damaged, with an estimated P230 million in damages to infrastructure, as well as an additional loss of at least P41 million from destroyed crops, livestock and fisheries. Despite the intensity of the storms, the dead (including those killed while bravely trying to maintain the roads) and seriously wounded numbered only in the hundreds. It would appear that the loss of human lives was limited by an incredible mobilization of local resources. Acts of individual sacrifice and bravery were supported by the broad efforts of local agencies.

In the past, when calamities hit local areas, the coordination of response efforts was limited. In part, the delay in response was due to obstacles in communication. In the case of the 2004 typhoons, as soon as the extent of the disaster was assessed, coordination was quickly established among the provincial office of the governor, the offices of the mayors for the municipal local governments, the office of the president of Aurora State College of Technology (ASCOT) and their associated agencies. ASCOT served as one of the many evacu-

ation centers, and it also initiated contact with 10 other state colleges and university. This resulted in broad-based collection and distribution of relief goods to the affected population. This initiative was coordinated with the above-mentioned offices to ensure that goods reached the people most in need. The ASCOT-Fundeso Coastal Resource Management Project (partly initiated by VSO) also played a role in terms of both financial and logistical support. All the work of other local agencies and the contributions of individuals may never be fully told, and this generosity and cooperation perhaps best illustrate how the people of Aurora dealt with this calamity.

Looking back at the typhoon response now that several months have passed, there are signs that it was more of a progression than a single event; that it was, in fact, the initial stage in the development of Aurora's capacity to respond to future calamity situations. As activities returned to normal, meetings that involved all of the above agencies were initiated. A strategy of coordination was established among the organizations that directly service the province of Aurora. The colleges and universities also established a similar trans-provincial strategy. In addition, the ASCOT-Fundeso Coastal Resource Management Project includes ongoing efforts to rejuvenate mangrove areas. This academic initiative is supported by a proposed new government legislation that would prioritize the rejuvenation of mangrove areas that could serve as coastal buffers against typhoons. In at least some strategic riverfront areas, new dikes are also being constructed to check floods. With these initiatives, the current level of preparation in Aurora is a step forward in minimizing the impact of future calamities.

The Filipino people have long been known for their ability to move on after calamities. It would seem that both the primary government offices in Aurora Province and the system of colleges and universities have evolved a strategy to enhance their contribution to this trait of the Filipino people. When adversity leads to improvement, hopefully we become more empowered to define the future.

ried out by the whole community (by those devastated by the flood and by those not as badly affected), with technical advice and support from external parties such as NGOs. In the same way, the community members – whether affected by the disaster or not – worked together to restore their farmlands. A rolling work model was arranged to give time for people to attend to their personal and household needs.

Alternative livelihood activities were developed as sources of food and income until the community members regained their farmlands. Since they could not farm, they began to make bricks. Some housewives knitted clothes and raised cattle. These new income-generating alternatives managed to support the people temporarily, while they waited for their farms to be rehabilitated.

The primary lesson learned from this experience is the importance of raising the self-confidence and optimism of the people to recover from disasters. When

natural shocks occur, feelings of desperation and misery can prevent people from moving forward, and make them dependent on external assistance. However, all types of assistance and grants are short-term. The most important aspect of recovery is regaining control of one's life to live as one did prior to the disaster. This is what made the people in Rewangga able to cope with the disaster.

Another learning is that, while material assistance such as goods and money for recovery after a disaster are necessary, it is also crucial to provide alternatives and solutions for the people using methods and resources available at the local level. Natural disasters are inevitable and, in dealing with their devastating impacts, it is ultimately the people affected who can help themselves overcome their situation.

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## Mobilizing Resources: Coordination and Calamity

### A Sketch in Philippine Resilience

In November and December 2004, South and Southeast Asia were stricken by natural calamities, in particular the tsunami that had widespread regional impact. Overshadowed by the global response to that devastating event, the local response to the series of typhoons that hit the province of Aurora in the Philippines illustrates an enhanced approach to relief both within the province and throughout the Philippines. The complete story of these typhoons cannot be told here, as it would involve the words of many. However, from the limited perspective of our local VSO program, it seems that there was a change in how the Philippines responded to the 2004 typhoons. These changes suggest a heightened sense of coordination and an awareness of the need to build capacity for effective calamity response, as well as to develop mechanisms for mitigating the impact of natural shocks.



photo: paul watts

Wading through floods in Aurora, Philippines

Furthermore, The Save the Andaman Network also extended financial assistance, in the form of temporary loans pending the availability of government assistance, for the repair of damaged fishing boats and equipment. To gain access, the village committees have to prepare proposals, specifying the number of boats and equipment for repair and the amount of financial assistance needed, which they then submit to the Network for review and appropriate action. If approved, the Network channels the funds through the village committees, which in turn allocate the money to the beneficiary households based on prior agreements among the village members.

