



Early Recovery Cluster



Syria

The vision of the Global Cluster for Early Recovery (GCER) is to “ensure holistic and system-wide responses that include national and local actors to improve aid effectiveness, reduce vulnerability to shocks and to pave the way for sustainable development by strengthening linkages between humanitarian and development frameworks”.⁵ The GCER is led by a strategic advisory group, with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) acting as the chair, and ActionAid, Danish Refugee Council, the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), IOM, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNICEF, World Food Programme (WFP), and the Swedish Agency for Social Protection and Preparedness as members.⁶ As early recovery is cross-cutting and looks different in every situation, interventions can be integrated into other active clusters or can be implemented as a stand-alone cluster under a different name. For example, the Early Recovery Cluster has been named “Return, Reintegration, and Recovery” in Sudan, or the “Community Restoration Cluster” in Pakistan.⁷ It is the humanitarian coordinator and humanitarian country team’s decision to determine whether existing clusters are meeting specific early recovery needs, or whether a stand-alone cluster should be created to ensure these needs are being met.⁸

GENDER EQUALITY IN EARLY RECOVERY

Emergencies exacerbate pre-existing inequalities, but they also present a unique opportunity to turn pre-existing gender roles, stereotypes, and inequalities on their head. Life as we know it is completely changed during a disaster or a crisis; lives, homes, jobs and routines are all lost. The early recovery stage can be a pivotal moment where humanitarian actors can conduct a gender power analysis to assess the needs, skills, and limitations of women, men, boys, and girls and act in a way to promote gender equality: “build back better” socially and in a rights-based manner. The Early Recovery Cluster takes a ‘people-centred approach’ that recognizes that “a person’s gender, age, and other diverse characteristics have a significant impact on the way they experience emergencies and access assistance.”⁹ The people-centred approach aims to achieve meaningful participation of affected populations, designs a response to these needs to minimize negative consequences, and integrates them into the response to ensure dignity and capacity to survive are strengthened.¹⁰

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE EARLY RECOVERY CLUSTER

- Cash-for-care work where women are paid for taking care of their children, the elderly, the injured, and the sick, highlights the economic role and importance this plays especially if their unpaid care work burden increases during a disaster;
- Child care that is made available to women to participate in recovery activities;
- Engaging local actors, especially women's groups and networks created by impacted groups responding to a disaster, and linking them to recovery phases to maintain decision-making power, local perspectives, and to increase capacity; and
- Needs assessments during a response that ask communities to consider immediate needs as well as needs envisioned in the future for better planning.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND BEST PRACTICES

- Ensure that early recovery activities that are often immediate livelihood support (e.g. rebuilding roads, markets, etc.) include participation of women and girls. Resilience building after a disaster without including women and girls risks exacerbating gender inequality;
- Conduct a market analysis of needs, and design

- income-generating programming and support accordingly: avoid “pre-packaged” provision of skills and training that may glut the market with too many people delivering similar services (e.g. tailoring, hairdressing, mechanics, carpentry);
- Advocate for preparedness (pre-disaster) activities to take place in disaster-prone communities to strengthen gender sensitive response and early recovery activities post-disaster;
- Always identify existing capacities in the impacted group to reinforce and build these rather than duplicate and decrease recovery effort capacities;
- Ensure that activities undertaken in a response do not lead to risks to early recovery in the future (e.g. increased tensions in a community). This includes a coordination and communication role across all clusters during a response. Additionally, a conflict sensitive approach should also be in place;
- Encourage communication and collaboration between development and humanitarian actors (both locally and globally) for better information sharing, lessons learned, etc., during the response and early recovery stages; and
- It is difficult to identify disaster start and end dates. It is therefore encouraged that donors allocate flexible funding during the response/recovery spectrum that is sometimes nonsequential and fluid, and discourage linear funding.

5. <http://earlyrecovery.global/about>

6. <http://earlyrecovery.global/about>

7. <http://earlyrecovery.global/integrating-early-recovery>

8. <http://earlyrecovery.global/content/e-learning-early-recovery-humanitarian-action>, Module 3

9. <http://earlyrecovery.global/about-page/people-centered-humanitarian-action>

10. <http://earlyrecovery.global/about-page/people-centered-humanitarian-action>

