



**Bridging the Expectation Gap:  
Empowering communities in  
post-disaster governance**

by Karl Segsneider  
Lars Krause

**Tsunami Aid Watch** is a programme of the Southeast Asia Regional Office of Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, in co-operation with Southeast Asia Consult and Resource Co., Ltd.

**Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (Heinrich Böll Foundation – HBF)** affiliated with the German party Alliance 90/The Greens and headquartered in Berlin, is a legally independent, non-profit organization working in the spirit of intellectual openness. The Foundation's primary objective is to support political education both within Germany and abroad, thus promoting democratic involvement, socio-political activism, and cross-cultural understanding. Development cooperation is one of the major fields of the Foundation's activities. Tsunami Aid Watch is a special contribution to the Development Watch initiatives that the Southeast Asia Regional Office of HBF has been carrying out for many years.

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## **Krabi Declaration on Sustainable Post-Tsunami Rehabilitation**

The participants of the forum would like to extend their gratitude and heartfelt thanks to all individuals, communities, national and international groups, parties and organizations for the help and aid they have provided for the individuals and communities affected by the tsunami of December 26<sup>th</sup> 2004. We hope that they will continue to give us unwavering support during the remaining task of long-term rehabilitation. The tsunami has left Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, the Maldives and other countries with devastated coasts, shattered communities, economies and hundreds of thousands of people in need of support. This destruction was, however, only the initial direct impact of the tsunami disaster. The ensuing aid efforts were part of just the first phase of tsunami rehabilitation.

Nine months have now passed since the tsunami and in most affected areas treatment has been delivered to the wounded and basic shelter is available for the surviving victims; in many cases the boats and fishing gear needed for livelihood restoration of the fisher folk have been provided; the remaining tasks are ready to be overseen by restored community structures and local administrations. The situation can, thus, in most instances be described as approaching stability. However, it is a far cry from being normal.

The tsunami recovery now enters a second phase of transformation that is the recovery from a disaster into a more permanent and functioning economic and social set-up, i.e. the mitigation of the secondary tsunami impact. While the aid to rehabilitate from the initial direct impact of the tsunami was characterized by speed and efficiency, the recovery support effort needed for the indirect impact recovery must strive for long-term effectiveness and sustainability. Taking into account livelihood, economic recovery, disaster management, issues of land and housing for the displaced, the landless, women, children, gender issues as well as migrant labor problems. In order to achieve this, a number of measures are urgently needed. Based on past aid delivery experience we therefore ask the international community and supporting NGO's and GO's to mobilize all available resources to:

- Ensure that the long-term rehabilitation of the tsunami affected area is based on definitions of fairness, justice, sustainability and stability as perceived and defined by the tsunami affected communities and individuals;
- Develop the secondary tsunami recovery support into an opportunity to address and solve pre-tsunami problems that have been worsened and/or exposed by the disaster;
- Deliver assistance and support in an accountable and transparent form that ensures participation of those affected in planning, implementation and execution of long-term rehabilitation programs;
- Establish – a vitally important point - a proper, honest and forward-looking information system and data-base on the tsunami disaster for the use and to the benefit of its affected individuals and communities, independent of nationality, race or religion;
- Initiate an aid-tracking system / mechanism to avoid the misuse of aid-resources or its appropriation for something other than aid purposes;
- Ensure that the remaining rehabilitation becomes a stepping stone for further development of the affected areas leading to better conditions than before the tsunami disaster.

If the international community, governments and civil societies help to continue with the tsunami recovery support based on the conditions given above, the tsunami disaster itself can be turned into an opportunity for development that is in line with sustainability needs and economic progress of all mankind. We believe in the strength of cooperation, coordination, openness and solidarity in times of need.

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## **Preface**

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung works in the fields of civic education and participation, citizens' empowerment for sustainable and democratic societies inclusive of just and fair gender relations. The Foundation does not belong to any of the professional organizations that deal with disaster management and post-crisis recovery, such as The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and others.

Nevertheless, when the Tsunami struck the Andaman coast, we decided to go beyond some modest contributions of emergency aid for our long term partners in the affected provinces. With the Tsunami Aid Watch programme (TAW), we became involved with the post-Tsunami rehabilitation process in line with the Foundation's mandate. What TAW had to offer, was an agenda for the empowerment of communities to help themselves beyond the external aid provided in this extraordinary crisis situation, and monitoring the reconstruction phase.

The Foundation's partners were the Sustainable Development Foundation and the then newly-founded Save Andaman Network, who had built experience and developed trust in some of the areas affected by the Tsunami and therefore had access to those communities.

With 'Bridging the Expectation Gap: Empowering Communities in Post-Disaster Governance' the authors conclude the series of Tsunami Aid Watch publications and close a circle. Now far richer in understanding and experiences, Tsunami Aid Watch returns to its initial intention to empower people and the book draws conclusions from three and a half years of Tsunami rehabilitation through TAW's work.

'Bridging the Expectation Gap' takes as its point of departure the observation that the results of three and a half years rehabilitation in Southern Thailand did not result in the level of sustainable development aspired to, that should or could have been. From there, the authors explored the underlying structural causes for this conclusion. Some of them are familiar to those with experience in disaster management: expectation gaps between aid donors and recipients; socio-economic and local political structures that resist sustainable and fair rehabilitation and reconstruction; all too often characterized by a lack of decision making power amongst

those being aided, especially in post-disaster governance beyond the level of house building and other micro-level projects.

On the positive side, the authors concluded that rehabilitation was most often successful and served the needs of the people, when the communities and local organizations had much of decision making power and took leading roles in administrating and implementing the re-building of their environments.

If well intended reconstruction processes are handled in a disempowering way, fair and sustainable results will remain wishful thinking. This means that donor and aid organizations engaged in development work need to ask, to what extent planning and management tools allow for the flexibility that is required, if target groups are really to be included in determining goals, budget allocations, process management and evaluation.

Tsunami rehabilitation is taken as a starting point in the analysis. But throughout the text, links and references point to development aid in general. Many of the authors' conclusions go beyond Tsunami aid. What transpires is a logical mirror image of structural and institutional problems and challenges that Overseas Development Aid faces under routine conditions of 'normalcy'.

'Bridging the Expectation Gap' therefore aims to conclude 'Lessons Learnt' from the Southern Thai experiences after the Tsunami, for future disasters, rehabilitation processes and beyond. The authors' observations about political dimensions and related community empowerment require careful consideration and discussion. It can hardly be contested that recovery processes and the aid provided therein, impacts governance and decision making structures. 'Reconstruction' never leads to the identical situation as existed before the disaster, and is thus a construction of something new. In this sense there is always an 'opportunity in crisis'.

Finally, I wish to thank the authors Karl Segschneider and Lars Krause for the documentation of their insightful reflections throughout the process and the efforts to share them. I hope that this volume makes for interesting reading, provokes objections and instigates a constructive discussion about the problems we are all familiar with in development work.

My heartfelt thanks goes to Save Andaman Network, the partner communities in the impacted provinces of Southern Thailand and, last but not least, to Romlee Maeroh, TAW coordinator and the entire TAW team who worked restlessly for the success of the programme and shared their insights to make this book possible.

Chiang Mai, June 2008

Dr. Heike Löschmann

Director

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Southeast Asia Regional Office



## 1. Introduction

Approaching four years of Tsunami recovery in December 2008, more national and international debate over the success of Tsunami Aid should resonate around the sustainability aspect of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Although most of the infrastructure has been rebuilt, many grievances of the Tsunami affected people and communities remain unaddressed. Sustainability has not been achieved.

Instead, the unsustainable pre-Tsunami economic and political structures have mostly been re-instated, which led to worse outcomes for local communities than what existed before the Tsunami. For many villagers, the situation is still characterized by a lack of economic opportunities, ever less access to natural community resources, as well as lacking self-governance. Important decisions and big profits are made elsewhere.

This failure occurred despite the best of intentions regarding sustainability by national and international donor organizations, reinforced by the United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, Ex President Bill Clinton's slogan "Build back better"<sup>1</sup> and the global wave of donations in the disaster aftermath.

The lack of sustainability in the results of the Tsunami mid and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction process has so far only rarely been addressed in the official statements and publications of the parties involved, or systematically taken up by independent researchers. Informally the issue is being discussed in for example, criticizing the lack of coordination, the Royal Thai government's top-down approach, or a lack of readiness in the communities to create their own sustainable livelihoods.

Having a closer look at post-disaster rehabilitation, the list of actors involved and their mutual relationships presents itself as an opportunity to explore the differing perceptions towards aid and reconstruction. Resulting in multiple expectation gaps (see in more detail in the following chapter): from the individual donor in, let's say a Western or Middle Eastern country, who expects his or her money to be spent quickly and fully in order to help

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<sup>1</sup> See the Office of the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery's 'Key Propositions for Building Back Better' for an earlier account of Lessons Learned from the Tsunami Recovery.

satisfy the immediate needs of the ‘victim’ of a natural disaster; to the aid recipients in another country who perceive that their expectations are to be the core determinant of what aid efforts should look like, whether it satisfies immediate needs for nutrition, shelter or economic opportunities.

Exploring the expectation gap will serve us as a tool to get closer to an understanding of the (basic) pitfalls within the process of sustainable post-Tsunami rehabilitation and reconstruction. Being able to understand some of the rehabilitation problems as originating in perception and resulting expectations, will in the next step allow us to understand the underlying needs and principles that shape post-disaster socio-political structures and post-disaster governance. These can then be linked to the Thailand specific situation as an example case study.

The questions that we take as a point of departure are:

- Why has sustainability in the Tsunami aftermath despite all the best intentions and a lot of donation money involved, by and large, not been achieved?
- Which are the good practices to be learnt from for future post-disaster scenarios, as well as corrections for the long-term recovery in Southern Thailand?
- What are, hence, the lessons to be learnt?

Despite a rather critical/skeptical overall view of the results more than three years after the disaster, we also see plenty of positive examples that have created a greater sustainability than that which existed before the disaster: good practices that, from our point of view, should be taken as a starting point when trying to learn from the 2004 Tsunami experience.

This especially includes the case of Bahn Nahm Khem in Phang Nga province, where a strong communal will evolved in the wake of disaster and succeeded in taking control of a significant part of reconstruction in their village; and the one of Save Andaman Network (SAN) in a variety of projects they implemented together with their partner communities.

Our first hypothesis results from these experiences. They show that *post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction succeeds in sustainability when the communities themselves are involved at the heart of the decision making and coordination structures*. Conversely, the exclusion of the villagers in the rehabilitation process, beyond the short phase of first aid/immediate

emergency aid, prevents sustainability from becoming achievable. What ever the degree of participation in singular projects of donor organizations–sustainability only becomes possible when national government bodies and donor organizations step back to let communities play the central role in decision making and coordination in the overall reconstruction process of their own environment.

Drawing on other specific Tsunami Aid Watch and partners' experiences, we can extend the first hypothesis and add a second one relating to donor/aid organizations' engagement under post-disaster conditions: *Successfully achieving sustainability in post-disaster rehabilitation depends on the flexibility and adaptability of project setups to allow for multiple frames of perception within the disaster management context, so as to minimize the resulting expectation gap between donors<sup>2</sup> and recipients<sup>3</sup> during their temporary cooperation.* The local context and the recipients' needs (as perceived by the communities themselves) always need to be the pivotal point of all aid and development measures.

With this paper we aim to contribute to the discussion on post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction, particularly on how to adjust donor strategies for sustainable post-disaster development. We draw primarily on the experiences of the Tsunami Aid Watch programme of the Heinrich Böll Foundation and its partner communities and organizations, but also on secondary sources from the broader scope of the Tsunami and post-disaster rehabilitation debate. It is beyond the scope of this paper to collect and analyze additional data. What we want to achieve is to stir discussion with our ideas of what the lessons to be learnt after more than three years of Tsunami rehabilitation in Southern Thailand should be.

### **1.1. Sustainable post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation: What is it?**

Discussing sustainability is not an easy thing to do. Although the concept seemed pretty straight forward in first the Brundtland and then the Brand Report (Cf. for example: Segschneider 2002a). Time has ensured that the concept itself has seen a fate similar to the word 'green' which once stood in

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2 actual donors, as well as donor organizations; shaped by intentions and external restraints

3 individuals, communities, recipient organizations like local NGOs and CBOs; shaped by needs as well as demands developing in exchange with their environment

politics as a symbol for environmentally friendly thinking and policies and now, like before, mostly describes the color of an apple.

In Thailand for example, sustainability is now almost solely understood as sustained growth and economic opportunity. The process by which this very one sided understanding came into being, or better still the loss of most of the meaning of the original sustainability concept, is due to the hijacking of the phrase by the market economy and aggravated by the various translations of the phrase from English into Thai (Cf. Segsneider 2002b, 3f.). For us and our partners in the rehabilitation process, however, sustainability has retained its original meaning and has even expanded its definition:

*Sustainability in human societies describes a situation where the ecological, economic, social and political aspects are maintained in balance to the advantage of all four elements in the human environment.*

Consequently, post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation has to be evaluated in light of the *ecological, economical, social and political aspects alike*, and demands for related policies have to be formulated accordingly.

## **1.2. The Krabi Declaration on Sustainable Post-Tsunami Rehabilitation**

An attempt to achieve this was made during the international conference ‘Sustainable Long-term Rehabilitation for Marginalized Groups Post-Tsunami’ in Krabi in September 2005.<sup>4</sup> The participants of this gathering unanimously approved the following declaration, which served the Tsunami Aid Watch programme as its conceptual guideline and as a reference document for our understanding of sustainable rehabilitation. The text formulated here is our benchmark for sustainability in this paper:

“The participants of the forum would like to extend their gratitude and heartfelt thanks to all individuals, communities, national and international groups, parties and organizations for the help and aid they have provided for the individuals and communities affected by the tsunami of December 26<sup>th</sup> 2004. We hope that they will continue to give us unwavering support during the remaining task of long-term rehabilitation. The tsunami has left

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4 Full title: ‘Sustainable Long-term Rehabilitation for Marginalized Groups Post-Tsunami: Identifying Challenges, Strategies and Policy Recommendations’, 22-26 September 2005, Maritime Park and Spa Resort Krabi, Thailand.

Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, the Maldives and other countries with devastated coasts, shattered communities, economies and hundreds of thousands of people in need of support. This destruction was, however, only the initial direct impact of the tsunami disaster. The ensuing aid efforts were part of just the first phase of tsunami rehabilitation.

Nine months have now passed since the tsunami and in most affected areas treatment has been delivered to the wounded and basic shelter is available for the surviving victims; in many cases the boats and fishing gear needed for livelihood restoration of the fisher folk have been provided; the remaining tasks are ready to be overseen by restored community structures and local administrations. The situation can, thus, in most instances be described as approaching stability. However, it is a far cry from being normal.

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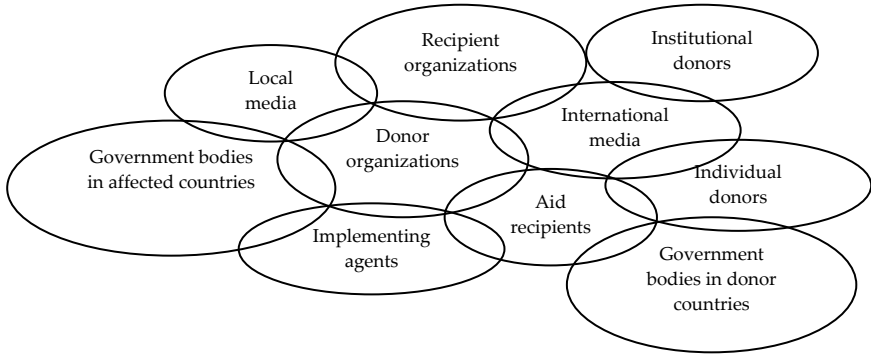
## 2. Mapping the landscape of disaster aid and the expectation gap

### 2.1. Mapping the actors of disaster aid

As a starting point, let us first step back a bit and sketch the structural characteristics of the post-disaster reconstruction setting, in our case the post-Tsunami context in the affected provinces of Southern Thailand.

The main actors involved are (in loose order):

- Aid recipients: individuals and groups of people who survived the Tsunami and/or were affected by the disaster, and were to receive aid.
- Recipient organizations: such organizations that were assigned by aid recipients and donors and their organizations to implement aid projects.
- Donors: individuals and institutions from within Thailand and abroad.
- Donor organizations: such organizations that received donation money, in order to implement aid projects in the affected areas, in our case in Thailand.
- Governmental bodies of affected and donor countries: they shape the framework for aid efforts, become active in recovery and rehabilitation themselves, as well as making the rules for donor organizations from abroad. (In their function as rehabilitation implementation players, governmental bodies are in Figure 2 belonging to the donor side. The overarching governmental functions refer to setting the rules for, steering and coordinating aid efforts.)
- Implementing agents: These are private or public individuals or companies that receive some of the aid implementation tasks via outsourcing.
- Local/national and international/global media. In depicting the post-disaster scenery in the following figure, we refer to this dimension more extensively as 'the public', better 'publics' that for analytical purposes are mainly subdivided into the local/national setting of the affected country and the public beyond. The tremendous importance of the media as a key intermediate institution is particularly evident in the case of the Tsunami aftermath.



*Figure 1: Main actors in post-disaster aid*

Figure 1 visualizes that the aid recipients can easily escape sight amongst all the actors participating in disaster aid. The list of potential or real actors could be extended, for example to people in the affected area who were not directly impacted by the disaster; as the listed categories could be subdivided into various sub groups, etc.

For our analysis of post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation, however, these categories are appropriate. Drawn and structured along a time arrow these organizations suffice to give us a suitable picture for our analysis. Laid out in such a way, Figure 2 depicts flows of money (light green), bodies that set rules or exert quasi-regulatory power (light brown) and agencies involved in planning and implementation, providing initial indications of power relations.