To ensure the equitable distribution of financial aid, each household is allowed access to loans only once. Duplication or additional financial support is cancelled, and funds for cancelled beneficiaries are added to community funds, which are allocated for natural resource rehabilitation as set down in community plans. This approach is believed to promote self-governance and strengthens community capacity to manage their own assistance programme based on equity.



Oy Sirisook  
Sustainable Development Foundation  
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### The Save the Andaman Network believes in:

- Direct participation by villagers: encourage affected communities to develop self governance and devise their own assistance programs
- Community revival: provide relief aid and assistance, restore livelihoods and jobs
- Sustainable long-term rehabilitation: assist communities with long-term development plans, promote village funds and help communities manage household debts
- Turning crisis into opportunity: address issues of land conflict, availability of clean water systems, and environmental and natural resource management

### What are the Network's future plans?

The Save Andaman Network plans to craft and implement long-term community development plans with the communities to ensure livelihood security after the crisis. So far, the communities have initially identified the following concerns: ensuring clean water supply for household consumption; promotion of local sanitation, welfare of children, people's participation in community enterprises (such as establishing community saving groups, village banks, local cooperatives and community-run fish landing cooperatives); as well as the promotion of learning processes to enhance the capacity of community organizations and members to determine the direction of their livelihood rehabilitation.

## From Conflict to Collaboration for Post-tsunami Rehabilitation:

### The Case of Kor Muuk Village, Trang Province, Thailand

Ban Aren vividly recalls his personal experience of the 2004 year-end tsunami, which struck his fishing village, Kor Muuk, in Muuk Island within the Province of Trang, South Thailand: "It was Sunday morning around 10 am when I sailed ashore after a typical fishing day. I noticed how low the tide was. Suddenly, there was this loud noise like an airplane roar, slowly getting louder and louder behind me. I looked back to the sea and saw a long white strip. It was beautiful, but I had no idea what it was". As the wave approached, he swam to shore and tried to alert others of the approaching wave. Some people were alarmed by the unusually extreme low tide and had already rushed to higher areas; others waited

for the second wave to hit before they moved to elevated grounds. For two nights, they camped out, not completely understanding what was happening. Amid the fear and anxiety, sympathy and concern for others spread among the community members. Ban Aren remarked, "Prior to the tsunami, some of us barely talked to each other. But, during that time, we felt that we needed to protect and look out for each other."

### Providing Assistance, Creating Problems

When the weather began to clear, the people returned to their homes to find major destruction wrought by what they learned was a tsunami. Soon, various forms of

Type of Destruction	Number
<b>Lives</b>	
• Number of deaths	1
• Number of injured persons	5
<b>Property Damaged</b>	
• Significantly damaged houses	31
• Moderately damaged houses that can be repaired	52
• Damaged boats that have to be replaced	10
• Damaged boats that can be repaired	65
• Damaged boat engines that can be repaired	45
• No. of families that lost fishing gear (information about the number of pieces of fishing gear that were lost is being compiled)	185

external relief assistance began to pour into the village. Although the assistance was immediate and well-intended, distribution was ill-coordinated and unsystematically implemented. The inequitable allocation of relief supplies and other assistance created conflicts within the community resulting in a situation which Ban Aren regarded as "worse than the real tsunami". With no resolution to the problem, many avoided socializing with one another and attempted to restore their livelihoods and belongings on their own.

### Getting Back Together

After some time, the community leaders met to address the problem and take action. First, they formed a taskforce to provide immediate assistance to affected communities. Second, each bay delegated two representatives to work with a central taskforce at the village level to consolidate and communicate information from each bay. They also decided on how to manage the assistance provided to the village. Third, the taskforces at bay and village levels were assigned specific roles and responsibilities such as monitoring government and private-sector assistance; ensuring equitable distribution of aid among affected families; coordinating with the government, NGOs and private sector; and updating information.

These strategies have eased the conflict among the community members and different organizations. Donors now realize that external assistance must first be coordinated with Muuk Island's village committees. "When we finally talked it through," Ban Aren remarked, "I felt so relieved. It was as if a big mountain was lifted off my chest!"

