Food security and linking relief, rehabilitation and development in the European Commission

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1. The LRRD in the European Commission

Why LRRD?

The link between relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD), i.e. the "grey area" between humanitarian aid and development, results from the difference between humanitarian aid and programmes of development co-operation as far as their objectives, procedures, time frames, partners, and types of interventions are concerned. Indeed, humanitarian aid meets the immediate needs of individuals during crises and is mainly provided by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), whereas development co-operation aims to support the policies and strategies that correspond to the priorities of the partner country. LRRD programmes progressively take over from emergency aid so as to stabilise the economic and social situation and facilitate the transition towards medium and long-term development strategies.

The LRRD: a priority for the European Commission

In its Communication (2000) n° 212 on Development Policy, the European Commission (EC) points out the importance of taking into account LRRD in order to combat poverty efficiently. This aspect is also stressed by the Council and the European Parliament.

The Commission initially analysed the LRRD concept in Communication (1996) n° 153. It is stated not only that humanitarian crises are costly in both human life and resources but also that they disrupt the process of economic development. This approach, still valid, was evaluated by Communication (2001) n° 153 which points out the need to put LRRD into practice.

2. Putting LRRD into practice

Taking into account the LRRD in programming

The specificity of a LRRD situation is taken into account starting from the programming stage in the Country Strategy Paper (CSP) which is the policy document elaborated by the European Commission. If a crisis arises after the completion of the CSP, an addendum referring to LRRD can be added to the CSP.
Instruments

Making LRRD operational includes better co-ordination between services and partners, sharing information, and adopting an LRRD approach in project management. An LRRD approach means that relief actions take into account long-term development and development activities incorporate conflict prevention and post-conflict management.

Immediate responses to LRRD situations require adequate and flexible instruments to obtain more effective results. LRRD responses come from all available financial instruments. However, some specific budget lines are more appropriate for procedural reasons: ECHO, the B-Line of EDF, the Rapid Reaction Mechanism, the Emergency Reserve, the thematic budget line including the Rehabilitation Line, the NGOS Co-financing Line, and the Food Security Budget Line (FSBL).

Throughout a food security crisis cycle, in co-ordination with ECHO, the FSBL is an adequate tool which has the ability to provide:

- a short-term response to avoid the deterioration of the situation of the most vulnerable people (distribution of food aid);
- a medium-term response to help populations ensure their own food security (income-generating actions, boosting production via seeds, fertilisers, tools, etc.);
- a long-term response to assist governments in defining and implementing an adequate food security policy and with crisis prevention.

Co-ordination and complementarity

Co-ordination and complementarity are fundamental for LRRD implementation.

Internally: co-ordination between ECHO, the thematic budget line, and the European Commission’s other long-term development financial instruments (for example EDF) is very important. The creation of a internal inter-service steering group should contribute, among other things, to better co-ordination between the various services. It should also be responsible for disseminating the LRRD approach.

Externally: co-ordination with Member States, other donors, international organisations, NGOs, and UN agencies.

Complementarity between donor interventions and available instruments is also an important aspect for putting LRRD into practice.

Challenges

Different challenges arise when incorporating LRRD into EC management of external aid. Putting LRRD into practice implies a need for a more rapid decision-making process and more rapid implementation of various existing instruments. Furthermore, the process of devolution from the EuropeAid Co-operation Office to the European Delegations abroad contributes to better co-ordination and monitoring of executing partners, which should speed up reaction times in crises situations and strengthen the link between humanitarian aid and development actions.

Table 1 summarises the above points in tabular form.
Table 1: Putting LRRD into practice

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<td>• ECHO</td>
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<td>• Rapid Reaction Mechanism</td>
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<td>• B-Line of European Development Fund</td>
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<td>• Thematic budget lines: Rehabilitation, Human Rights, Food Security</td>
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3. **Food security: a priority in LRRD situations**

Along with health, sanitation, and access to water, food security is one of the main fields concerned by the transition from humanitarian aid to long-term development. The FSBL is responsible, in co-ordination with ECHO and other financial instruments, for the implementation of the EC food security policy.

**Information systems**

When a food security crisis arises, governments and the international community must correctly evaluate needs in order to respond appropriately to the crisis. This is why the EC has begun discussions with FAO and WFP on the methodology for and the application of Crop and Food Supply Assessment Missions.

Food security information is also necessary for governments to formulate and implement adequate national food security policies.

This aspect – information – is a priority for the FSBL that finances various types of information systems, mainly through FAO.

The FSBL gives priority to not only information gathering but also to analysis through technical expertise in Headquarters, the Delegations of the European Commission, and the ministries of the beneficiary countries. The data analysis concerns the agricultural sector (crop assessment) and households’ vulnerability and poverty.

**The FSBL’s main partners in crisis**

The FSBL works with different partners depending on the situations and types of food insecurity. In an LRRD situation, privileged partners are NGOs and international organisations. When the economic and political situation allows, the FSBL also works jointly with governments. In all the types of intervention, and especially in LRRD interventions, the involvement of the beneficiaries and local authorities is fundamental. Figure 1 shows how the FSBL is allocated between partners.

**NGOs**

The FSBL works mainly with NGOs in the context of a crisis. Contributions are in the form of (1) cash, or (2) food aid, seeds and fertilisers.