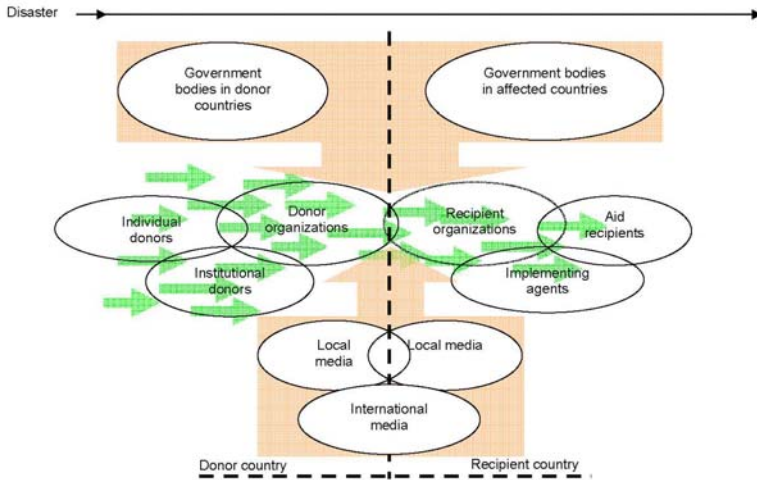


Figure 2: Mapping the actors of post-disaster aid

### Actors and their expectations

Each player perceives his/her own role and/or agenda that are roughly shaped by assumptions, intentions and visions, by interests as well as external restraints that limit their room for maneuver. In the following, we will have a closer look at these main actors, roughly sketching their interests, needs, intentions, and restraints. Those factors are resulting in respective expectations that shape communications between those involved.

### The survivors: individuals, communities, their organizations

At the *individual and family level*, those are the people who were injured, who might have lost family members, friends, their houses, businesses (big or small), their cars, motorbikes, sentimental items or whatever belonged to them. They might suffer from psychological difficulties as well as material needs. There are immediate requirements that need to be met, food and water, shelter and medical treatment for example; then long-term needs such as income opportunities, proper housing, etc. It is the individuals' suffering that stands at the outset of a joint aid effort in whatever location affected. The immediate individual or family suffering is normally the kind of disaster impact that is predominantly reported in the media.

Barely noticed in disaster journalism is a more subtle issue: Individuals and families normally do not live an isolated life, but live in *communities*, be it in

villages, towns or cities. At the community level, life is also dealt a hard blow in case of disasters. Communities have decision making and administrative bodies and they are socially structured in particular ways, by sets of rules, hierarchies, sub groups of the community, and conflicts. With losses of life and physical destruction, the social and political structure is affected, sometimes more, sometimes less. The more lives that are taken, the greater the devastation, the more traumatized a community will be, the more local structures are suffering and trying to cope with such an event. A community might be well prepared for a worst case scenario, but still has to reestablish their decision making structures. Interim solutions are needed for whatever has been harmed by the disaster and its aftermath; and they might have to deal with external 'invaders' in the shape of government officials or external donors.

Beyond the state official local administrative bodies, there might be groups of civil society, **community based organizations (CBOs)** and local **non-governmental organizations (NGOs)**. They might have existed before a disaster or be formed because of a disaster. They are characterized by an intimacy with the communities' needs. They might be consisting of the same people as official administrative bodies or comprise members of an alternative elite. Members are normally subject to culturally similarly shaped patterns as the surrounding society, even though they might be adherents to particular ideologies, at the surface opposing certain cultural norms. They are a body that forms an alternative pool of expertise as well as access to such.

#### Donors and donor organizations

The sources of additional resources going to a disaster affected area are the **donations** made, both in the affected country and abroad. Donations comprise in our understanding all resources that are voluntarily re-directed to a disaster affected area: mostly money donated by individuals and companies; but, structurally, also additional resources allocated by governments/governmental bodies, in the case of Thailand especially the Royal Thai Army or Royal money. Often donations are bound to a particular purpose of using the money – as, for example, helping Tsunami survivors. Donors donate, but also expect in one way or another, accountability from the organizations they entrust with their donation money.

Donations are not normally directly transferred to the accounts of disaster survivors, but channeled through **aid organizations** and/or government

agencies. Aid organizations depend in their engagement on regulations in their respective home country, as well as those in the affected host country. Furthermore, they depend, of course, on those who contribute money/resources to their disposal.<sup>5</sup>

#### Regulatory bodies: governments in affected countries and abroad

In an affected country, the first institution to be held responsible for taking action in the wake of a disaster would normally be the **national government**, potentially local governmental bodies, if still intact. They disperse resources to deal with hardships and particular challenges, the extent depending on the strength of the respective state and the damage that occurs. Governmental agencies are subject to bureaucratic requirements and an institutionalized way of decision making and problem solving. The way a government deals with challenges like a disaster, is shaped by the existing institutions as well as the political culture. In the case of Thailand, the approach taken would still be predominantly a top down approach that tries to steer the whole process from ministerial/administrative agencies in Bangkok.

**Donors' and donor organizations' home country governments** are relevant for setting the standards for the operation of aid organizations. This includes the process of donating as such and minimum qualifications that an organization needs to fulfill, in order to be entitled to the collection of donation money and the permission to engage in formal disaster aid operations. Representatives of all relevant governments might assemble in conferences to coordinate rehabilitation efforts after disasters, be they manmade or of 'natural' origin.

#### The public(s) and the media

All these actors cannot be considered autonomous, though, dependent only on their own mindset and resource base. The whole setting is framed by public discourses which influence and are influenced by the already mentioned participants to differing degrees. Beyond, they are largely shaped by the **media**; those in a local/national setting of an affected country, and

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<sup>5</sup> While there are different types of aid organizations, as governmental or state-related ones and ad hoc-organizations that mushroomed particularly after the 2004 Tsunami, we want to here focus on established, professional aid organizations, that draw on long experience in disaster aid and post-disaster reconstruction, are recognized for their capacities and capabilities, but also sometimes criticized for allegedly overly big bureaucracies that consume a significant share of donation money.

those shaping public perceptions in countries abroad or even on a global level. With the Tsunami of 2004, the relevance of the media as a globally linked player became all too obvious.

The media are subject to their own market rules and priorities of what makes it to the news and in what way. The media can be sub-divided into different categories with their own target groups, acting in differing arenas. Nevertheless, in the case of 'natural' disasters, a tendency can be identified in the media's focusing on individual suffering, predominately shown in pictures of crying children, destroyed homes, saved survivors, arriving helpers and rebuilt houses.

While the media's intermediate role is tremendously important to create a readiness to donate, it also severely restrains the room to maneuver for aid organizations. The latter is the case, for instance, through the pressure for quick results that can be photographically documented and presented to the donors' public(s). This already includes two dimensions: time pressure, and pressure to produce clear results, visibly labeled with the name of particular aid organizations.

From this rather limited sketch of the actors involved, it already becomes clear that on all sides there are very different sets of perception, self perception and of resulting needs, intentions, visions, interests, restraints and, finally, expectations involved. Before we have a more systematic look at these factors, we want to present a quite simple example from the Tsunami rehabilitation context, in order to illustrate the difficulties in negotiating the different positions outlined above.

## **2.2. On an island in the Andaman Sea**

The villagers of Koh<sup>6</sup> X, a rather remote island in the Andaman Sea, did not – and still do not – have a 24 hour electricity supply at their disposal. Before the Tsunami struck in December 2004, they had various small diesel generators for several household needs, an old communal generator, based around an old car engine. As well as, post Tsunami, home solar systems which were given to each (registered) household by the Thai government.

After the Tsunami, a big donor organization investigated the communities' needs for assistance. Since boats were already being built and houses had not been that much affected on Koh X, the donor organization came up with

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<sup>6</sup> Thai for island

the idea to improve the village's energy generating capacity. They then decided to provide two generators to the community in order to satisfy the village's and the shipyard's need for electricity. The capacity of the two generators was several times greater than that of the old one. The donor organization was not negligent, hence they took with them the old generator, to ensure proper waste disposal.

So the villagers found themselves equipped with their home solar systems that were already partly nonfunctional through a lack of expertise on the island on how to operate and maintain them. Furthermore, there were several small private diesel generators still existent; and two more communal generators, the donated ones, that would have been enough to supply enough energy for the whole community and their little shipyard.

But diesel is an expensive commodity on a remote island like Koh X. So the community could not afford to operate the new generators as much as they needed to. It was decided to use one of them at peak hours in the late afternoon and early evening; the second one initially remained completely unused and only latterly employed in two of the three phases, thus running in sub-optimum capacity. Mostly, villagers continued to rely on their home solar systems as well as their private, small generators.

With a capacity much higher than could be afforded by the villagers, the generators ran in an inefficient way. Furthermore, the villagers were unable to fix any technical problems/failures of the generators. The local technician was neither aware of the inefficient way of how the generators were used, nor of how to deal with major technical problems.

**Conclusion:** The community had always been aware of an efficient use of resources because they used to live in an environment that gave them no other choice but managing the scarcity of resources. With the new post-disaster solution, insufficient know how has created a situation where they have had to rely on technology that does not match their needs and is hence not used in a sustainable way. To manage the risks for the local population and the environment is much more difficult, when knowledge about the technology they operate is limited.

Despite best intentions of all parties involved, the outcome of the donor organization's aid effort was quite different from what was intended by one side, and assumed and expected by the other. In the end, the villagers

owned two big generators, but had significantly higher fuel expenses due to their high capacity and inefficient use. They found themselves badly prepared for their operation and maintenance, since there was no one to turn to in case of system failure. The old generator that they knew how to manage and repair had disappeared and could not be used any more.

In this chapter we take this little episode from the Tsunami rehabilitation context in Southern Thailand as a starting point and as an illustration for the ‘expectation gaps’ between the various parties involved. The aim is not, to blame any particular organization or player for the failure or limited success of a well meant aid effort. The episode rather serves as an almost overly typical, hence instructive example, of where the difficulties in post-disaster reconstruction efforts and the wider development context lie.

### **2.3. The impossibility of closing the expectation gap**

The episode above involves only disaster affected villagers and a donor organization. Government agencies, CBOs and NGOs, donors and media are not mentioned. Still, by taking into account only those two parties in a relatively simple case, we can identify a whole range of difficulties in expectations and communications in a disaster aid context.

A **donor organization’s** representatives come to a village and try to identify needs, in order to find a way to spend a budget they allocated for disaster aid in the Tsunami case. They correctly assume that they are not the first donors coming to the island. Houses had been largely unaffected, the few that were damaged were already being repaired; boat construction had already begun, and a shipyard was being set up, in order to make boat building easier. Hence, they survey needs beyond housing and boats, and identify limitations in electricity supply.

The **village leaders** meet representatives of yet another organization coming to the island in the disaster aftermath. The basic, obvious needs have already been met, housing and boats are being restored. The provision of a more extensive and reliable electricity supply is a development opportunity that had been missed by government agencies before the Tsunami, and not yet taken up by the earlier visiting donor organizations. To provide both households and the new community shipyard with a reliable electricity supply, as well as renewing the old generator, they present what they think is a well thought out solution that meets local needs. Hence, the provision of new generators by the donor organization is agreed upon. This is the point

where discrepancies in expectation start to become relevant, manifesting themselves only later.

The donor organization needs to spend a certain budget in a given time frame, preferably in a way that is helpful and useful for the disaster affected community. Its interventions are based on a certain rationality, bound to a policy that is not always congruent with aid recipients' way of thinking. Aid experts from donor organizations need to make an effort to imagine which difficulties in communications might evolve in whatever target area. It is by far not self evident, what kind of knowledge and rationality can be taken for granted, and where the minor or major discrepancies might come to the fore. They work under time constraints which means that they need to produce successful results in a limited, given time, more often than not in the short term. And most organizations prefer to implement projects that can easily be publicized as tangible successes (like house or boat building, as opposed to waste reclamation).

In our example, the donor organization opts for diesel generators that have worked well in other places. It provides a capacity greater than the current need, so as to ensure development opportunities under conditions of future growth. It assumes that the new machines can be managed by the local technician, since the community leaders did not address this as a problem. The project promises to become a quick and easy success because the need is quite obviously there.

A significant amount of money can quickly and easily be spent, with hardly any future costs for the donor involved. Then, in order not to cause any environmental problems, they take with them the old generator.

The community leaders, the local technician and the island's villagers are taken by surprise when they realize that they have received two big generators. They need to find a way how to deal with the potentially huge capacities and the significant demand for diesel. Finally, they have no choice but to adjust to the technology that they now have, even though the local technician can barely manage maintenance and operation. It is decided to use the generators at a rather low load, ensuring their operation at peak hours, and especially for the shipyard. The efficiency of energy use is bad when used in such a way. The costs to the villagers are higher than before.

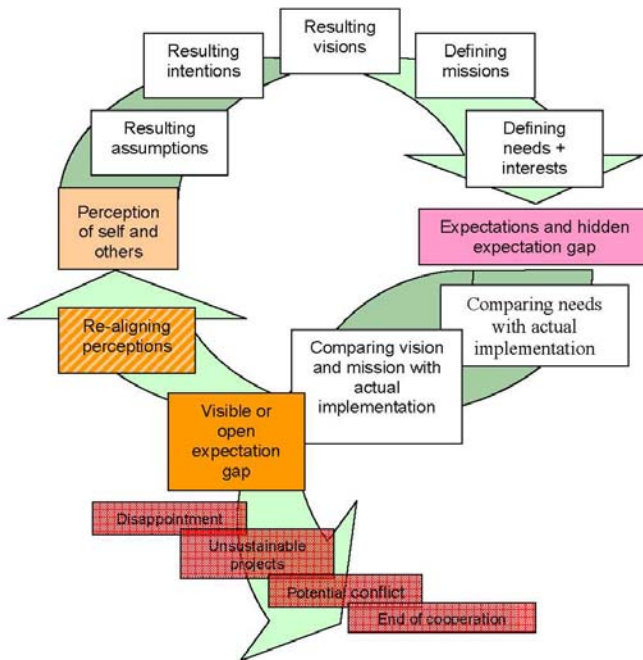


Figure 3: How expectations and their gaps evolve

At the end of the day, the aid recipients are worse off than before. They do not obtain more electricity than before, while paying higher fuel costs. Furthermore, collective electricity generation is at risk, because the local technician is not sufficiently trained for the M&O of the new machines. Development opportunities are becoming strained because a higher share of the community's incomes has to be spent for diesel and cannot be used for other purposes.

One or another individual villager might have already had second thoughts when meeting the donor's representatives. However, their gratefulness and inferiority experienced towards the donor and the well educated people with high social status ensured their respect and prevented any criticism or even the possibility of challenging the donor's plans. They, especially the local technician, were not prepared for dealing with the kind of technology that might even be state of the art in a more sophisticated location, let alone

in the island village. The know-how needed to manage the new technology is beyond the experience of the locals.

Because the well educated people from the donor organization suggested a certain way to implement the hopefully improved electricity supply project, the villagers took it on trust the plan would be a good solution that would serve their needs. It would improve their old technology, increasing its reliability and reducing the risk of failure. The bonus of a greater electricity supply for a little bit more luxury, maybe even refrigerators some day, was hoped for. At the end of the day, it did not work out – despite all good intentions of everyone involved.

#### Restraints, intentions, visions, needs – interests – expectation

The example shows that despite the agreement of various parties on a certain measure, ideas about what would actually happen differed. This is rooted in different assumptions that contribute to the formulation of certain intentions, visions, missions, needs and related goals. Together with contrasting interests, they lead to expectations that are not the same for each of the players involved and their respective perceptions thereof.

At this stage, gaps between the expectations of different actors are already in existence, but as practical cooperation has not yet started, the gaps are hidden. Once cooperation activities start in earnest to deliver aid, the results are constantly compared to the visions, missions and needs identified. The more these are met, the smaller the expectation gap. On a village level, unquantifiable tools such as 'instinct' or 'common sense' might be applied for a comparison; on a donor or administrative level, 'LogFrames' and their 'indicators' gear into action.

Because the respective expectations that developed from the identified set of variables are rooted in different realities, partly even in the different 'worlds' where the participants come from, gaps inevitably open up between their varied expectations. Sooner or later these become visible. This is independent of a satisfying agreement that might already be in place.

We suggest the notion of an 'expectation gap' in order to describe this variation between differing actors' perceptions and their resulting

expectations.<sup>7</sup> It includes not only the aid recipients' changing perceptions and expectations and how those are met in time, but those of all involved. The expectation gap is a structural one, it needs to be there. There is no way around it because no two people in this world can develop an identical understanding of their expectations or interests. This becomes much more complex in post-disaster setting, where organizations (and people) from the other end of the world 'invade' an affected area. With good intentions, for sure, but communications are much more difficult, because cultural barriers grow stronger, besides the existing limitations of different backgrounds in class, ethnicity and gender that always persist everywhere.

What aggravates the situation is that two different sets of indicators can easily result in a different 'visibility' of the expectation gap for the individual players. For example, if the aid organization's indicators are only quantifiable in character, they will only measure in absence of target group expectations (which is a thoroughly qualitative in character, as are instinct and common sense). They will consider their mission a success in line with needs and goals defined if two generators are delivered and an amount of XXX US\$ has been spent. It is therefore paramount to readily assume an expectation gap and constantly, together with the partners, realign perceptions of the cooperation process and its results. Failure to do so is most likely to result in disappointment, unsustainable projects, potential conflict and possibly an early end of the project.

The expectation gap is an intrinsic part of a (any) network of cooperation and **it can never be closed. It will always be there and needs to be recognized as a fact in disaster aid**, as well as development contexts more

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<sup>7</sup> The notion of an 'expectation gap' in development has been coined in the context of the nation-/state-building efforts, taking place in the post-war/international engagement scenarios of Afghanistan, Kosovo and Iraq. Authors in those cases refer to the expectation gap in order to highlight the difference between the expectations of inhabitants at the outset of a post-war reconstruction, the consequent development effort, and the state of satisfaction/frustration after several years of the ongoing process with its actual outcome. (Devendorf/Grzelkowski 2007; Mauring 2007) Those authors concentrate on the aid recipients' attitudes/perceptions at different points in time. The 'international community', being the donors and international administrative and security agencies, as well their position, intentions and restraints are more or less treated as a given. They are to be the recipients of the respective authors' recommendations of how to change policy, in order to successfully deal with the menacing challenge of the expectation gap.

generally. This has a whole range of implications for aid and development work on the ground. Our original map of the post-disaster-actors landscape has hence changed:

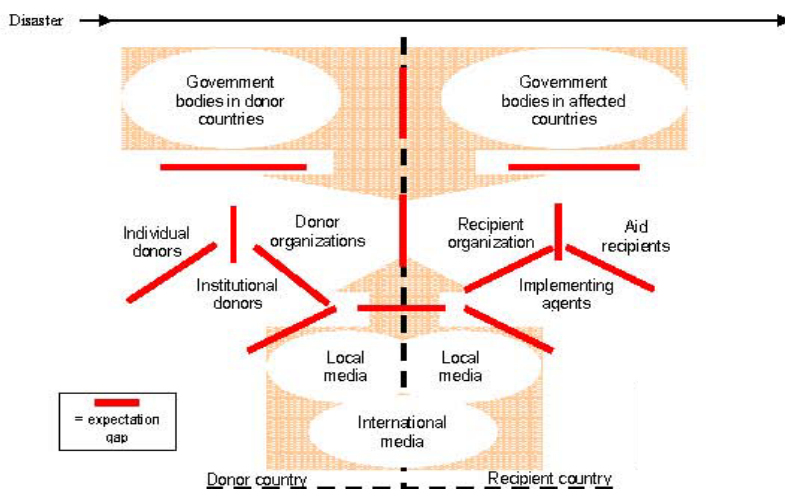


Figure 4: The expectation gap in post-disaster recovery and reconstruction

#### 2.4. Implications for development work: Recognizing the expectation gap

Due to the getting together of people of different class, gender, national and cultural backgrounds, the international and intercultural aid interventions and reconstruction efforts in the aftermath of any disaster are particularly sensitive types of human interaction. Communication and cooperation patterns provide for an immense number of traps for all parties involved. Generally, it can be stated that the more limited expertise and knowledge of local socio-cultural conditions, and the higher time pressure for a quick delivery is for donors, the bigger expectation gaps get, and the sooner projects fail to deliver, at least from a sustainability perspective.