### Kor Muuk Today

The Save the Andaman Network is supporting Muuk Island in building boatyards. The Network donated money to establish community revolving funds for repairing fish-

ing boats and gear. Community members whose boats have been lost or damaged can access these funds, and the loans can be repaid over a number of months. (The conditions vary from village to village). This way, money is cycled back into the fund, thus benefiting others. Ban Aren and other committee members feel the revolving fund is a fair arrangement. They remark, 'Of course, everybody wants assistance to be free, but how do we build our sense of 'community' by and for ourselves? Yes, it is a struggle because we don't want increased debts, but any profit generated from the loan can be used to support other development plans that we wish to conduct in the future. With this money, we need not depend on the support of external donors.'

With The Save the Andaman Network's support, 64 out of 75 damaged boats were placed under the community's management process. To date, 27 houses have been repaired, with 37 boats left for repair.

The community is also developing a plan to restore marine resources destroyed by commercial trawlers. The encroachment of commercial trawlers is a constant problem for the community. The proposed strategy is to install artificial coral reefs around the island, with each bay deciding on the locations. Community-representatives from each bay around the island are delegated to facilitate this village-level planning. The community also plans to establish a community-based warning system. The idea is to have appropriate technology that communities can use and maintain by themselves.

More challenges lie ahead. The bay committees are new, formed only post-tsunami. They need to be capacitated to function effectively as people's organizations. One of their immediate needs is training on book keeping. More importantly, they need a strategy to effectively and equitably manage external assistance, so that needs of people are met in a manner that does not ruin the solidarity of the community. It is essential for the committees to observe transparency in their operations and to communicate the progress of their work to all community members through village meetings and other venues.

For more information, please contact Oy Sirisook at [preecha@mozart.inet.co.th](mailto:preecha@mozart.inet.co.th)

Since the reconstruction process for tsunami aftermath is still on going, we encourage you to 'watch this space' for news of further developments of Muuk Island's community organization.

Andre Ave Minggus  
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Indonesia

## Coping after a flash flood in Redwings Village, Flores

### Introduction

Rewangga village is located within the disaster-prone Ende District, Flores in the eastern region of Indonesia called Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT). Ende is known for its high poverty incidence and history of natural disasters. Within the past decade, it has been hit by volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, floods, landslides, droughts and, late last year, a tsunami. Almost every year, floods, landslides and droughts destroy people's lives and properties. Rewangga suffered two large floods in 1985 and 2003.

Rewangga village lies on the slopes of Mount Mongge, which has an undulating topography and steep inclines. In 2003, it had a population of 1,070. Most of the 821 families are into farming, while others work as employees, merchants and labourers. Their primary products are rice, coconut, vegetables (sawi, water-spinach and cabbage) and corn. Farmers can have three rice croppings in a year with the good irrigation facilities in the area. The soil – mostly volcanic ash – is very fertile but loose and prone to erosion in times of heavy rains, given the sloping topography.

### The Flash Flood

On 30 March 2003, a flash flood inundated Rewangga Village after two days of continuous rain. Eventually, the land could not hold the large volume of water, triggering a flash flood that wiped away houses and croplands, and destroyed livestock and crops that were ready for harvest. Approximately 10.9 hectares of rice paddies, 9.2 hectares of vegetable gardens and many farm animals such as goats, pigs and cows were lost. Fortunately, nobody in the community died. At least 404 families were directly affected by the landslides and were evacuated to safer areas within the village or in other villages.

The flood also destroyed much of the physical infrastructure that supported the people's livelihood activities, such as irrigation systems, farmlands and roads. It took three days after the disaster for external assistance to reach Rewangga.

Yastim (Yayasan Tani Mandiri or The Farmers Development Foundation) worked with a number of stakeholders to form a disaster management team, called Wake Mungu Volunteer Team (meaning, "restoring the

Working on distribution plans



photo: Farmer Development Foundation

dignity" of people affected by the disaster). The team assessed the number of victims and the extent of damage to properties and personal belongings caused by the disaster. It also coordinated with external parties to extend assistance and distribute money and materials to the affected community members, and monitored activities during the three-month period of emergency response to disaster.

### Community mechanisms for coping after the disaster

Three months after the flood, the emergency response and assistance waned. Without external help, the people started to rely on themselves for survival.

Faced with farmlands buried in mud and vegetable gardens that had turned into rivers, the people planted vegetables that could be harvested within a short period along the fertile riverbanks for their immediate source of food. Increasingly, the efforts of the people to cope with the calamity brought them together. Farmers with stored seeds provided for other village members. Later, the farmers developed seedbeds in groups, producing seeds that could be distributed to other needy farmers.

The land restoration started with the construction of a new irrigation channel. In the absence of building materials (cement, bricks and pipes), the people used materials obtained from their surroundings, such as riverstones, gravel and clay for cement. The work was car-