1. **An overall financial allocation is granted annually on the basis of a call for proposals by country.** This allocation is devoted to projects proposed by NGOs and selected by the Commission based on standard criteria and the consistency of the projects proposed with the Country Technical Documents. These documents identify the priorities by sector and by geographical area within the framework of the national food security strategy. In 2002, FSBL support to NGOs ranged from a minimum of 400 000 Euro to a maximum of three million Euro over a maximum period of four years. The NGO projects aim to reduce household vulnerability by increasing incomes and improving access to production factors. The aim is to improve the socio-economic environment and to reduce exposure to climatic risks.

2. **Food aid in kind** is distributed under the Food Aid Convention by EuronAid, an NGO collective. Food aid targets the most vulnerable people in crisis and post-crisis situations. It is an important component of the EC food security programme. Priority is given to local and triangular purchases. **Targeted seed and fertiliser distribution** is also done by EuronAid to help vulnerable populations ensure their own food security in the medium term through agricultural production.
International organisations

International organisations are also important partners for FSBL in LRRD situations. International organisations (1) distribute food aid in kind or (2) receive a financial allocation for the implementation of projects.

1. **Food aid** is mainly distributed through WFP and EuronAid. It is also distributed by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The FSBL’s financial contribution to WFP targets a restricted number of countries in order to optimise available resources. The FSBL allocation to WFP is dedicated to financing two types of operations: Emergency Operations (EMOPs) and Protracted Relief and Recovery Operations (PRROs).

2. The FSBL’s financial support to FAO is granted through an overall “package”1 (1999-2003) or through national/regional projects. The overall “package” to FAO financed by FSBL contributes mostly to improving food security information. The national/regional projects are implemented according to the specific needs of the countries. In Afghanistan, for example, the goal of the FAO project financed by the FSBL is to improve agricultural production (by strengthening of national seed production capacity).

Direct aid to governments

The FSBL gives financial support to governments. In a long-term approach, this support helps governments define and implement adequate macroeconomic frameworks and appropriate food security and crisis prevention policies.

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1 A new programme is being elaborated and will take into account the main recommendations of the 2003 mid-term review of the former programme.
Exceptionally, such as in Malawi in 2002, food aid can also be granted directly to the governments.

**Priority countries**

FSBL priority countries are those with structural food insecurity difficulties (Table 2) and countries that are in crisis or post-crisis LRRD situations (Table 3).

| Table 2: Countries with structural food insecurity |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Armenia | Georgia | Moldova |
| Bangladesh | Haiti | Mozambique |
| Bolivia | Honduras | Nicaragua |
| Burkina Faso | Kyrgyzstan | Niger |
| Cape Verde | Madagascar | Peru |
| Eritrea | Malawi | Yemen |
| Ethiopia | Mauritania | |

| Table 3: Countries in crisis/post-crisis situations |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Afghanistan | El Salvador | Somalia |
| Angola | Guatemala | Sudan |
| North Korea | Liberia | Tajikistan |
| Congo R. D | Palestine | Zimbabwe |
| Ecuador | Sierra Leone | |

It should be noted that some countries, such as Ethiopia and Eritrea, could be classified in both of these two groups.

**The Afghan example**

*Priority sectors*

The 2002 Afghan Country Strategy Paper identifies the following priority sectors:

- Sustainable livelihoods and social risk management: rural development and food security, health, social protection, humanitarian support;
- Economic infrastructure;
- Democratisation and good governance: public administration, capacity building and reform, reconstruction, law and order, de-mining.

*FSBL interventions*

The FSBL intervenes in Afghanistan with a variety of intervention tools, including:

- Initially, food aid contributions to WFP Emergency Operations (EMOPS). The last contribution dates back to November 2002.
- The provision of seeds, tools and fertilizers to poor and isolated farmers through NGOs.
- Long-term rural development projects through NGOs.
- Enhancement of the national seed industry through FAO.
- A bilateral programme with the Afghan Transitional Authority (ATA), including:
  - Rural rehabilitation & social protection mechanisms through labour-intensive public works (under the ATA National Emergency Employment Programme),
  - Rehabilitation of irrigation systems and improved water management at the river basin level in the North (Kunduz, Takhar and Baghlan Provinces)
In collaboration with the concerned stakeholders, the establishment of a food security and nutrition surveillance system,

Capacity building,

Definition and elaboration of a national budget (natural resources and rural development).

**ECHO interventions**

- Water and sanitation;
- Shelter for refugees.

**Lessons learned from the Afghan case**

The main elements of success were:

1. LRRD was taken into account from the beginning of the EC intervention;
2. There was a geographical concentration of operations to improve impact;
3. The Delegation played an active role in co-ordinating activities (meetings, field mission with ECHO, etc.) and permanent contributions from HQs (both ECHO and EuropeAid);
4. There was rapid commitment and implementation;
5. The phasing out of ECHO in specified fields was done in co-ordination with parallel and/or subsequent EuropeAid funded activities;
6. Concerning initial food aid activities, a link between the WFP distributions (financed by the FSBL) and the ECHO intervention (food for work) was established right from the start.

**4. Conclusions**

In conclusion, LRRD is a priority for the European Commission’s co-operation projects and humanitarian actions. The greater challenge for the recently created LRRD inter-service Steering Group is to improve the “operational nature” of LRRD mainly through better co-ordination of existing instruments. The process of devolution from EC headquarters to EC Delegations abroad should also contribute to this. Finally, the diversity of Food Security Budget Line instruments (food aid and financial aid) and its partners (NGOs, international organisations, governments), its innovative and transitory character, and the fact that its geographical coverage is not pre-defined make adequate reactions in LRRD situations possible.