As stated above: The expectation gap was always there, is there, and will always be there. But: **How well the expectation gap can be narrowed down, is the decisive factor on how successful and sustainable a post-disaster rehabilitation process will turn out.** The actors in disaster aid and post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation work under structural restraints. This does not only include the limits of budgets or legal prerequisites that, for example, donor organizations have to meet in their countries of origin. This

also encompasses the compulsion, coercion and constraints at the base of perception of a disaster that are produced in the various public arenas. On the one hand, the media opens up opportunities to create pressure on reactionary actors from a progressive, empowering, sustainability orientated perspective. And they enable fundraising campaigns unseen in the past. On the other hand, particularly the (alleged or real) ever accelerating speed of the media produces various consequential and aid detrimental results:

- firstly, the need for donor organizations to quickly jump on the train of suddenly erupting media events, that will normally be forgotten within days;
- secondly, the resulting tendency to ever shorter aid efforts, adjusted to the media businesses and their markets and related policy agendas, and
- thirdly, the need to quickly deliver results that can be publicly well presented.

It is interesting, though disturbing, to observe that the more is talked about sustainability, the shorter the actual time horizons of aid interventions get, and the more time pressure is put on players to produce visible results. Whether this is an accidental correlation or a relationship of cause and effect, would need some more discussion. What needs to be stated here is the utmost importance of the dimension of **time** and the **politics of time** in post-disaster aid, recovery and rehabilitation and the impact it has on perception and the resulting expectations.

Under these conditions, taking into account the example case and reflections presented above, one can summarize the following core dimensions of the expectation gaps:

- Perceptions of and assumptions about reality differ among the actors involved, depending on horizons of imagination and knowledge, according to class, ethnic, cultural and/or gender backgrounds.
- Socio-cultural barriers: Communications between people of different backgrounds, hence, give plenty of space for cultural misunderstandings.
- Post-disaster arenas are furthermore shaped by highly unequal positions of power of the actors involved. This is another structural barrier for creating more sustainable results than existed before a disaster. Culturally specific factors, such as particularly rigid

hierarchies in the East and Southeast Asian case, might create additional obstacles to having straight forward discussions and coming to agreements about needs and potential solutions. The political aspects of post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation will be dealt with extensively in the following chapter.

- Under given conditions of the aid market, donor organizations have to prove successful by getting a large share of donations, hence investing in marketing, as well as in marketing orientated public relations strategies.

Besides an orientation towards ‘successful projects’ from a marketing perspective, donor organizations need to meet the latest ‘policy’ trends of the development discourse. Successful policy discourses are translated into government policies and gain particularly effective strength: donor organizations need to shape their projects and policies accordingly. The frequency of ever new policy models has also been accelerated in the past one and a half decades. What David Mosse calls “*an upstream focus on policy*” (2005, 231), shifts resources away from local realities and dealing with it, and concentrates on well intended abstract concepts, that go along with the marketing focus on the aid market. Short-term orientation and inflexibility of project setups and post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation are the consequences.

What is necessary instead, is:

- Firstly, **adjustment of the more powerful actors, mostly donors, to the handicap that the expectation gap presents.** This means as a first step recognizing that it exists.
- Secondly, **taking the local setting and context as the given.** The disaster impacted area needs to be the starting point for adequate policies shaping the aid effort.
- Thirdly, this requires **a great deal of flexibility by donor organizations in project setups to adjust to local conditions and the aid recipient(s) perception and resulting expectations.**
- Fourthly, ways need to be sought **to de-accelerate post-disaster reconstruction.** A politics of time is required that enables a process that is self determined by the affected people and sustainable in its means as well as in its ends. Only, if immediate time pressure can be buffered, space can be gained to renegotiate positions, in order to narrow down the expectation gap.

### 3. Socio-political structures and post-disaster governance

#### 3.1. Rehabilitation as an issue of socio-cultural and political structures

In the aftermath of the December 26<sup>th</sup>, 2004 Tsunami, the global media, politicians and other players depicted the disaster's impact as a natural calamity without precedent in modern human history. It focused mainly on the individual dimension of human suffering. Without doubt, pictures and stories of children who lost their parents, of people without homes, and probably most importantly, desperate tourists touched potential donors' feelings from all over the world. They consequently made their contributions to the biggest fundraising campaign after a natural disaster that the world had ever seen. That there was a socio-political dimension to the disaster and its aftermath to-be was barely mentioned or even realized at the time.<sup>8</sup>

It was relatively early on, though, indicated by the intentions, objectives and activity plans of most donor interventions that they desired to promote a sustainable way of recovery and rehabilitation in all of the affected areas. In the face of the mountain of destruction and suffering, the UN's World Tourism Organization, for instance, facilitated the Phuket Action Plan (2005) that stated the participating parties' will to improve conditions, as compared to those that existed before the disaster.

Hence, it was implicitly acknowledged that the 'natural disaster' had struck areas inhabited by human beings, organized into social structures, and as such were characterized by power relations, political struggles and exploitation. And this fact particularly holds true for the affected countries from Indonesia and Thailand to Sri Lanka, the Maldives and India, where the social and political situation before the disaster had been far from being a harmonic setting characterized by justice and fairness. Manifest and latent social conflicts had been prevalent, especially in those areas where tourists

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8 As Nikolas Reese of the German NGO Asienhaus put it: "Statt das Seebeben sozial und ökonomisch zu kontextualisieren, wurde eine natürliche Katastrophe konstruiert, der "wir" ausgeliefert seien und die wir als Gefahr hinnehmen müssten. Diese vorpolitische Sicht der Katastrophe wurde durch den Eindruck verstärkt, die Flut sei über eine Region hineingebrochen, die zwar arm, doch merkwürdig unberührt von Macht, Herrschaft oder Ausbeutung sei. Auch wenn der Tsunami eine natürliche Ursache hatte: Dass Tourismus, Garnelenzuchtfarmen und eine sozial blinde und nicht naturverträgliche Entwicklungspolitik maßgeblich zum massenhaften Sterben so vieler Menschen und zum ungeheuren Ausmaß an Verwüstung beigetragen haben, wurde weitgehend ausgeblendet." (Reese 2006, 4)

were affected, where the powerful tourism industry had penetrated deeply into the marginal world of the local inhabitants who had benefited least from these developments.

Most donor organizations intended to contribute with their reconstruction efforts to a mode of sustainable development that intended to “build back better” (former US President Bill Clinton). Hardly any reconstruction project was to be implemented without the ‘participation’ of the aid recipients, the Tsunami survivors. Hardly any project proposal was accepted that did not claim to strengthen the power of aid recipients and felt to be in the closest of touches with the real needs of their target groups.

While, likewise, the individual aid recipient was more often than not involved in rebuilding his/her house and in decision making about what it would look like, this was much less so with regard to the overall planning and decision making at community, district and provincial level. While the individual needs tended to be met in a participatory way, the overall reconstruction in the affected areas was hardly characterized by self determination of the population on the ground.

Since the ‘natural’ Tsunami impacted many manmade environments, the disaster and its aftermath became highly political in regard to the reasons of high casualties and the scope of destruction. This is even more evident in devastated areas that obviously needed not only reconstruction of physical structures, but also the social, civic and political ones. With severely harmed or even destroyed socio-political institutions, affected people had to face the challenge of outside intervention – by national governments, the army, donor organizations and the media.

The political dimension of disasters and their aftermaths, as well as of aid, however, is not new. How aid organizations/aid actors position themselves toward the politics of disaster recovery and aid, varies greatly, though. Despite many players’ awareness of the political dimension of their aid and development work, the broader picture of overall decision making and coordinating reconstruction has so far not received enough attention.

Some organizations stress their non-political understanding of aid, in order to be able to help those in need whatever the political circumstances might be. While this is a legitimate argument in emergency situations, it does not go far enough in long-term recovery and rehabilitation processes. Their very

essence is the struggle about how to continue/start anew after a calamity. And this is mostly a structural issue.

We want to discuss here four aspects of great importance for the politics and policies of post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation, before we conclude with a discussion of how to get closer to a mode of post-disaster governance that ensures greater fairness and sustainability:

- the disaster's impact on socio-political structures in an affected area;
- existing local political structures and their shortcomings, mostly rooted in pre-disaster realities;
- socio-cultural specifics and the problem of translation; and
- the role of donor/aid organizations, be they national, foreign national, or international.

### **3.2. The socio-political impact of disaster**

*'When the waves receded, the informal heads (almost always elderly people) of the socio-economic community structure were mostly killed or incapacitated. While the economic vacuum was quickly filled by outsiders from un-impacted areas and in line with political or economic extensions of family networks, the restoration of local leadership took much longer', Karl Segschneider and Walaitat Worakul wrote, referring to the affected Thai communities' experience after the 2004 Tsunami. (TAW 2007e, 24)*

The social eruptions following the Tsunami in Thailand included not only the incapacitation of local leadership, but also the destruction of networks (families, extended families, communities), of livelihood and infrastructure, as well as the local self sufficiency environment.

First aid does not rely so much on local leaders, since it is necessarily working along the lines of a top-down approach of outsiders who come to the aid of disaster victims, trying to meet the basic needs of the affected people. In the Thai post-Tsunami case this worked out to be rather evenhanded, effective and efficient, with a lot of voluntary contribution, also involving civil society organizations. Activities of affected local communities evolved rather spontaneously and in an improvised manner. (cf. TAW 2007e, 25)

A change from extended families to smaller families, from strong family networks to strong NGO networks took over many functions of the devastated old structures. Gender roles shifted, tasks and responsibilities were newly assigned. The micro economy was slumping and the economic structures awaited reconstruction. Hence, the socio-political structures of the disaster affected areas were in the early stages of the disaster aftermath in a rather fluid state. Pre-disaster conditions broke up. On the one hand, this created a high degree of vulnerability and a pressing need for rebuilding community structures. On the other hand new 'opportunities in crisis' arose.

The need for outsiders to make decisions in the immediate aftermath out of humanitarian reasons for the impacted population is obvious and understandable. But: It is crucial not to miss the point when the impacted population and local expertise need to become involved in decision making and coordination processes. Otherwise the most unforeseen negative consequences can come to the fore.

*Example:*

In the Thabtawan and Bahn Nahm Khem communities in Phang Nga province, for example, survivors were housed after the Tsunami in improvised tent communities. The tents were organized in line with structures of aid requirements as perceived from the outside perspective of first aid experts, as speed was of the essence. It seemed to be quite inefficient to leave the task of organizing the tent communities to a 'shell shocked' and barely surviving population.

In Thabtawan and Bahn Nahm Khem all young survivors up to about fifteen years of age were separated by gender and put in groups of boys and girls into tents. No adults were included due to fears over potential abuse situations. All amenities that could possibly be found were included, for example TV sets, video games etc.

In spite of earlier intentions, the tent situation endured for almost three months, which established an unparalleled social environment that is claimed by many inhabitants of Thabtawan and Bahn Nahm Khem to be responsible for a dramatic increase in youth criminal activity after the Tsunami. The older boys (and girls) become the social leaders of their tent communities, without local adult supervision and guidance, instead being taught by their first ever unlimited access to television, advertisements and

video games over an extended period of several months, while mourning the loss of their families.

As often happens: the improvised shelter had become just one problem on a list of problems to be solved. Once it was organized, it was considered done – even if seen full of flaws – and other tasks were perceived as more urgent, for example building permanent housing, so as to get the survivors out of the tents. Had local survivor perspectives been taken into account early enough and brought into the decision making and coordinating positions in the tent communities, maybe these negative developments might have been prevented. It is obvious that time is needed for ‘shell shocked’ communities to get organized to some degree amongst themselves. But even if it had taken two weeks for the tent communities to get to this point, at least they would have then been able to influence the temporary social setting in line with a known social structure, accepted by the communities and appropriate for their young population.<sup>9</sup>

The social changes resulting from a disaster can be fundamental. The example shows that it is crucial for aid workers to identify the point(s) in time when control over social organization of temporary shelters, coordination and decision making need to involve local structures again. Closely following the first aid phase that is dedicated to satisfying the most urgent human needs, the phase of immediate aid follows. In this stage first steps towards a social structure beyond the emergency situation are being taken for and by the survivors, almost always based on new parameters as the old social and organizational structures have been (literally) washed away by the disaster. New players become relevant, i.e. persons or groups that have at their disposal the resources now urgently needed for the immediate aid: capital, human resources, knowledge, contacts, material resources etc.

However, the disaster aftermath and its fluid socio-dynamic state also open up opportunities for progressive developments raising political awareness. This aspect is particularly relevant from a gender perspective. Disaster often

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<sup>9</sup> The communities are by no means homogenous entities. Hence, when involving local leadership from early on, the concerns of those further from the centers of power, must not be neglected. For example, in temporary shelters in Southern Thailand, men gathered for coffee, while women met each other when cooking. Since leaderships were male-dominated, the coffee rounds were targeted by outsiders who announced that funds were available. Women lost out for a lack of information and access.

brings with it spontaneous and improvised activity that cannot rely on traditional gender patterns any more. So reformulated gender roles evolve. Many households were after the disaster headed by women who had to struggle with particular hardships, but also emerged stronger from the disaster aftermath. In a number of cases in Southern Thailand women took over vacant community leadership positions. This happened in Buddhist, Muslim und Morgan communities.<sup>10</sup>

But whatever changes appear in a disaster aftermath – they will have to compete with restoration tendencies, the simple re-building of pre-disaster structures.

### **3.3. Socio-political structures and their shortcomings**

It is rare that pre-disaster socio-political structures are shaped in a way that a simple re-establishment would be desired. In most disaster prone areas in this world we have to deal with structures that are not open to a fair and just recovery rehabilitation process.

Governments are, generally, the first players held responsible for creating a legal and budgetary framework, in order to help disaster survivors and control the post-disaster situation on the ground.

In the case of the 2004 Tsunami, not only those in need were calling for the support of their respective governments. Also donor organizations and NGOs were demanding not to leave help for the survivors to the mercy of donors. For example, Niklas Reese of the German NGO 'Asienhaus' wrote: *"In order for reconstruction to become an opportunity for real development, it is, in spite of all the focus on civil society initiatives, indispensable, not to release governmental institutions from their responsibility. Only they can enforce and guarantee assistance for suffering individuals based on a legal claim. Aid and development opportunities must not depend on the 'mercy' of the wealthy. Is aid continuously delegated to private actors, a further 're-feudalization' of support in times of need might be the result."* (Reese 2006, 4f.; translated by the authors)<sup>11</sup>

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10 Three years after the disaster, women community complained, though, about weak networking among themselves. They participated in various aid organizations' capacity-building measures, but no strong women's leaders' network emerged from that.

11 In the German original text, it reads: "Damit der Wiederaufbau auch eine Chance fuer echte Entwicklung sein kann, ist es u.a. bei aller zivilgesellschaftlichen Initiative unverzichtbar, die staatlichen Institutionen nicht dadurch aus ihrer sozialen

But the same author continues by saying that there is no denying a severe ownership problem in many states, for example in the Tsunami affected countries, with the state either co-opted by elites or simply not being able to deliver on certain public goods.

From a political science perspective, we are dealing with post-disaster areas of 'limited statehood', which implies that:

- A state/government is, at least with regard to certain policies or territories, not capable of effectively making decisions or implementing them;
- The most significant reason behind that is the weakness of political and administrative institutions to make and implement decisions;
- Mechanisms of the limitation of power/dominance are only partially in place.
- The result of which is, that the state in such cases tends to be usurped by patron-client-networks and hence is not working for the common good. Governmental institutions tend to be usurped for private purposes.
- Institutions are not able to efficiently provide public goods.
- Since dominance/power is not sufficiently contained, e.g. by the rule of law, powerful interest groups can with relatively low risks engage in profiteering.
- Certain services are either delivered by private/non governmental actors, or they will not be delivered at all. (Cf. Risse 2007, 10 and 16)

In the case of Thailand after the 2004 Tsunami, the national government was able to, firstly, lead the immediate disaster relief operations in an efficient, effective and evenhanded way (for an account of the successful reaction to the disaster, see Segsneider/Walaitat 2007, 7-9); and, secondly, somewhat contain the spread of unchecked aid activities by external organizations by only granting access to the affected areas to those organizations who had been active in Thailand before the disaster; or by such individuals who were

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caught up by the Tsunami themselves. In this way it was made sure that aid actors were more or less familiar with the territory and socio-cultural realities they were going to deal with and that the recovery and rehabilitation did not begin in a completely anarchic way.

Nevertheless, local political structures after the disaster did not provide a framework that could assure a fair and just mode of post-disaster governance, in the sense of ensuring fair decisions for all stakeholders about how to conduct the rehabilitation and reconstruction process. That is, on the one hand due to the disaster's impact in weakening the leaderships of the local communities; on the other hand and even more so, due to the unjust structures that had already existed before the disaster.

Government policies towards local communities were by and large characterized by the traditional top-down processes. When the term 'participation' was referred to, then it was for a rather meaningless way of informing the 'locals' or asking their opinions without significant consequences.<sup>12</sup> Policies have by and large been shaped in a way that benefited those in government positions, their networks and extended networks, all too often at the expense of the local population who had to struggle with the consequences.

