Kosi Flood Recovery and Reconstruction

Millennium Development Goal:
Goal 1 - Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
Goal 7 - Ensure environment sustainability

Targets:
• Halve, between 1990-2015, the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day
• Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environment resources

Relevant India Development Goal:
Reduction of poverty ratio by 15 percentage points by 2012

Background

The 2008 Kosi floods devastated large parts of Bihar, one of India’s poorest states. Spread over 3,000 square kilometres, the floods affected around three million people in the state. In the aftermath of the disaster, UNDP supported the government of Bihar in providing humanitarian relief to victims of the natural disaster. As the relief phase came to an end, UNDP launched the Kosi Reconstruction and Recovery project to support recovery processes including settlement and habitat planning to reduce disaster risk.

A UNDP pilot, in partnership with the government of Bihar and the Owner-Driven Reconstruction Collaborative, rebuilt 130 houses in two of the worst flood-affected villages- Orlaha and Puraini through an owner-driven approach. Homeowners were provided sufficient technical expertise and information to drive the reconstruction process and build environment-friendly, disaster-resilient homes. Each homeowner received INR 55,000, or just under US$ 1,200 to rebuild their homes. The money was transferred to a joint account on the condition that one account holder was a woman. People without land were given additional money to buy a land, and by putting in some of their own money and labour, homeowners were able to get more out of the scheme.

Objectives

• Develop comprehensive district-level rehabilitation and reconstruction plans based on vulnerability analysis of settlements and regions
• Enhance technical capacities of the government and communities to integrate disaster-resistant techniques in reconstruction processes
• Support effective implementation and monitoring of reconstruction processes in five flood-affected districts through District Management Support Cells
• Establish cluster-level building/facilitation hubs that can serve as a model to facilitate and upscale an inclusive owner-led reconstruction programme led by the government of Bihar

Project Information

Area: Crisis Prevention and Recovery
Budget: US$ 1,000,438
Duration: 2009-2011
Government Counterpart: Government of Bihar
Implementing Partner(s): Government of Bihar
Other Partner(s): 29 states
Location(s): Five districts in Bihar (Araria, Madhepura, Purnea, Saharsa and Supaul)
**Results so far**

- The government of Bihar has upscaled the pilot to re-build 100,000 houses in the worst-affected districts of Madhepur, Saharsa and Supaul, as part of its new Kosi Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Scheme.
- Evidence generated through rapid assessments of community infrastructure, risk reduction plans and development of water body plantations was used to build a Geographic Information System database to provide inputs in the preparation of district rehabilitation, reconstruction, mitigation and development plans.
- Technical capacities of government and communities enhanced through training of masons, government engineers, carpenters and homeowners on safe home construction practices using environment-friendly, disaster-resistant local building materials.
- District Management Support Cells established in five districts to ensure effective implementation of the government of Bihar’s programme.
- Eight Kosi Setu Kendras or grassroots facilitation hubs established in eight of the worst-affected areas in the region to guide close to 50,000 families and the district administration on disaster safe reconstruction techniques, to provide information on the government reconstruction schemes for families and to empower homeowners to “build back better”.

**Looking to the Future**

- Completion of reconstruction process for 100,000 houses destroyed by the Kosi floods.
- Integration of owner-driven approach to reconstruction in national shelter reconstruction policies.

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