For a basic understanding of these structures in the Thai case, a few characteristics of the political system and the political culture are outlined below.

#### **3.4. The specific socio-cultural and political context in Thailand**

To analyze the Tsunami impact on a social level, it is first necessary to understand its predominant structure before the impact. Below are a few concepts that are paramount for Thai social structures in a community, but also have a meaning on the wider national and even regional level in Theravada Buddhist countries.<sup>13</sup> These concepts are largely idealized and they can vary in limitless ways. Their sole purpose, here, is to provide a glimpse on some Thai cultural traits that are often difficult to understand by

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12 The development and implementation of the Tsunami Early Warning System and disaster preparedness in Thai government style is an instructive example. See the resource book "The Tsunami Early Warning System in Thailand" (TAW 2007d).

13 Parts of this sub-chapter are adapted in shorter form from the Heinrich Böll Foundation's publication: "Limits to Sustainable Development? A case study of Thailand from a cultural perspective on sustainable development in Southeast Asia" (Segschneider 2002b)

readers not familiar with Southeast Asian and Theravada Buddhist countries. They are instrumental in understanding at least to some degree the extent of an expectation gap based on cultural backgrounds.

### I. *Rabob Phi Noong*

The main aspects of Thai social structures focus on responsibility for other community or family members. This is expressed in a rigid system of respect, originally based on age. The elders are responsible for their minors in age and are at liberty regarding decision making. The younger acknowledges the elder's responsibility and the opportunity it creates for him/her by respecting the decision without (voiced) reservations.<sup>14</sup> Family structures are open and flexible, and not necessarily dependent on any relation based on lineage. An unrelated individual can become a proper family member at any time in what we might call 'social adoption'. Thus, smaller family units connected by birth can quickly extend into a larger family consisting of any number of individuals firmly united by the commonly shared responsibility for each other within the family's groups. The resulting system is called *Rabob Phi Noong* and includes a strong political aspect of alliance and loyalty.

### II. *Khreua Yaad*

While a member of the family is always considered an older or younger (*Phi* and *Noong*, respectively) 'brother' or 'sister', independent of whether they know each other closely or not, social contacts outside the individual's family are described as acquaintances (*Khon Ruu Djak*), friends (*Phuan*) or close friends (*Phuan Sanit*). These social contacts can over time reach a level where the terms *Phi* and *Noong* are used to address each other, or even more intimate pronouns like *Gu* and *Mueng*. The calling upon of resources or their provision is managed by the *Khreua Yaad*, which is the network of all people united in a group that provides social security for its members in times of need and opportunities in times of affluence. The *Khreua Yaad* can extend over several groups in order to further mutual interests.

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<sup>14</sup> The opportunity, here, would consist of the provision of a 'care-free' time in certain respects of life, which the younger individual can use to explore and learn in accordance with his/her own needs. These needs are only curtailed by respect for the elder and by the duties he/she has towards others younger than him or herself.

### III. *Rabob Upphatam*

The social discipline needed by all individuals to adhere to the basic framework of the larger family-society is cemented by what is called the *Rabob Upphatam*. This is a system of unquestioning respect for the social elder within a group of people and guarantees his or her prerogative in decision making for the whole group.

A social elder would be a person who has earned the trust of his or her community so the position is not necessarily connected to age. The *Rabob Upphatam* can also be described as a system of conflict management, not only within a family but also between two or more families and their support networks, when social elders meet to discuss and solve problems for the communities they represent.<sup>15</sup> To function appropriately, it is necessary that all members of a society believe in the correctness and goodness of the decision of a social elder. This system applies especially in Southeast Asian countries that adhere to Theravada Buddhism, but to some extent also in Islamic countries of the region. A strong link with religious teachings and institutions is therefore a basic pre-condition for becoming a social elder or leader.

*Related politics:* In this deeply ingrained social hierarchy equality is rather difficult to achieve as most social interaction is organized in vertical structures. There is a large degree of social and economic responsibility of the leaders for their networks, and in exchange loyalty of those further down in the hierarchy. This also impacts on the understanding of corruption, promotes a different understanding of public office and makes the western interpretation of democracy an almost irrelevant notion.

The implications for political culture and the way politics work in Thailand are endless. Serving your own interest becomes synonymous with serving your network and through their extended social and economic responsibility it becomes equal to serving the 'people'. That they are exclusively 'your people' in this case and not inclusively 'the people' as in a country's citizenry is mostly not even considered a point of contention in discussions concerning democracy and good governance. Hence it is considered normal that before the law some people are more equal than others (in best

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15 The standard translation of the term 'Rabob Upphatam' as 'peer-ship system' or 'patron-client relationship' is misleading and not correct, as its concept is not based on an economy centered culture, but a community oriented network of responsibilities and opportunities.

Orwellian 'Animal Farm' tradition), that one can bolster one's equal-ness by bribes and presents and that your economic situation directly reflects on your political standing.

There are also political implications with regard to disaster aid. There can be no true political empowerment without economic empowerment; the freedom of choice is the freedom you can afford. The meaning of sustainability in such a context clearly shifts away from an idealistic proposition and rather becomes a notion of sustained economic wellbeing. The idea of a right to self determination for the use of funds by the survivors themselves becomes a threatening notion to give up political power for those higher up in the hierarchy. Actual true decision making rights must be restricted as much as possible in order not to threaten existing political and power structures.

The complexity of this issue is obvious. There is no disaster aid from anywhere or anyone without a direct and measurable political impact in the disaster area. For example, former Prime Minister Thaksin's direct involvement in the aid efforts gave his party a number of unprecedented seats in elections in the South. So, when international aid organizations try to spend huge disaster aid packages in record time, they potentially and actually increase the social and political turmoil in the target area and thus severely undermine their own chances as aid organizations to achieve a sustainable recovery.

### **3.5. The role of aid organizations**

Aid on a larger scale, i.e. aid beyond direct donor recipient interaction, is based nationally and internationally on aid organizations. So much so, that many of them have become international aid corporations with hundreds of millions of US\$ or € to be distributed worldwide. National government owned aid organizations that mostly work internationally enhance this trend of working in a global context through many intermediaries. There is hardly any choice but to do this through a large administrative structure, in order to be able to responsibly manage these amounts of donor capital. The discussion concerning these aid structures is almost as old as aid has become an internationally administered activity.

Most criticism was and is directed at the administrative overhead costs that can easily use up to 40% or 50% of the aid funds before they reach their intended recipients. The discussions and efforts made over the last few

decades have lowered that number significantly. Most organizations nowadays try to limit their organizational expenses to no more than 25% of the total donor funds. This might still sound a lot to the individual donors who give money to the aid organizations, but definitely compares very favorably with the current estimate for local - i.e. outside of Bangkok - administration of the Thai government. According to estimates of Chiang Mai University, out of 100 Baht<sup>16</sup> collected in taxes only about 11 Baht gets back to the local areas where the taxes were collected from in the first place.

Aid in our time cannot do without organizations and extensive administration. But getting back to our concept of the expectation gap, the question central to the one concerning the roles of aid organizations is rather whether these administrations make decisions in line with recipient needs or not. After all, it is those in need that the money has been donated for, even if it has been channeled via aid caretaker and delivery organizations. For example, moneys specifically donated to aid children can legally not be spent for something else – at least that is the legal construct. But what happens if – as was the case in Thailand – several tens of millions of € are donated in first aid to less than 1.000 orphaned Tsunami children? Are you going to make each of them a Baht multi-millionaire while other survivors often receive less than 10.000 Baht?

Aid organizations and their expectations, individual donor behavior, as well as development policy fashions and their more or less rapid changes, are related to broader societal trends in donor societies. A conference in Frankfurt/Main, Germany, in March 2003, discussed the 'Crisis of Humanitarianism'<sup>17</sup> and took issue with problematic developments of aid. While referring to the particular settings of reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan after the wars, several issues with relevance for Tsunami rehabilitation and beyond were tackled:

- The so called 'mercantilization' of aid (*Merkantilisierung der Hilfe*): the ever more pressing need to compete on the fundraising market,

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16 By May 2008, one Euro equals about 49 Baht.

17 The conference was organized by medico international, Heinrich-Boell-Stiftung and the Faculty of Education of Frankfurt University. At the time of the US-led attack on Iraq it was debated how aid was instrumentalized and how aid organizations could and should deal with this. It was the organizers' intention to counter the tendencies of instrumentalization in aid by raising critical public awareness. They wanted to reach out with the conference beyond the circles of aid organizations and aid experts.

hence leading to an ever more aggressive way of using pictures of crying children to touch potential donors to actually transfer money to donation accounts.

- This is accompanied by the growing need of aid organizations to invest more and more money in marketing strategies instead of developing more effective strategies to tackle aid and development issues.
- The shift from socio-political to merely technical issues of aid: rapid disaster aid has come to the fore, at the expense of longer-term development engagement. This is to be considered a de-politicization of aid – as already referred at the outset of this chapter, with mainstream disaster discourse stressing the individual dimension of suffering and the need for technical reconstruction.
- Sustainable reconstruction and development efforts require, though, a thorough understanding of socio-political contexts; they require time and freedom from short-term pressure to deliver quick results – and quick (mostly visual) documentation of those for the majority of the media.

Principles, such as democracy, subsidiarity and safeguarding a legal basis for aid do, however, not go along smoothly with the prevailing neo-liberal discourse. The latter has significantly contributed to shaping a situation where aid is no longer discussed in terms of a **Right** of human beings to be aided and a **Right** to determine themselves. But instead in terms of how aid budgets should be allocated to and received by the ‘victims’ as generous donations by those who pity them and who are supposed to gratefully accept whatever is given. This is closely related to the shift in focus to immediate disaster relief efforts.<sup>18</sup>

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18 This situation, where we do not discuss the human rights of disaster survivors and their political will any more, but the generosity of donors and quick reactions to immediate disasters’ impacts only, has been termed the ‘re-feudalization’ (Refeudalisierung) of aid, the downside of the coin of ‘de-politicization’ (Entpolitisierung). Neo-liberal pragmatism does not care any longer about the structural causes of poverty or disaster. “Hilfe, in der es keinen Kontext mehr gibt und so auch keine Gesellschaftlichkeit. Nur noch die Rettung des Einzelnen ist moeglich, während die katastrophale Ordnung der Welt, die so sehr der Rettung beduerfte, wie in Zement gegossen, unveraenderbar wirkt.” (Gebauer 2003, 16; rough translation to English by the authors: “Aid that exists without context, devoid of a societal dimension of human existence. Only individual solutions seem within reach, while

If we link these general problems of aid and aid delivery to the issues discussed in the chapter about the expectation gaps further up in this paper, the prospects for the results of such aid efforts are not particularly good. One is tempted to agree with Thomas Gebauer of medico international who wrote: *“If we can not develop an understanding for the crisis at hand, because we refuse to acknowledge important political and cultural contexts, we simply can not adequately respond to that crisis.”*<sup>19</sup>

Beyond that, in the 1990s a shift occurred in planning, monitoring and evaluation processes to the ‘Logical Framework Approach’, with resulting documents summarizing goals, indicators, basic assumptions, sometimes outputs and activities: the LogFrames. A LogFrame is a conceptual construct that tries to anticipate implementation problems by defining not necessarily the process steps, but rather by loosely framing the expected results with indicators that measure the success of a project. While this is very effective to ensure that the aid organizations’ aid policy and goal perspective is preserved within the actual aid delivery plans and implementation, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the actual aid recipients to place their own objectives firmly within an aid plan.

The result is what one of our friends in a Tsunami project in the South of Thailand called “the dictate of the LogFrame”. The LogFrame logics go along with the *“upstream focus on policy”* (Mosse 2005, p231) which shifts resources away from local realities and dealing with it, and concentrates on abstract concepts which often have difficulties being translated into locally specific cultural realities. How the objectives of the LogFrame can be preserved and the indicators be achieved during actual project implementation provides such a rigid framework that the expectation gap becomes cemented within the basic documents of a project. The discourse and discussion between aid organizations and aid recipients that is actually needed to make an aid project useful and effective, is degraded to a number

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the disastrous world order, in dire need of salvation, seems to be unchangeable, made from concrete”.)

19 Translation by the authors. Original text: *“Wer kein Verstaendnis fuer die Krise entwickeln kann, weil er dafuer wichtige politische und kulturelle Zusammenhaenge ausblendet, kann auch nicht adaequat auf die Krise antworten.”* (Gebauer 2003, 16f.; cf. also Salm 2003, 54f. concerning the need for informed knowledge of local power structures/relations)

of meetings that try to sell the LogFrame as what the target group should be willing to strive for.

Hence, what prevents donor organizations from developing adequate answers to the questions posed by a locally specific context is in the Tsunami context, twofold:

Firstly, the problem of translating the Western globalized development policy discourse by discussion and its specific perception into locally understood practices that need to be translated back again, is too often unaddressed, ignored and in its extent not even understood. For example, what does 'democracy' represent in Germany and what does it stand for in Thailand? An implicit assumption is all too often made in the Western development policy discourse that it should "mean the same thing everywhere". But that does not cut the mustard in Thailand, where people and concepts are most decidedly not the same and equal everywhere, in spite of living in a 'democracy'.

Secondly, the time frames set for the implementation of LogFrames do not comply with local needs. Perceptions of time of individual donors and aid organizations differ significantly from those of the ones actually receiving aid. As one local leader eloquently put it, while discussing time issues over a project, "It is funny that you have all the watches, but we have all the time."

### **3.6. Towards effective and fair post-disaster governance**

Drawing on a political science perspective, we need to ask how governance<sup>20</sup> of post-disaster areas under conditions of limited statehood works and which mechanisms should be put into place, in order to both ensure, at least a basic level of input legitimacy (which closely links to the rights of aid recipients in locally specific contexts), and fair results/outputs for all stakeholders. Proper governance mechanisms are in disaster affected areas

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20 The term 'governance' shall here be referred to as "the entirety of all co-existing modes of collectively regulating social matters" (Renate Mayntz, quoted in Risse/Lehmkuhl 2006, 7). Governance covers, according to Thomas Risse and Ursula Lehmkuhl, "sovereign action on the part of the state ("governance by government"), governance via networks of public and private actors ("governance with government"), as well as regulation by non-state actors or self-regulation by civil society ("governance without government)" (2006, 7). Three types of institutionalized governance structures can be distinguished, according to the mode of coordination: hierarchy; systems of negotiation; and systems of competition. (Cf. Risse 2007, 5.) Governance structures can either be formal or informal.

closely related to the reconstruction projects of the donor and implementation organizations involved. (Re) Construction happens on a large scale. The most basic aspects of the lives of disaster survivors, as well as other people living in the area are affected. Hence, for sustainable results and ongoing sustainable development to be achieved, finding a proper mode of post-disaster governance is crucial.

In a post-disaster setting all relevant players are engaging in governance structures of one or the other kind. The questions are, to what degree they are legitimate and how effectively and fairly the outputs are distributed. One of the major answers to the legitimacy question has been for some time the empowerment of 'civil society', and particularly in post-disaster contexts working and channeling funds through civil society, especially when a governmental structure does not work properly. This aimed not only at effectively achieving sustainable results with funded projects, but also at improving accountability of (local) governments by strengthening critical counter forces.

But in post-disaster societies with a limited or severely handicapped statehood, the support of civil society forces can never be the only way. Because here, the focus on civil society – or even external actors, as suggested in the Tsunami Aid Watch concept of a 'Seal of Fair Recovery' (TAW 2007b) – is largely due to the absence of alternatives, for the lack of socio-political institutions that provide for fair outcomes of the rehabilitation process. A strong civil society by itself does not necessarily lead to progress from a democratization and sustainability perspective. Hence, an approach for multi-stakeholder governance structures is to be aimed at, which has its focus in the goal of transforming the post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation into long-term sustainable development.

Rehabilitation always needs to be rooted in democratic processes as seen from the perspective of the disaster affected target groups in order to assure a sense of rehabilitation ownership that is devoid of any sense of 'disaster victimization'. Governance structures, hence, need to be up to the challenge of negotiating the perspectives and expectations of individual aid recipients, donors and other actors about what exactly constitutes fairness, sustainability, participation, gender democracy, etc. in the process of decision making and implementation. An approach is required that takes into account the flaws of local structures that prevent fairness and justice for the politically disadvantaged groups of disaster survivors, so that power inequalities can be balanced.

As already hinted at, the post-disaster governance issue cannot be discussed without bringing up the issue of **time**. Different stages of post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation require different forms of decision-making and different modes of governance. In an earlier publication Walaitat Worakul and Karl Segschneider suggested a classification of phases of aid, drawing on sources dealing with post-conflict needs assessments (TAW 2007e, 3-5):

- Short-term recovery, with transition and stabilization achieved after 12 months;
- Mid-term recovery and rehabilitation, with transformation and institution building after 12 to 36 months;
- Long-term rehabilitation, with consolidation from 36 to 120 months.

The first phase of short term recovery would need further distinctions, in order to match the different logistical/technical as well as socio-political requirements at different points in time – from the first hours after a disaster to taking in the first days and weeks, until disaster relief transforms into recovery and then reconstruction. The immediate reaction to a disaster must focus on speed, effectiveness and efficiency in giving first aid to the victims. What is needed, is saving people from danger areas, take care of very basic needs. Any aid beyond that already ought to take into account the time perception of the affected groups or communities and not only the time perception of aid workers from outside. The danger to overlook the time factor in disaster aid is constant and increases with the aid available, as aid mostly functions in top-down and/improvised ways, more chaotic at the outset, becoming more authoritarian with the arrival of professional aid organizations or the army.

Already a very short time into the disaster aid processes, the need for a more sophisticated governance mechanism grows. The immediate aid (that follows first aid), as we have seen with the example of tent communities, is more often than not already a first step on the way to reconstruction. If a sustainable rehabilitation that will eventually phase out in an ongoing sustainable development process is aimed at, the questions of legitimacy, fair outcomes and social and cultural appropriateness are already coming up.

From a perspective that strives for sustainability and democratization of/in the process and in order to ensure a favorable outcome for the weaker groups among disaster affected aid recipients, governance that produces fair results cannot be achieved without a politicization<sup>21</sup> of all reconstruction related issues. Otherwise socio-economic and political power hierarchies will be all too obviously reflected in reconstruction results. Incompetence in design, planning and implementation will only open up access venues to profiteering by those who benefit from unfair structures and the exceptional opportunities in crisis.

The result of a politicization not taking place, threatens to be the incapacitation of the disaster survivors themselves, of the affected people, victimized not only by the disaster, but also by aid efforts. Decision making and coordination of recovery and rehabilitation have always tended to be driven by governments, donor organizations and by what we call further down the 'urban economy' – the capitalist economic structure in collaboration with the ruling elite, shaped by culturally specific factors and topping a particularly shaped social hierarchy. And among local communities, the most vulnerable groups tend to lose out on a fair share of aid: often women, ethnic minorities, migrant workers without legal documentation, the handicapped, the elderly and the poorest community members.

The need for efficient and consciously implemented counter measures, the **(self) empowerment of the disaster survivors**, is blatant.

How to achieve, then, or at least contribute to (governance) structures that produce fair and sustainable outputs, also for the more disadvantaged groups of disaster survivors/disaster affected inhabitants? How to ensure fair results, when having a closer look at gender, class and minority issues? Normally, existing social realities are not made to contribute too much to the goals of sustainability and fairness.

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21 From our point of view, politicization refers to understanding the fundamentally political nature of rehabilitation and reconstruction in a disaster aftermath; the need to take into account the socio-economic and political contexts, with particular regard to power structures; and, most importantly, the disaster survivors' becoming aware of their own power, their own needs and demands and their right to have a say in (re-) building and (re-) shaping their environment, as well as their collective action to struggle for their interests.

From our point of view, we can get closer to achieving justice in the rehabilitation of an entire area only by progressively politicizing the whole process, empowering disaster survivors to take their destiny and their future into their own hands and counterbalancing the threat of profiteering by powerful players, from the moment of the actual disaster occurring.

This politicization has several aspects:

- Stakeholders need to become aware that recovery and rehabilitation is not only a technical and economic matter, but essentially a **political** issue.
- Donor organizations need to start their aid activities with a thorough analysis of the **local power structures**, in order to become able to understand how to create a sustainable project. This requires a great deal of local expertise and **understanding of the cultural background**.
- This means checking on **how effective and fair government bodies' work**, and whether they should be counterbalanced with alternative players.
- Coordination of aid effort needs to be understood in terms of **rehabilitation governance**, as a political process at its very core. So the question of legitimacy needs to be brought up: Is bringing in donation money sufficiently legitimizing decision-making power for aid organizations? Should not local people at least have a veto power concerning all activities discussed in the framework of rehabilitation? We are talking about their **Right of Self Determination**. Locals must be at the heart of decision making and spending procedures.
- **Profiteering opportunities** need to be identified; and the more **disadvantaged groups need to be empowered** to fight for their rights in such cases: as most commonly in cases of land grabs.
- This means that leaders in local communities need to be identified and efforts need to be made to **sensitize communities for the political struggle** required to safeguard their rights and opportunities.
- Dependent on the analysis of local players and power relations, governance structures should be set up/influenced in ways that serve the interests of those who have the most difficulty to voice their concerns. This must include taking into account power inequalities based on gender, class and ethnicity.

- The focus on politicization and structural matters also means that a kind of **aid** is required **that is orientated at local partners and local contexts**; that is **ready for a longer-term engagement and flexible in reacting to local conditions**. All too often the aid organizations move on and leave behind a faltering infrastructure. (Cf. for example Eckart 2003, 45; Gebauer 2003, 20)

Without shifting the focus on the collective dimension of reconstruction processes, on collective decision-making and the political framework in particular, sustainability cannot be reached. Going one step further in the chapter on the expectation gap: **The expectation gap needs to be narrowed down by (re) locating the political center of all reconstruction aid to the needs and the political will of the disaster impacted communities.**

## **4. Socio-Economic and Political Aspects of Tsunami rehabilitation in Southern Thailand**

### **4.1. Some challenges of post-disaster economics**

*Example:*

An island in the Andaman Sea<sup>22</sup> lost much of its population's fishing boats to the Tsunami. In the disaster aftermath the question became, how to build new boats for those fishermen who had lost their means of income. The community on the island preferred to do this work by themselves. They wanted to use their local resources and rebuild boats in their own community's facilities.

The administration in charge in Bangkok decided that this would not be a proper solution, as granting villagers access to the local forests (which are centrally controlled by the government's ministries) could possibly create a precedence that might lead to conflicts later. The local population was also considered to still be in a state of shock with other more urgent worries hindering them to competently organize a major boat building challenge by themselves. So rehabilitation funds were not allocated to the community, but to an (outside) entrepreneur who would build the boats and give them to the community.

The resources, first and foremost wood, were taken from the local forests in the province. It is not clear whether wood from the community's immediate environment was used for building the community's boats. However, choosing this rebuilding approach, the wood had to be paid for from rehabilitation money, in order to buy boats from a private company. The result of the whole operation was not satisfactory. The boats delivered were of inferior quality and the specifications not in line with the village fishing infrastructure, thus they could not be used for fishing out on the sea. Six months after the Tsunami, one could go to the island's village landing shores and find literally up to a hundred fishing boats rotting in the sand.

So at the end of the day, a large amount of money had been spent without achieving anything except the paying of urgently needed rehabilitation money to an outsider with good connections in the province. Only following this failure to rebuild fishing boats for the community's fishermen could the

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22 The island's name is known to the authors and the information taken from TAW's experiences.

community and an NGO working with them initiate a community shipyard project in order to rebuild boats in their own way, with their own resources and with proper results. Apart from all the other benefits gained by the community from the new shipyard facility which can be sustainably used for boat repair and boat building they can now build boats for other clients from other communities.<sup>23</sup>

Immediately after the Tsunami, destroyed, lost or damaged houses and boats was the most visible damage besides human death and injuries. In the media, especially abroad, a very simplified picture of local needs prevailed. Beyond the reconstruction of tourism complexes, simple purchases of new houses and boats seemed to be needed, in order to compensate for the losses they had suffered from the disaster. Aid organizations collected donation money whilst riding the empathy wave, with donors abroad expecting exactly that: houses and boats being rebuilt, the more impressive and faster, the better.

But as highlighted in the example above, it was not that easy. Here we will list just a few critical issues:

- Large scale reconstruction requires a huge amount of resources that is contested by vested interests.
- Large scale reconstruction is a huge business: who was going to benefit from it?
- The disaster itself had an impact on the very supply of resources. Would there still be enough fish left in the sea to be caught by the same number of fishing boats/fishermen as before the disaster?
- Large scale reconstruction activities depend on an infrastructure that is able to support them.
- Large scale reconstruction inevitably has a grave impact on the market, on demand and supply structures, hence on prices and the local economy in general.
- With large scale destruction, property and ownership rights became a serious issue of conflict, or: the already existing issue became a focus of public attention.

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<sup>23</sup> For examples of 'good practices' of setting up community shipyards, repairing and rebuilding boats, as implemented by Southern Thai communities in collaboration with Save Andaman Network, see case study 2 in 'Building for the Future' (TAW 2008b).

These are all points that illustrate the importance of the economic dimension and the closely linked relevance of a governance structure which is able to manage economic interests, leading evolving conflicts to fair solutions. As the following examples in this chapter will show, placing decision making in rehabilitation firmly in the hands of the impacted communities is the only way to actually achieve fair post-disaster governance and sustainability in the rehabilitation process.

#### **4.2. Rehabilitating communities and the tourism industry**

“The Andaman Coast is a golden opportunity area,” said Thanu Nabnien of the Coastal Wetlands Project when opening his talk about the communities’ rehabilitation and tourism development at the Tsunami Aid Watch Public Forum<sup>24</sup> in January 2008: a ‘golden opportunity’ for profiteering, especially after the Tsunami disaster.

After the disaster the need to quickly rebuild the damaged parts of the tourism industry in the Southern Thai provinces and get tourists to come to visit again, with Phuket, Koh Phi-Phi and Khao Lak being the best known, was taken as a starting point by those in charge of rehabilitation policies. That was also perceived as the main way to restore local people’s livelihoods (cf. for example Passau study group 2006b). The tourism industry has been considered by far the most important pillar of the local southern economy. That holds true, of course, if you only compare the mere numbers of turnover; or the damage done by the Tsunami translated into numbers: since the tourism industry’s financial worth is tenfold greater than the next largest one, fishing.

But Khun Thanu’s remark about the ‘golden opportunity area’ hints at a deeper truth. It is rather questionable who benefits from the boom of tourism; or from another perspective: whether the economic benefits that trickle down to the local communities outweigh the tremendous harm done by tourism to local environments and livelihoods. Further than that: The post-disaster situation presented itself as a ‘golden opportunity’ for even more investment than under normal tourism development conditions. And local communities, as organizational entities who under normal circumstances were the only opposition and critics to excessive tourism

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24 Tsunami Aid Watch’s concluding public forum ‘Three Years after the Tsunami: Sustainable Rehabilitation? Experiences and Prospects’ took place in Bangkok on 26 January 2008 in Bangkok. For more information, see: [www.c2taw.org](http://www.c2taw.org)

development, remained conveniently out of the picture, knocked out by the Tsunami.

Of the local population, only a few influential and wealthy people had been able to benefit from an early stage of tourism development on their lands; people who had formerly made a living by developing their own tin mining businesses in Phang Nga's Takua Pa district, for example. While barely benefiting financially from tourism, the vast majority of the local population were excluded from decision making about whether or not tourism should be developed in their surroundings, or in which way this should happen. Tourism (re) development is, hence, less to be seen as the economic basis of livelihoods of the inhabitants of the affected area, but rather as the major threat to their livelihoods and quality of life. There were too many cases where tourism business interests gained the upper hand over ideas to environmentally or socially improve on what had existed before the disaster.<sup>25</sup>

*Example:*

Koh Y, a major tourist destination, suffered devastating destruction from the Tsunami. All physical structures close to sea level had been wiped out.

By and large, these original buildings on the island had been illegal because the area had been declared a national park many years before. This was the reason for the tremendous difficulties that local communities encountered when trying to stay on the land they had inhabited for generations; and to further use the resources in their environment. Their use was now protected by the law and the national park administrations set up for the removal of the locals.

However, for private businesses different rules seemed to apply. All kinds of tourism businesses had mushroomed – until the Tsunami destroyed most of them. After the initial mess had been cleaned up, people on Koh Y came up with good ideas on how to 'build back better'; excellent ideas how the environment could be better protected, resources be managed in a sustainable way; and generally tourism be developed without destroying

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25 Tsunami Aid Watch has suggested a "Seal of Fair Recovery" (SoFaR) to tackle this structural problem of tourism development. It would aim to create a competitive edge for those tourism enterprises that take on board criteria of sustainability and fairness towards the local population. See: TAW 2007b.

local people's livelihood. International development agencies collaborated with government bodies in order to come up with zoning and other plans to steer the reconstruction process in a well intended, socially and environmentally responsible way.

But after a certain point that was reached rather sooner than later, it became obvious that 'building back better' would not take place. The collaboration between international aid agencies and the authorities ended in a rather unspectacular manner, earlier than planned, by an invitation to engage with reconstruction on another island and leave Koh Y to the local national park administration and other local bodies. They were set to cooperate in the reconstruction of Koh Y with the very same vested interests that had already dominated the first round of tourism industry construction, ignoring national park regulations. The rebuilding favored the pre-Tsunami setup with a significant financial and political backing from the major pre-Tsunami tourism players. The 'drawback' that smaller entrepreneurs got less of a chance to re-establish their businesses in their previous locations, or even not at all, was accepted in favor of fewer uncontrolled developments and the opportunity for bigger players to expand their business empires.

#### **4.3. Conflict over land and resources**

With the Andaman Coast having become a 'golden opportunity area' for tourism development, the trend to convert land to a private good that you can buy and sell, gained in pace. Land developers saw easy profits, while local communities only slowly understood the importance of possessing proper land title deeds – mostly when they already got involved in struggles with developers. As a consequence of development, predominantly tourism development, land conflicts have been escalating for some time already. With the Tsunami, the number of conflicts multiplied and came to the fore.

Land conflicts have been *the* crucial issue in Tsunami rehabilitation, as in many other post-disaster settings in countries of the South. They have particularly strongly affected those who have suffered from a lack of education and who have had no or only a precarious legal status: Among them are the minority Morgan, Morglan and Urak Lavoy communities and undocumented migrant workers, most of them of Burmese origin.

There has been extensive coverage in the media as well as by NGO and official governmental bodies' publications of land conflict cases, but with a current lack of follow up on the situation three years after the disaster.

Several publications of the Tsunami Aid Watch series have either directly tackled this issue or indirectly stressed its utmost importance as a severe obstacle for Southern Thai community development, especially since the 2004 Tsunami.<sup>26</sup>

Everyone who has been involved in or observed Tsunami rehabilitation, is familiar with land conflict stories of one sort or another. The disaster aftermath provided an excellent opportunity for the shameful business of grabbing land from people who had already been victimized once by the disaster itself. They were now struck by this second Tsunami.

But private land developers and speculators are only part of the problem. Another important player who causes immense problems for communities is governmental bodies, such as the National Park authorities. In a significant number of cases, communities' habitation in areas declared National Parks had been tolerated by the authorities before the disaster. After the Tsunami though, permission for villagers to rebuild their houses was granted only as temporary shelters. Another kind of struggle over rights to land use erupted, with few cases having been sorted out with long-term solutions. (Cf. TAW 2008f, 13-16)

Various NGOs set up bodies to deal with land conflicts, to give legal support to the communities, document cases and engage in advocacy efforts on the national level.<sup>27</sup> For example, the Andaman Community Rights and Legal Aid Centre was installed to deal with this task. Two subcommittees of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) have dealt with land conflict cases that were submitted to them by communities and their NGO supporters. For the case of Bahn Thabtawan (see also a further example below) and several others, the NHRC recommended:

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26 See the TAW publications: "Communities in Limbo" (TAW 2008f) which is dealing explicitly with the issue. Data from 119 communities along the Andaman coast that are struggling with land conflicts, were gathered. See for example "Andaman Communal Development and the Tsunami: Changing Coastal Ways of Life" (in: TAW 2008a) for more background on the long history of land rights struggles and forced migration of local populations in Southern Thailand. The issue comes up in several other publications of the TAW series. For other examples of coverage, see: Bangkok Post, 22/12/2007; Passau study group 2006a, 8f; Tourism Concern 2005.

27 See the TAW-report "Communities in Limbo" (TAW 2008f) for an example of Save Andaman Network's documentation and NGO-support given to communities.

- *“The government must recognize and approve the entitlement of communities to the land where they have their homes and earn a living.*
- *The government must examine and revoke entitlement documents for land illegally issued to individuals only concerned with making a profit and developing tourist projects.*
- *The government must assist the villagers to repair the damage they suffered from the Tsunami disaster.” (TAW 2008f, 31)*

Nothing has really followed from the Commission’s statements.<sup>28</sup>

According to Preeda Kongpaen of the Chumchon Thai Foundation, about 450 cases of conflict over land title deeds are still pending, while only 13 have been concluded.<sup>29</sup> According to the Andaman Community Rights and Legal Aid Centre, 412 villagers from 23 communities have faced land trespassing charges. (Bangkok Post, 22 December 2007)

Those cases that are finally resolved, all too often end with locals finally selling out their land to developers, even if for a better price. Under current economic conditions, it is extremely difficult to avoid this kind of outcome, since the dominance of the urban over the rural economy is too strongly ingrained in Thai society, as in any society that is speeding up its integration into the capitalist economy.

But conflicts between different interest groups have not been limited to the land issue. Tourism businesses in collaboration with the government have also promoted barely sustainable agendas with regard to the use of natural resources. Furthermore, the local communities’ resource base has been severely affected by uncontrolled damage done to the environment. This, again, has particularly impacted the most marginalized groups and women, including the Morgan minority, especially when communities were without Thai IDs.

A particular concern for all of the local populations is the impact of mega projects, such as the sea marinas in Phuket and Koh Yao Noi, the Pak Bara

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28 Furthermore, various subcommittees of the Centre for Fighting Poverty (SorTorJor) have dealt with land title and land use issues, leading to a positive, but sometimes only temporary conclusions in several cases of the use of public land. (Cf. TAW 2008f, 31-33)

29 According to Preeda Kongpaen’s presentation at the TAW Public Forum “3 Years after the Tsunami. Sustainable Rehabilitation? Experiences and Prospects”, on 26 January 2008 in Bangkok.

deep seaport or Koh Kho Khao airport, close to the community of Bahn Nahm Khem in Phang Nga.<sup>30</sup>

#### **4.4. (Re) Building houses in Southern communities**

Generally, when compared to other countries affected, in Southern Thailand, houses were built fast and efficiently. So within a year, almost all local inhabitants affected called a new house their own. (Cf. Segschneider/Walaitat 2007, 16) More often than not inhabitants were asked by donor organizations to participate in the planning and implementation of construction.

Nevertheless, coordination was all too often flawed, especially in the early stages where it hardly existed among donor organizations and government agencies. This, then, posed a severe obstacle to producing sustainable results. The intrusions by the urban economic profiteers, often assisted by the local authorities, had to be dealt with. Land conflicts hampered and delayed house building projects.

#### *Example:*

The severely affected community of Bahn Thabtawan in Phang Nga province saw in the early stages of the reconstruction process a rather uncoordinated aid effort by a multitude of organizations with a complete lack of local bodies to control the overall process. In Bahn Thabtawan with its majority Morglan population (or sea gypsies as they are commonly and not necessarily correctly described by outsiders),<sup>31</sup> a land conflict developed

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30 For preventing worse from happening, civil society representatives have been hoping for successful application for the Andaman Sea and Coast being declared "UNESCO world heritage". For examples of damage done to the communal ecology by the tourism industry and government policies, beyond the harm already caused by the Tsunami, see: "Ecology and Environment of Bahn Nahm Khem Three Years after the Tsunami" (TAW 2008c).

31 About 10,000 Morgan, Morglan and Urak Lawoi people live along the Thai Andaman coast. They used to be seafarers and are widely known as 'sea gypsies'. Their communities' state of development differs greatly between those located on the mainland and the ones off the shores of the Malay Penninsular. But the biggest differences are between those who have been granted Thai citizenship and those who have not. About 700 Morgans are still without proper identity documentation and hence without rights. For more information about the Morgan people, their communities, history, culture and particular challenges after the Tsunami, see: 'Andaman Communal Development. Origins and Culture of the Morgan Sea Gypsies'

over one part of the village's land where there was a lack of appropriate land title deeds.<sup>32</sup> This was the reason for a well meaning aid agency to quickly get started with rebuilding houses only in the village area where there was no issue over land titles and only for those who were not in trouble in this respect. A second organization followed suit and started reconstruction in another area of the village's land, also not affected by issues of contested land titles. Those two organizations readily (re) built 'their' parts of the village in a style very different from local traditions, even though the future inhabitants were included in planning and implementation to some extent.<sup>33</sup>

Left over were those who still had to fight over the right to further use of their land. They were desperately looking for aid organizations willing to help them. They finally found some Thai foundations and NGOs who gave their support, in order to raise the funds necessary to reconstruct shelter for the affected families. In this case the level of participation in the whole development process of building houses was much higher, but so was also the amount of work people themselves had to invest in their new homes. While people from the other village parts could concentrate on livelihood generation, the last group still had to struggle for a new shelter.

However, this last group could design their own homes and have much more influence their new living environment. As a result, the third part of the village that was the last to be constructed and is still struggling over land titles is the one that remains the most similar to the original village destroyed. Here, the inhabitants could clearly voice their needs and concerns and the results came out accordingly.<sup>34</sup>

The appearance and structure of the 'village in three parts' facilitated and enhanced conflicts between the inhabitants, most of them concerned

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(TAW 2008a) and 'Tsunami Impact: The world of Morgan, Morglan and Urak Lawoi Sea Gypsies after the Waves' (TAW 2008d).

The neglect of Morgan communities by government and secular aid agencies left the doors wide open for Christian fundamentalist aid groups. Their ambiguous aid efforts and socio-cultural effects on the communities, in Bahn Thabtawan and Bahn Thungwa for instance, are documented in "CROSS-Effects" (TAW 2007c).

32 For more detail about the land conflict in Bahn Thabtawan, see 'Communities in Limbo' (TAW 2008f).

33 For more information, see also: Passau Study Group 2006a.

34 For a detailed description of the process, see case study 1 in 'Building for the Future' (TAW 2008b).

dissatisfaction about the extent of aid other individuals had received as compared to oneself. In the end, the reconstruction of one single affected Tsunami village resulted in three new physically segregated communities with different architectural and structural appearances. Later on, after the aid agencies 'closed shop', the Thabtawan community was left alone with the task of managing the impact of ill thought out donor policies. Currently, in this case, it looks as if the involvement of the local youth group has succeeded in bringing the different parts of the village together and recreating a new sense of unity. But the initial lack of coordination and community decision making created severe challenges for achieving a sustainable long-term development process.

Similar to this example, it was reported from the wider area around Khao Lak that coordination was not working, neither among aid organizations, different governmental administrative institutions (e.g. TAO and village heads), or between NGOs and local administrative bodies. The direct results were a number of conflicts erupting over the distribution of aid. Additional harm was done. From Bang Niang in Kuraburi district of Phang Nga province it was reported that the local municipality and village head were not involved in reconstruction efforts at all. As a result the village headman was considered more and more irrelevant by villagers, and there was no longer any formal local governance mechanism in place. (Cf. Passau Study Group 2006a, 9f.)

Action Aid's People's Report "Homestead Land & Adequate Housing in the post Tsunami context" concludes that generally in Thailand, as well as in the other Tsunami impacted countries, the local population was hardly, if at all, involved in decision making about where settlements and housing were to be rebuilt. With regard to land and house building governance the Action Aid report states:

*"Underlying many of the complaints regarding land disputes and (the threat of) forced relocation and unsuitable housing was the fact that people were not consulted and involved in decision making processes. This was particularly so for women who were widowed by the tsunami, members of excluded social groups such as Dalits and Irulas in India, Mokens in Thailand, and single and older women."* (Action Aid 2007a, 31)

In various cases decisions to evict or relocate communities to other locations, often on higher ground or land further away from the beach, were made,

ignoring their customary right to beachfront land use. This also threatened their livelihoods that were mostly based around fishing or rubber plantations. Especially in the case of women the spatial interrelatedness of life and livelihood is apparent. Hence, the (forced) re-arrangement of their geographical space had tremendous, often unaddressed gender based impacts.<sup>35</sup>

#### **4.5. Rural vs. urban economy**

The distribution of costs and benefits of reconstruction in the 'golden opportunity' areas of Southern Thailand is a rather extreme version of the more general segregation of two economies, not only in Thailand, but in most societies. They more or less exist side by side, even though they are not on a par with one another: the urban and the rural economy. In general, the less developed a country, the more pronounced is the segmentation and the differences between these two basic economic structures.

As pointed out in earlier TAW publications,<sup>36</sup> the 'two economies' depend on their own arrangements of infrastructure, incorporating different people and following their own rationalities and scales. The structures in the economic centers of the tourism and large scale fishing industries were set up to accommodate large scale investments and projects with local administrations geared up for assisting them.

On the other hand, there is the rural economy including most of the local communities and their inhabitants along the Andaman coast. It is mostly based on a communal support structure, on the use of public goods, hardly assisted by local administrations and not in tune with the city centered government policies. It is a semi-self-sufficient way of life that has to be lived on the basis of the rural economy.

Yet, members of local communities have become more and more dependent on tourism and fishery related work outside their communities, in order to provide additional income for their families. Their traditional livelihoods cannot completely support them any more, since the urban economy had its

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35 The Action Aid People's Report 'Violence against Women in the post-tsunami context' brings up this issue as another form of structural violence against women. (See Action Aid 2007b)

36 See "78 Weeks Later", TAW 2007e, 18-20, and "Seal of Fair Recovery", TAW 2007b.

effects on the villages by using their infrastructure and competing for their resources.

Villagers 'benefited' from the large scale industry investments as menial laborers, as gardeners or cleaning personnel in the hotel complexes or deck hands on boats. For the more sophisticated jobs that would have provided more income, most of them lacked the skills, like, for example, speaking English or other formal qualifications. For most professions that earn better wage levels in both blue and white collar jobs, at least a Bachelor's degree is required. So, if locals benefited, they did it from jobs at the bottom end of the income value chain.

The separation of urban and rural societies has a long tradition in Thailand, but the nearly complete dominance of the urban over the rural community and the ignorance towards maintaining and nurturing rural communities as environmentally and socially sustainable entities and the backbone of the country is a still young phenomenon. This tendency accompanied the country's economic boom since the late 1980s. With Thailand having become a newly industrialized country, national decision making became increasingly short-term oriented, especially focusing on macro-economic data. With this new paradigm in place, the impact of the exploitation of resources on local communities was to a much lesser extent than before taken into consideration. Communities became more and more disempowered, especially with regard to managing the local environment and the use of resources. (Cf. Segschneider 2002b, 40/41)

In Thailand, links between political and business interests have traditionally been very close. Politics has been used as a way to protect and promote business interests, and economic power with its related networks is the basis for political success. With national politics and the urban economy collaborating, the rural economy does not stand a chance to improve its position again.

#### The Royal Thai Government's role

These basic structural characteristics – urban vs. rural economy – underlie government policies, as they are in turn reproduced by them. After the Tsunami, The Royal Thai Government acted on the grounds of the assumption that the most pressing need was to restore tourism in the impacted areas. At the same time there was a lot of discussion about sustainability in building back local communities.

The government took an approach to post-disaster rehabilitation policies that basically followed those two different paradigms and segregated reconstruction efforts into different bodies and sectors of the socio-economic structure, as if they were fundamentally distinct systems, unrelated to one another. There were separate policies under different supervision/guidance put in place for, firstly, the restoration of administrative bodies; secondly, the reconstruction of the tourism industry; and, thirdly and lastly, the rehabilitation of the affected communities.

The priorities become obvious when the amounts of support budgets for reconstruction were made available and how high administrative hurdles were. Karl Segschneider and Walaitat Worakul stated in an earlier publication:

*“...two to three months after the Tsunami much of the government’s mid-term first-aid had not even arrived in the effected areas. Financial economic starter-packages could not be paid as death-certificates could not be issued. Re-housing and repairs could not start as aid recipients and government donors could not agree on the number of houses affected. Loans on re-building small companies were not forthcoming as land-title deeds and other documents were destroyed and could not be replaced, and so on ...On the other hand, large scale loans for hotels and other tourist industries were easily accessible. Budgets for planning post-Tsunami reconstructions, like for example in Phang Nga (Khao Lak) Phuket and Krabi (Phi-Phi Islands) were quickly allocated. A trend became apparent: the higher the urban economic status of the affected area before the Tsunami, the more financial aid and other assistance was provided. Affected areas based on rural economies were mostly given over to the care of foreign national or international aid organizations ....” (TAW 2007e, 19)*

Phuket, Phang Nga and Krabi have all been declared special zones of tourism development under the Regional Development Plan 2005-2008. This has contributed to land in these provinces being in high demand, creating a rush of purchases raising land prices. In the light of this situation it is easy to predict that in the future confrontations between communities and land profiteers will be unavoidable.

The government initiated, for example, the Andaman Coast Tourism Recovery Project with the Designated Areas for Sustainable Tourism

Administration (DASTA)<sup>37</sup> being in charge of it. The Andaman Coast Tourism Recovery Project aims to identify areas that can become 'special zones' attractive for tourism. Entrepreneurs interested in involvement can present their project proposals at DASTA centers for consideration and advice. DASTA will issue a permit of compliance for identification purposes. The permit will be granted within 30 days. Interestingly, the government remains the principal capital investor for every project. As a result, the independent investor risks little in the event of failure. (Cf. TAW 2008c+f)

DASTA's objectives are officially declared to be to encourage and support people and communities to preserve and develop their local tourist attractions. It also encourages local organizations and local administrations to preserve their culture and folklore. Moreover, it aims to support tourism activities through adequate training and employment of local people. This is supposed to enhance the quality of their lives. Yet, theory and practice are two completely different matters.

This is evident in the projects given the go ahead that were opposed by local people. These projects have always favored urban style development and gave benefits only to tourism and to real estate property investors. Almost immediately after the Tsunami hit the Andaman coast, capital investment projects were launched in Khao Lak, Phang Nga province. This proved to foreshadow the large investment influx that took advantage of the situation. Inevitably, small local investors were not able to survive in Khao Lak or nearby areas.

The announcement of 'special zones for tourism' is not different from designating 'special economic zones'. There is no accountability of any type of outside agency. The real purpose of the project is for the government together with politicians, officers and capital investors to reap the benefits of the land. The natural resources pass into the hands of the capital investors rather than the locals. Government policies in Tsunami recovery and reconstruction have, hence, tended to be shaped in a way that benefited the urban economy, particularly the tourism industry; those people in government positions or with good relations to them; their networks and extended networks, all too often at the expense of the local population who had to struggle with the consequences and without any policies to support the recovery of their local rural economy.

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37 DASTA is under the authority of the Office of The Prime Minister.

The main problem of economic recovery in the affected area has not been a lack of funds for reconstruction. It was rather that the sharp economic division that already existed and has increasingly marginalized rural coastal communities' economies before the Tsunami was not addressed by the rehabilitation plans. The massive influx of donor capital and activities could have been sufficient to bridge the economic divide, had they been better allocated to the affected communities for their own planning, instead of being distributed through outsider dominated projects.

Instead:

- Traditional livelihoods remain under threat through land encroachment driven by the intrusion of the urban style economy.
- Tsunami recovery increases the pressure on natural resources, as locals have to compete with foreign investors over the use of their immediate ecologically Tsunami damaged environment.
- Economic recovery programs, like for example some vocational trainings that were offered after the Tsunami lacked measures to link those new skills with the urban style economy.
- New economic opportunities remain scarce. While the aid efforts focused on replacing and repairing fishing boats, as well as the tourism industry, women's livelihoods were neglected, for example those based on small food stalls. Occupational groups often lacked follow up measures to find a market for the products that could now be made.

That the economic divide was not sufficiently addressed in post-disaster management becomes also very evident in the fisheries industry. Although still a mainstay for many rural economies, here again, the focus was put on the rehabilitation of capital intensive, investment based operations instead of small scale labor intensive communal fishing. Quoting from the summary of the Action Aid People's Report "Fisheries-Based Livelihoods in the post-tsunami context" should suffice here:

- *"The major problems faced by the small scale fishers in the pre-tsunami period (declining fish catches, weakening access rights to the sea and land, changing trade context, marginalization of women and the poor, over-capitalization and increased cost of operations) were not addressed in post-tsunami livelihood support programs and some of the issues may even have been exacerbated by these programs.*

- *Small-scale fisheries and fish workers receive less attention from policy-makers who are more focused on privatization and increasing investments for faster economic growth.*
- *Macro-economic policy changes have negative implications for the local small-scale fishers.*
- *The policy processes – whether in the livelihood context under normal circumstances, or in the disaster management context – are top-down and effectively treat fishers as passive recipients rather than as active participants exercising their rights.*
- *There is a lack of attention given to poor fishing people and their needs, particularly women.*
- *Strategies tend to be piecemeal and focused on specific components rather than on the whole picture. People and livelihoods receive less attention than fish and technologies.*
- *Policies continue to ignore the existence of fisher folks' customary rights in the coastal areas.*
- *The existing fisheries' management policies – if properly implemented – have the potential to address many of the issues faced by the sector today.*
- *Post-tsunami, alienation of fishers from their habitats and fishing grounds increased, sometimes ostensibly for their own safety or livelihood support, but at times to make way for private investment in, for example, tourism.'* (Action Aid 2007c, 39)

#### **4.6. Empowering communities: Save Andaman Network and 'Tsunami Village' Bahn Nahm Khem**

Having described and analyzed shortcomings of Tsunami aid as well as persisting structural deficiencies, the question to be asked, should be: How to approach rehabilitation and development efforts, if structural conditions restrain, undermine or at the outset work against sustainable results thereof? How to achieve fair and sustainable results in an environment that is characterized by unfair socio-economic and political structures, PLUS international and national donor organizations' own agendas, needs, intentions, perceptions, hence expectations?

In spite of adversarial structural conditions, sometimes supported, though, by factors like the growing attention paid to the needs and grievances of local communities, there have been plenty of good examples among Southern Thai rehabilitation experiences. They can serve as role models or, at least, as starting points to investigate ways to bring about more positive development results in the future. Naturally, the following examples are

taken from the scope of partners in the Tsunami Aid Watch programme. This is by no means to say that the only good practices are to be found in our own surroundings, but it is a rather practical matter of drawing on our own experiences.

#### Save Andaman Network...

...has evolved as the best known local NGO player in the Tsunami impacted provinces along the Thai Andaman coast since the disaster struck on 26 December 2004. Immediately after the Tsunami, local NGOs that had been working with the small scale fisher-folk provided rapid assistance seeking refuges, searching for the missing, arranging funerals, mobilizing communities and establishing temporary shelters. Already, two days after the disaster, local NGOs formed 'The Coalition Network for Andaman Coastal Community Support', or in short: Save Andaman Network and some 35 NGOs from across the country formed "The Collaborative Network for the Rehabilitation of Andaman Communities and Natural Resources". This national network further expanded to include some 44 NGOs.<sup>38</sup>

Members of the NGOs involved realized very early on that many large agencies and international NGOs lack the flexibility and efficiency to deploy funds and provide relief in a timely manner. They saw uncoordinated efforts of multiple agencies and NGOs acting independently which resulted in manifold project overlaps and inefficient use of funds. At the same time, though, most small agencies and NGOs, whilst able to intervene flexibly, efficiently and rapidly, lacked the accountability and infrastructure demanded by donors.

Furthermore, many large agencies and NGOs focused on short-term relief only, e.g. supplying food, fishing equipment, fishing boats and building houses. They placed little emphasis on long-term relief and rehabilitation e.g. restoring livelihoods, developing communities and empowering communities for self governance. These challenges, coupled with insufficient knowledge of the needs of Tsunami affected communities, resulted in poor

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38 See a detailed list of the organizations involved, as well as of the supporting organizations from both private and public sectors in the attachment. Find additional information about Save Andaman Network in the forthcoming TAW publication "Evolving from the Waves: Future prospects and tasks for a post-Tsunami NGO" (TAW 2008h) and about SAN's project implementation in collaboration with their partner/member communities in "Building for the Future" (TAW 2008b); as well as on the website of the Sustainable Development Foundation:

[http://www.sdfthai.org/web\\_pages\\_tsunami/tsunami\\_upd\\_rep\\_overview.html](http://www.sdfthai.org/web_pages_tsunami/tsunami_upd_rep_overview.html)

deployment of funds and provision of relief that would create additional negative impact.<sup>39</sup>

Creating a network of NGOs, governmental and private sector organizations seemed for the participating members the best way to overcome the obstacles mentioned above. By leveraging the expertise and resources of over 40 different government and nonprofit organizations, the network could coordinate multiple interventions, organize the allocation of resources, minimize operational inefficiencies and maximize the value derived from donated funds.

The network took over an important translator and coordinator function, based on the principles:

- Community participation in the sense of the community setting up and managing their own projects
- Community rehabilitation
- Long-term sustainable development
- Turning crisis into opportunity

This has included:

- Proper needs assessments in accordance with the impacted population's views.
- Empowering communities for self governance
- First and foremost serving the interests of those who were threatened to be marginalized once again: the smallscale fisher-folk, migrant laborers, ethnic minorities, etc.
- Amplifying local voices with regard to how the immense sums of donation money should be spent. Taking as a point of departure: the donation money belongs to the recipients, with the goal of self administration and money channeling to be steered by the local population.
- Taking the time for a proper needs assessment, bringing communities together, empower them to manage the process by themselves, with the support of SAN field workers.
- Getting local expertise and local knowledge involved as the starting point for rehabilitation, instead of relying on external

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39 For more information about Save Andaman Network's underlying rationale, its goals, operating and implementation structure, see: [http://www.sdfthai.org/web\\_pages\\_tsunami/tsunami\\_upd\\_rep\\_overview.html](http://www.sdfthai.org/web_pages_tsunami/tsunami_upd_rep_overview.html)

experts without intimate knowledge of the area, the people and the prevailing structures.

They, hence, contributed to buffer the top-down approaches applied by various players, from the government and the army to international aid organizations. Since Save Andaman Network as a local organization does not exist outside the Thai social structure, they have surely also reproduced certain aspects of it. This refers to hierarchical chains of command, when e.g. channeling the aid through the SAN branches. This mostly excludes donor organizations sorting things out directly with the communities, while giving the leadership significant power within the NGO communities' relationships. While this could be criticized as the top-down approach of an alternative elite, it serves at the same time as another buffer against meddling with the communities by too many actors and SAN takes over certain responsibilities for longer-term success.

By providing local expertise and familiarity with the impacted communities and areas, they were predestined to contribute to more sustainable solutions than the 'quick fixes' of those who had to quickly spend budgets and deliver examples of achieved project goals.

SAN has considered building or repairing boats not only as a simple service or the delivery of goods. In line with fisher folk communities' ways of life, they have managed to understand it as a process that does not start with the actual building of something, but with getting people together, in order to make it a communal affair. Instead of individually building boats or ordering boats from whatever company, they set up communal shipyards that could after repairing the damage be used for longer term development as well. Save Andaman Network benefited from the gathered experiences of many NGO activists of many years of struggle and was, hence, prepared to identify at a very early stage the critical points in rehabilitation for the local communities. They have been involved with those communities, who became embroiled in land struggles, while other aid organizations would or could only take care of building houses when the land issue had already been sorted out. Through their expertise they were close to the actual needs of the communities, were aware of the political aspects and struggles involved in rehabilitation and were able to link the field work on the ground to advocacy on the national level.

If – and potentially how – Save Andaman Network continues to work in their target areas, thus transforming their Tsunami experiences into contributions for democratization of the longer term development process of the Andaman Coastal provinces, remains to be seen.<sup>40</sup>

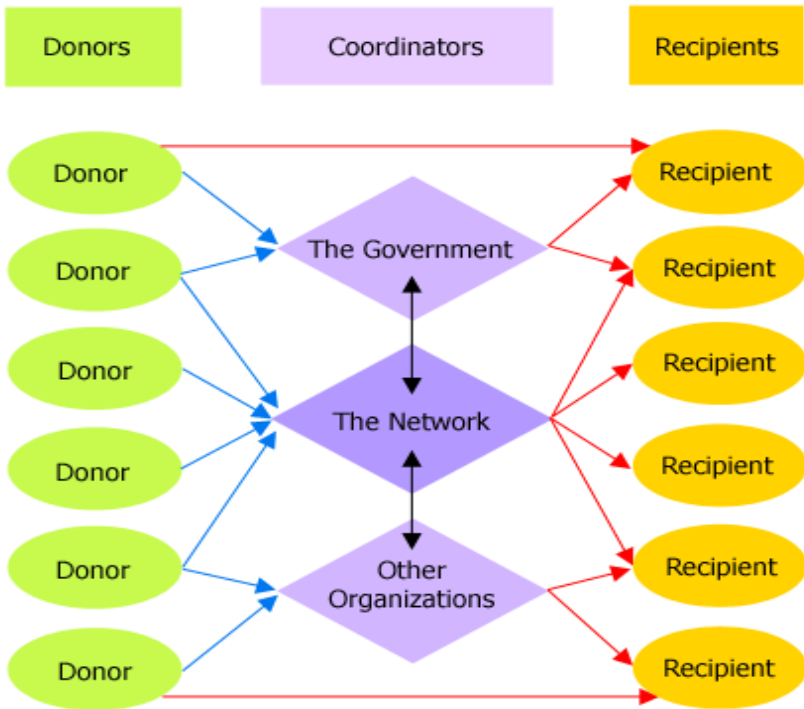


Figure 5: The role of Save Andaman Network

'Tsunami village' Bahn Nahm Khem...

*"The tsunami has given us ... a stronger community,"* Maitree Jongkraichak summarizes in a Bangkok Post article (5 January 2008) as the result of the disaster and more than three years rehabilitation experience in his community Bahn Nahm Khem in Phang Nga province. *"In the past, people in*

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40 These still open questions are the issue of the last forthcoming TAW publication 'Evolving from the Waves: Future prospects and tasks for a post Tsunami NGO' (TAW 2008h).

*Ban Nam Khem rarely talked to one another since we were from many different provinces and had diverse backgrounds. It was like we talked in different languages. The tsunami, however, brought our divided community together and has taught us that nothing is beyond our free will. And we are willing to learn from the past to stand on our own feet now and in the future."*

Bahn Nahm Khem had been the Southern Thai community hit the hardest by the December 2004 Tsunami, with more than 500 inhabitant's killed and large parts of the village wiped out. In the disaster aftermath a whole range of organizations, national and international, NGO and governmental, flooded the village with aid which was uncoordinated and distributed in an unfair way. Additional divisions were created in a village that had already seen significant segregation before. Some people received several fishing boats, while others received none. Some got tourist style bungalow houses; some got shoddy boxes built by the army.

The origins of changing things for the better lay in the getting together of the villagers to fight the lethargy brought about by passively waiting to be helped. Instead they started to gather to have coffee and discuss community matters, how things could be sorted out in a more appropriate way, as people urgently needed to be done.

Later on, some started to set up a community coordination center, in order to start taking things into their own hands. Luckily, the foundation for a community bank had already been laid before the Tsunami and thus could be quickly and successively implemented. The community coordination committee evolved as an **alternative power and decision making center** of grassroots (self) empowered people to the official Tambon Administrative Organization (TAO), dedicating their efforts to capitalize on the 'opportunity in crisis' for their community.<sup>41</sup>

At first, the self founded center served as a place for collaborating in solving problems that the community faced and planning activities. The center became an important source for donors and aid agencies to gain an insight into the real needs of the community, while the coffee club served as a meeting room where plans for occupational development, rehabilitation of

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41 A more detailed account of how self-awareness of the community and self-organization evolved, can be found in the TAW publication "Three Years of Tsunami Rehabilitation in Bahn Nahm Khem: Opportunity in Crisis" (TAW 2008g).

natural resources and the environment were discussed. Some members of the community set up a shipyard school to train people in boat building while providing new boats according to the needs of the community.

Assisted by Save Andaman Network, the community later on established their own relief distribution system and set up a revolving fund to pay for further development activities. The community demonstrated that it was perfectly able to manage the rehabilitation grants and to implement their own projects.

In the course of development, the agenda of the community has changed. While the housing and boat projects have been mostly completed, the focus shifted towards opening up new economic opportunities and developing the community. A disaster preparedness plan has been developed that takes the opposite approach to the governmental ideas. Created on the basis of local knowledge and/about local needs, it works bottom-up, demonstrating that communities are well able to deal with their own affairs, if given the opportunity and the resources necessary to do so. Besides, eco-tourism projects have been proposed to various donor organizations.<sup>42</sup> The community did not wait for approval, but began to turn their ideas into reality.

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<sup>42</sup> This includes a project for a cultural center located in a little lake, with surrounding mud huts as eco-friendly accommodation, and the Sustainable Community-Owned Professional Eco-Charters project that has been developed in collaboration with Tsunami Aid Watch and the community of Bahn Koh Muk, see also: "SCOPE-Charters" (TAW 2006).

## 5. Current conclusions from the on-going Thai post Tsunami recovery and rehabilitation process

### 5.1 Pitfalls of post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation aid

In previous chapters we have tried to show the multitude of actors involved in post-disaster rehabilitation, the complexity of factors involved in any attempt to achieve sustainability in recovery and also in development in general. We have shown that the success of any such attempt is largely down to the recognition of multiple expectation gaps, and then on the ability of any community and/or organization with strong communal links, from very early on in any recovery or rehabilitation process, to act and decide on its own behalf; as well as the flexibility of the donor organization to adapt its own delivery structure to communal needs.

Disaster aid, development and sustainability can, but do not always and surely not automatically, go hand in hand. Even with the best of intentions we have found in the post-Tsunami recovery case study of Thailand that some of the more important reasons that prevent successful aid and development management can be identified as follows:

1. Problems and issues of differing *perceptions* between all actors involved in post-disaster management and development in general
2. The essence of the differences in perception manifests itself in the *expectation gap*, which can never be completely closed.
3. Attempts to keep the expectation gap small are most often hindered by differing *time horizons* of the involvement of the cooperating actors.
4. Different time horizons are also at the root of distinct understandings in allegedly common concepts, in fact creating a *concept barrier* for such notions as friendship, aid, sustainability, need, timelines, justice, fairness etc.
5. Concerning sustainability, the local time horizons are always intricately interwoven with local *socio-economic and political structures* on both formal and informal levels.
6. The existing **socio-economic structures** are directly and indirectly closely inter-related with the *political structures*. Any real empowerment to capitalize on development opportunities to achieve sustainability depends on a thorough analysis of this interplay.

The resulting impact on aid and development is twofold, firstly on the goal, then on the implementation level. Goals tend to be defined and understood from the perceptions of the strongest players; implementation is often achieved contrary to the differences in perception and expectations of the weakest members in the aid chain. The weakest members, however, are most often the final recipients and beneficiaries in any disaster or development aid. Human interaction has a 'natural' tendency to favor the strongest partner in a relationship. In aid delivery, this can be self defeating.

In order to search for options to avoid this trap and strengthen the aid recipients' position in rehabilitation, we shall now present a somewhat idealized timeline of recovery and rehabilitation phases and corresponding governance requirements. We shall then concentrate on the dimension of communal (self) empowerment for the achievement of sustainable outputs; in order to conclude with some fundamental principles that we have identified drawing on the Tsunami Aid Watch experiences, as presented in this paper.

## **5.2. Phases of aid and post-disaster governance**

Is a community or organization with strong communal links able to act and decide on its own behalf from very early on in any recovery or rehabilitation process? Does a donor organization have the flexibility to adapt its own delivery structure to communal needs? Those issues are closely related to the question, how post-disaster governance works and should work, if sustainability and fairness are to be taken as seriously as short-term efficiency and effectiveness. Governance requirements vary at different points in (post-disaster) time.

Summarizing the experience of participating communities and extra-communal organizations, an ideal disaster management timeline would encompass a two step approach in six distinct phases. Each of the two steps would have its own particular approach towards governance to increase future prospects of true sustainability. The responsibility for the individual types of governance would rest with situation specific but differing proportions of responsibility between extra-communal and communal organizations (see graph below):

### Step 1: Emergency governance

We call this step emergency governance as most of the responsibility for the disaster management would rest with extra-communal organizations. It is divided into three phase as described below

*Phase 1: First Aid (hours – days):*

First Aid would be the phase immediately after a disaster has struck. Its main objectives are to stop people from dying, additional injury and/or sickness and to establish a *'first aid infrastructure'*, i.e. temporary structures to arrest any further deterioration of the situation.

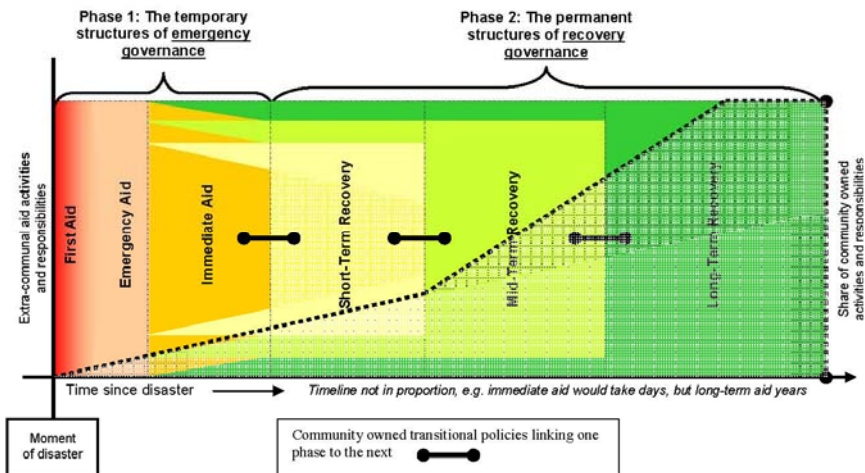
*Phase 2: Emergency Aid (days – weeks):*

The first aid phase blends seamlessly into the phase of emergency aid. The main objective would be to improve the situation to a point that disaster survivors start improving on their physical and mental health. Structures needed during this phase can be summarized as *'emergency infrastructure'* and would be strictly temporary.

*Phase 3: Immediate aid (weeks – months):*

The sole objective of this phase would be to further stabilize the situation through temporary reconstruction and– most importantly– to prepare for the following three recovery phases to come. Structures are still temporary; however, they would focus on empowering the survivors and their community to start taking responsibility and claiming ownership of future recovery and rehabilitation. Local human resources are for the first time developed beyond the disaster aftermath. Community owned policies are introduced to further define short-term, mid-term and long-term recovery visions, goals and activities. Structures introduced during this phase can be called *'reconstruction infrastructure'*.

Figure 6: Timeline of recovery and rehabilitation phases and governance modes



## Step 2: Recovery governance

### *Phase 4: Short-term recovery (months):*

With the beginning of short-term recovery, for the first time since the disaster the rebuilding of structures focuses on permanence and sustainability in at least three of its four aspects: economic, social and political. Structures introduced during this phase are called '*new (permanent) infrastructure*'. Their purpose is to build a physical, political and social foundation for the rehabilitation and recovery process to come under communal leadership and can then be owned by the community. Any remaining temporary governance structures left over from the short-term aid are dissolved and/or transformed into permanent communal institutions.

### *Phase 5: Mid-term recovery (years):*

The penultimate phase will allow the communities to completely take over the recovery process and to phase out any extra-communal involvement deriving from disaster aid. The ecology of the local environment - as the fourth aspect of sustainability - can now be approached and incorporated into mid- and long-term planning by the community. The mid-term recovery focuses on linking the new infrastructure with community centered governance.

### *Phase 6: Long-term recovery (years):*

During the last phase, the long-term recovery slowly changes into normal, non disaster related growth of the community, which is increasingly strengthened and expanded by integrating the newly established communal infrastructure and governance with other tasks and goals derived from outside the recovery process. Ideally, the community should achieve '*sustainable development*', i.e. an improved, normalized governance network and infrastructure that encompasses economical, ecological, social and political issues.

The ideal timeline as derived from the Tsunami Aid Watch experiences can only function if and when governance is treated and developed as an issue between equals. The stereotypical separation between Good Samaritan and disaster victim would have to be unanimously abandoned in favor of a perspective focusing on the 'opportunity in crises' as proclaimed in the Krabi declaration. This means that a concept and understanding of equality in aid would have to be fully introduced and incorporated into any cooperation frame and agreement between donors and aid recipients.

This is the usual situation in plenty of real world challenges where there are prevailing interest led politics and power relationships. And probably only a percentage of the people and organizations involved in disaster aid would subscribe to it. The concept is, after all, contrary to many helpers' self perception as 'the good Samaritan' and expectations of unconditioned gratitude from the side of disaster survivors. Those who agree with this paradigm can, nevertheless, try to act accordingly and strive to institutionally anchor the aid recipients' rights. They can contribute to strengthen their position in the multiple struggles they face in post-disaster situations.

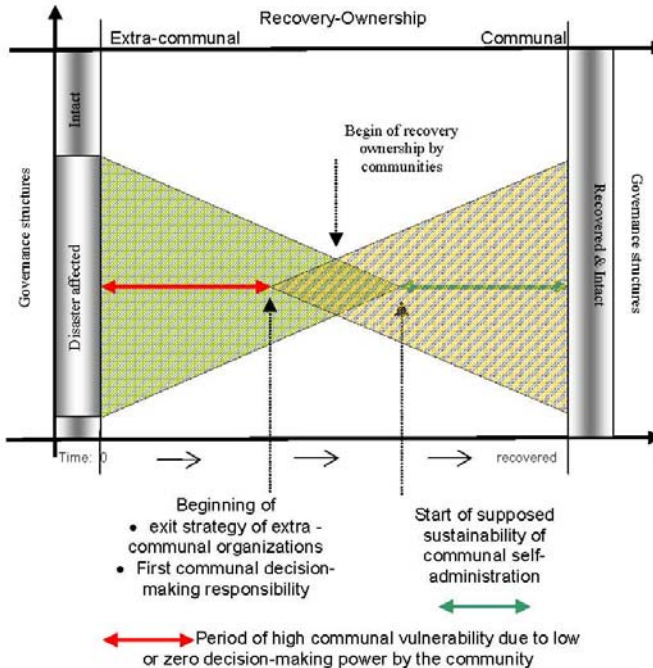


Figure 7: Governance recovery in post-disaster time (prevailing idea)

### 5.3. Local post-disaster governance and communal (self) empowerment

In a typical post disaster or development scenario, we find local socio-economic and political structures that are wholly or in part dysfunctional. To

(re)build local governance, extra-communal organizations<sup>43</sup> must enter the physical or decision making premises of a community to create temporary governance structures, until at a later stage the community is able to actively participate again. Until that time, the vulnerability of the community is very high, a fact which is acknowledged in all aid/development planning by actively incorporating the community at this stage in the decision making process. After some time, the community itself can claim ownership of the recovery or development process.

In the next step (of an ideal case), once extra-communal organizations have completely vacated their roles and positions in coordination and decision making placing them in their entirety into the hands of the community itself, sustainability is supposed to have been achieved. We have shown this outlook on disaster and development aid in the idealized process shown in Figure 7.

However, this is not what really happens. As we have seen in many examples in previous chapters, safeguards against failure to achieve sustainability do not really function well. In the case of Thailand, this is due to the overwhelming influence of the extra-communal organizations based on their political and economic clout. In the end, the need for governance structures in line with the visions of extra-communal organizations proves to be stronger than the actual communal need. Processes of communication, discussion and discourse fail to find a common language, to cross the concept barrier under the influence of adversarial power hierarchies. What is 'sustainable' for one group simply means 'sustained' for another. The definitions and concepts almost always followed in the end is that of the strongest partners in the disaster or development aid chains.<sup>44</sup>

Aid agencies are set to operate in line with their own objectives. They have to, as they are responsible for considerable budgets to aid in any disaster recovery. However, what we termed the 'dictate of the LogFrame' in the third chapter is greatly responsible for the inability to narrow down the expectation gaps. Aid projects are often designed based on perceptions literally a world apart. The rigidity of aid administration—introduced to stop

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43 These can be any organizations, governmental or non-governmental, national or international, foreign or local which are not from the existing governance structure of the community.

44 This fact is acknowledged in the intentionality debate which attributes success in sustainable development more often to coincidence than actual advanced planning.

misuse of funds– mostly will not allow LogFrames to be altered after the beginning of a project. Core decision making prerogatives are almost never given to the intended beneficiaries, for example the ability to entirely shift funds to other purposes other than those defined in the LogFrames; purposes that might be perceived as more urgent by the recipients of the aid. Thus, the true participation of the affected communities in defining recovery goals, indicators and fund use in order to achieve governance, is in almost all cases not possible. This is not due to the intentions of anyone involved, but the aid delivery structure itself.

Socio-economic and political structures define the true potential of a beneficiary to actively participate and influence disaster or development aid. For example, the main problem of economic recovery in the Tsunami affected area has hardly been a lack of funds for reconstruction. It was rather the sharp socio-economic and political divisions of already increasingly economically marginalized rural coastal communities before the Tsunami. The resulting economic and political isolation was not sufficiently addressed by the rehabilitation plans after the Tsunami. The massive influx of donor capital and activities could have been sufficient to bridge the economic divide, had they been better allocated to the affected communities for their own planning, instead of being distributed through outsider dominated projects. Instead, aid mostly benefited the stronger parties in the aid chain with the effect that:

- Traditional livelihoods remain under threat through land encroachment for tourism development driven by the intrusion of the urban-style economy.
- Tsunami recovery increases the pressure on natural resources, as locals have to compete with foreign investors over the use of their immediate ecologically Tsunami damaged environment.
- Economic recovery programs, like for example some vocational trainings that were offered after the Tsunami lacked measures to link those new skills with the macro, or as we call it in chapter 4, urban economy. Thus, new economic opportunities remain scarce.

#### **5.4. Re-construction is the construction of something new: Opportunity in crisis**

A fact that is often overlooked in disaster management is that at the level of a disaster, there is no such thing as a *re*-construction. Once communal structures have deteriorated beyond a certain point, human societies tend to

automatically fill the resulting structural vacuum or void, be it socially, economically, politically or ecologically. This means that the issue of ownership goes into a process of redefinition. New claims on old social, political, economic and ecological resources are being made; always resulting in the construction of a new status quo, with, hence, new social, political, economic and ecological demands on the remaining resources.

The period of redefinition is also one of high communal vulnerability as shown in the ideogram above. The outcome of the new distribution of resource ownership has a direct and very strong impact on the potential of survivors to construct a new future for themselves. It is not the amount of aid pumped into a disaster area– or development projects in general– but the ability of the evolving new structures and the resulting ‘communal constructs’ to allow survivors an ownership claim on and for the remaining resources to become an integrated part of their recovery process.

Two essential ingredients seemed to have worked as remedies in the Thai Tsunami recovery process. Whenever there was a minimum form of politicization of the recovery process and a (self) empowerment of disaster survivors, combined with decision making rights over the aid funds, enabled communities to be strong enough to resist pressures exerted on them by those intending to achieve a redistribution of resources. To acknowledge the fact that there is no *re*-construction, but only the construction of something new, we come to formulate the demand for disaster and development aid alike, that the weakest member by default becomes an equal economic and political power within the aid or development chain. Since this demand is opposed by interest driven policies and politics, the challenge ahead is the struggle of likeminded people for an institutionalized empowerment and of aid recipients, starting from the Right to Aid and the Right of Self Determination.

For such an approach to work, two sets of preconditions seem to be unalterable:

- 1. Understanding of the political dimension of recovery and rehabilitation aid delivery and the empowerment of aid recipients and local communities.**

Politicization, in the sense of understanding the power relations in a post-disaster context and empowering disaster survivors accordingly, is needed from the very beginning of aid delivery. This is about decision making and

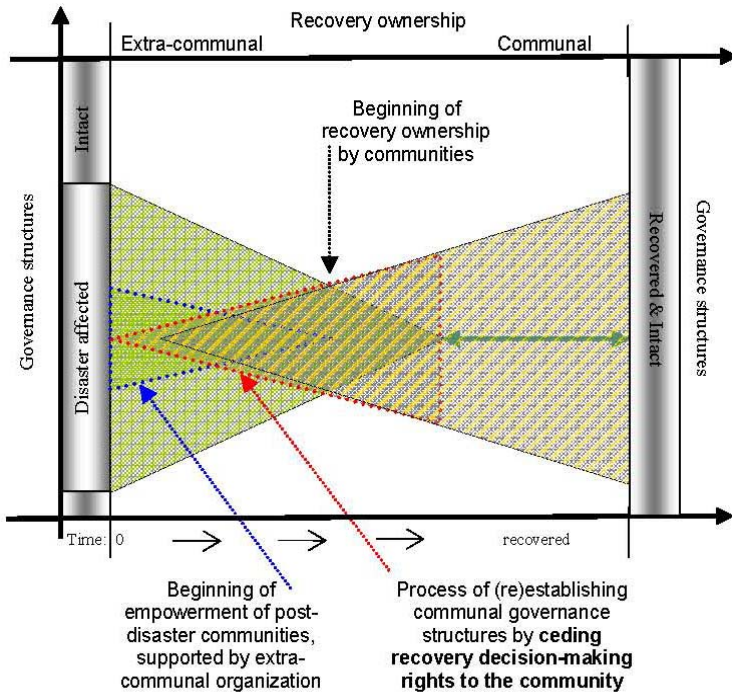
administrative structures, as well as setting up agencies to face the challenges of profiteering by the more powerful from early on.

Even in the first few hours after a disaster has struck, there will have been some form of self help arising from the devastation. This already constitutes the first post-disaster governance structure. It is more than likely that extra-communally led governance structures will initially replace this core group of leaders emerging in the wake of the disaster. Nevertheless, the process of empowering disaster survivors and post-disaster communities can be supported by offering them an opportunity to participate in attempts and activities to make the aid process open, to keep it adaptable and to empower and criticize its development over time. Conscious empowerment measures ought to be employed and continued, at least until the communities are able and willing to take ownership of their own recovery process, with the share of community owned activities and responsibilities being equal or larger than the extra-communally led ones. (See Figure 8 (ideogram) below).

**2. The right of the aid recipients to - at some point - decide on how to use funds donated to or reserved for them has to become an inalienable fixture of aid delivery concepts.**

This is probably the most crucial demand resulting from our experience with the Tsunami recovery: All donations for disaster survivors ought to belong to the survivors. This is not yet prescribed in law and instead donor organizations have to administer donations openly, publicly and in line with donor intention.

This demand does not mean that all funds should be distributed in cash to survivors (beyond what is absolutely necessary that is). Freely giving away unlimited amounts of money would have rather the opposite effect and worsen the situation. As we have described above, a disaster affected area is in a process of redefining ownership.



*Figure 8:* Governance recovery in post-disaster time (proposed concept)

To develop just and fair indicators to find out who is going to get how much, would be impossible and result in many potential conflicts in the community.

However, the process of empowerment, ideally self-empowerment, should go together with a gradual process of shifting and ceding all decision making rights concerning funds and their use to the actual target group of disaster or development aid. We have seen that the economic interest and the economic potential of outsiders define their political power in terms of asserting their own interests. We have described how the extended period of communal vulnerability originates in the rush to reclaim ownership rights to resources after a disaster. As a consequence, if we want affected communities to be able to assert their own interests in the recovery process, we have to empower them politically by empowering them economically. This is, we believe, the intention of most individual donors: they want to enable victims to fight for survival and thus transcend their status as

'victims'. Any aid or development processes would have to acknowledge this fundamental motive to help others.

Economic and political empowerment is not only achieved by cash or money in accounts. For the sustainability of any human community, a functioning economy based on resources is paramount. As the remaining resources after a disaster are contested by outsiders, the ability to claim ownership over these resources will give any surviving community political clout and power. To decide on the timing of this economic empowerment, donors and communities should get together to formulate a road-map with detailed benchmarks. After all, you don't rescue someone from a car accident and then let him drive the ambulance himself; but you also don't keep a broken leg in a cast for longer than necessary.

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## Attachment

### About Save Andaman Network (SAN)

On 28<sup>th</sup> December 2004, just two days after the Tsunami had swept into the communities of the Andaman Coast, a group of NGOs and the Network of Organizations for Public Benefit of the Southern Provinces in Thailand (including the Federation of Southern Fishermen, the NGO Coordinating Committee on Development, Community Organization Development Institute (CODI South), Community Development Project in Southern Thailand, the Public Life Research and Workshops; Peaceful Livelihood in Southern Thailand Project and Friends of Andaman) met and discussed what to do after the disaster at the offices of the traditional fishery association in Trang province. They all realized by this time that the Tsunami had caused such massive destruction that they were not able to rely on any single or small group of organizations in order to deal with the recovery task. Based on this understanding, Save Andaman Network (SAN) was founded with more than 40 constituent organizations that dealt with communal and natural rehabilitation throughout Thailand, while the NGO Coordinating Committee on Development, the Foundation for Children, The Siam Cement Foundation, and Sustainable Development Foundation worked alongside as supporting and coordinating units in the affected areas.

<b>Principles and Goals of Save Andaman Network</b>		
<b>Principles</b>	<b>Objectives and implementation procedures</b>	<b>Long term result</b>
Community participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SAN enhances communities to generate their own rehabilitation projects.</li><li>• Currently, SAN with their staff and volunteers has had experience in working with 189 Tsunami affected communities.</li><li>• SAN supports communities to be able to develop their own projects.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communities should have ownership of their own self sustaining rehabilitation projects.</li><li>• Communal strength will be created based on the principles of democracy and good governance.</li><li>• In the future, communities will cooperate for development and</li></ul>

		problem solving.
Communal rehabilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAN gives first aid and other relief for affected communities.</li> <li>• SAN assists in the recovery of communities until they can manage their own projects.</li> <li>• SAN helps to improve livelihoods and quality of life for communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New shipyards supported by SAN help communities by building and repairing boats for the long term.</li> <li>• SAN helps to develop and strengthen livelihood skills for the communities.</li> </ul>
Long-term sustainable development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAN supports long-term development projects for the affected communities.</li> <li>• SAN helps communities in debt management.</li> <li>• SAN supports communal funds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAN assists self – governing and managed communities.</li> <li>• In principle debts in communities should be reduced in number and amount. Help individuals to have more discipline in paying back loans.</li> <li>• Funds communities can manage.</li> </ul>
Turning crisis into opportunities	<p>SAN turns crisis into an opportunity, by correcting the following problems that existed before the Tsunami;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land ownership conflicts</li> <li>• Consumption</li> <li>• Environmental degradation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities should have legal land title deeds.</li> <li>• Communities managing natural resources and preserving their environment based on sustainability.</li> </ul>

**Save Andaman Network** with its supporting organizations and alliances has worked on rehabilitating 121 Tsunami affected communities. Among them were 22 communities severely damaged, whilst another 99 were partly damaged mainly to their boats and houses.

SAN helped to construct 32 communal shipyards which repaired 1,406 boats. It also supplied 2,920 units of various types of fishing equipment for the affected fishermen.

412 houses have been built or repaired.

At present, SAN is involved in helping to develop post-Tsunami rehabilitation into sustainable development by focusing on the communal economy, preserving coastal natural resources and establishing Tsunami early warning systems.

Tsunami rehabilitation centers established by SAN in the affected communities learned a number of lessons. The communities equipped with SAN rehabilitation centers are at the core of implementation work for rehabilitation projects. SAN also has both full time and part time workers who come from the business sector and civil society to help in the affected communities. Regarding the recovery of the affected communities as a cooperative task, all parties participated together without conflict or boundaries between each other. For this reason, six months after the Tsunami, more than 70% of the work expected to be achieved was accomplished, while 90% was completed within 12 months.

**SAN has four main member organizations:**

- The Federation of Southern Traditional Fishermen
- NGO Coordinating Committee on Development (NGO CODI South)
- The Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI South)
- The Community Development Project in Southern Thailand, known locally as Dab Ban Dab Muang-Rien Ru Dee Tee Pak Tai Project.

Below is a list of organizations and individuals who have provided support to local fishing communities through the offices and work of Save Andaman Network:

Action Aid International-Asia , ALLEN P. DE CLEENE, American Jewish World Service (AJWS), ANTON PAAR, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), Bank of New York 1-212-527-3100, Cogins Germany Ltd., Direct Relief International, Dynamo Windrad e.V. 34121 Kassel/Germany, Ernst & Young Limited, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Hawaii Association Of International Buddhist Chaminade University, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC), JOAN

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General Donors included:

Alternative Agriculture Network (AAN), Banthad Hill Range Reservation Network, The Siam Cement Group and Siam Cement Foundation, CHARM project, Federation of Southern Fisherfolk, The Stock Exchange of Thailand – SET, Kasikorn Bank, Phatra Securities Public Company Limited, Cement Thai Sales and Marketing CO., LTD. and Cement Thai Home Mart Sale Representatives, Toyota Motor Thailand Co., Ltd., Thai MMA Co., Ltd., The Siam Nawaloha Foundry Co.,Ltd., The Nawaloha Industry Co., Ltd., Plan Publishing Co.,Ltd., Thai Engineering Products Co., Ltd., Millennium Steel Public Company Limited, Siam Mitsui PTA CO., LTD., The Siam Kubota Industry Co., Ltd., Siam Furukawa Co., Ltd., Michelin Siam Co., Ltd., The Siam United Steel (1995) Co., Ltd., Siam gypsum industry CO.,LTD., Siam at Industry CO., LTD., Siam Yamato Steel Co., Ltd., ISIN TAKAOKA FOUNDRY (Bang Pakong) Co., Ltd., Kasikorn Public Company Limited, KGI (Thailand) Public Co., Ltd., Credit Swiss First Boston Co., Ltd. (Thailand), SICCO Securities Public Co., Ltd., Seamico Securities Plc., DBS VICKERS Securities (Thailand) Co., Ltd., SCB Securities Co., Ltd., Thanachart Securities Public Co.,Ltd., BFIT Securities Public Company Limited, TSFC SECURITIES CO., LTD., Macquarie Securities (Thailand) LIMITED, APAX Securities CO., LTD., Ayudhya Securities (Thailand) PLC., Kim Eng Securities (Thailand) PLC., Kiatnakin Securities CO., LTD., Globlex Securities CO., LTD., J.P. Morgan Securities (Thailand) CO., LTD., CLSA Securities (Thailand) CO., LTD., SYRUS Securities (Thailand) PLC., Trinity Securities Securities (Thailand) PLC., Tisco Securities Co., Ltd., TSEC Securities Co., Ltd., Siam City Securities Co., Ltd., Siam City Securities PLC., BT Securities Co., Ltd., Prudent Siam Securities Co., Ltd., Capital Nomura Securities Co., Ltd., Far East Securities Company Limited, Finansa Securities Company Limited, Phillip Securities (Thailand) PLC., Phatra Securities

(Thailand) PLC., United Securities (Thailand) PLC., UBS Securities (Thailand) PLC., UOB Securities (Thailand) Company Limited, ACL Securities CO., LTD., In television Securities PLC., Asia Plus Securities PLC., Adkinson Securities PLC., Bahn Koh Lom, Bahn Nahm Pling, Bahn Nahm Sai and Bahn Suan Plu, Tambon Thalung, Amphoe Hadyai, Songkhla Province, The Forest and Land Network, North Eastern Thailand, Anonymous Muslim donor, 14tula foundation, Community Organizations Development Institute (CODI), Federation of Thai Capital Market Organizations, YMCA-Chiang Mai, Thailand, Thai Association in Ottawa/Canada, The Securities Analysts Association (SAA), Association of Investment Management Companies (AIMC), Association of Securities Companies, Thai Investigators Association, Thai Health Promotion Foundation, The National Health Commission office, The National Health Security office...

...not to be mentioned other public help organizations and individual donors...

## **Publications of Tsunami Aid Watch**

### **Forthcoming publications**

1. Evolving from the Waves: Future prospects and tasks for a post-Tsunami NGO. By Phakphoom Withanthirawat.
2. Opportunity in crisis. Three years of Tsunami rehabilitation in Bahn Nahm Khem. Compiled by the community of Bahn Nahm Khem, written by Somsak Suriyamonthon.

### **Previously published**

1. TSUNAMI. A study on disaster response in Sri Lanka, with a contribution on the situation in Thailand by Karl Segschneider, Director of the TAW team, published in cooperation with Heinrich Böll Foundation, Brot für die Welt and medico international, July 2006
2. SCOPE-Chartes. Sustainable Community Owned Professional Eco-Chartes. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai, December 2006. ISBN 978 974 88189 7 9
3. Renewable Energy Options on Islands in the Andaman Sea. A feasibility study for hybrid renewable energy/diesel systems in two Tsunami impacted communities. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2007. ISBN 978 974 7093 51 3
4. Seal of Fair Recovery (SoFaR). A support tool for post disaster rehabilitation. A concept paper – Siegel „Fairer Wiederaufbau“. Zur Unterstützung des Wiederaufbaus nach Katastrophen. Ein Konzeptpapier. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2007. ISBN 978 974 8266 12 1
5. Tsunami: CROSS-Effects? Christian Religious Organizations' Support and its Socio-cultural Effects on aid recipients in Tsunami Rehabilitation. A case study at Thungwa, Thabtanwan and Nahm Khem villages of Phang Nga's Takua Pa district. By Pikula 76 Sithiprasertkula, in cooperation with Save Andaman Network, edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2007. ISBN 978 974 8410 258
6. 78 Weeks later: A descriptive, quantitative and qualitative summary after the Tsunami in Thailand. By Karl Segschneider and Walaitat Worakul, edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2007. ISBN 978 974 8410 24 1
7. The Tsunami Early Warning System in Thailand. A resource book, including a synopsis of comments by Tsunami impacted

- communities 30 months after the disaster. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2007. ISBN 978 974 8418 26 1
8. Andaman Communal Development and the Tsunami. Part 1: The origins and culture of the Morgan Sea Gypsies. By Sumroeng Choeychuenjit. Part 2: Changing Coastal Ways of Life. By Somyot Tolang. In cooperation with Save Andaman Network. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2008. ISBN 978 974 13 8162 3
  9. The Ecology and Environment of Bahn Nahm Kehm Three Years after the Tsunami. By Thiwawan Chaikao, Karl Segschneider and Romlee Maeroh. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2008. ISBN: 978 974 05 1622 4
  10. Building for the Future: A communal approach after the Tsunami. Case study 1: Building houses. By Chalinee Sathanboa. Case study 2: Establishing and managing community shipyards. By Witthaya Aphorn. In cooperation with Save Andaman Network. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2008. ISBN 987 974 8410 241
  11. Tsunami Impact: The world of Morgan, Morglan and Urak Lawoi sea gypsies after the waves. By Sumroeng Choeychuenjit. In cooperation with Save Andaman Network. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2008. ISBN: 978 974 05 4446 3
  12. Communities in Limbo: Land profiteering after the Tsunami. By Sayamol Kaiyoorawong, Somyot Tolang and Dawan Sanlee. Edited by TAW, Chiang Mai 2008.

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