Do they take the Advice? The Utilization of the TEC's Recommendations on the International Tsunami Response on Local Capacities in Aceh, Indonesia

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Abstract

Guaranteeing the quality of the humanitarian sector has been challenging for some time. Several initiatives took place to enhance the performance in the field. Nevertheless reaching standards and avoiding mistakes is still not an organization's forte. So far, evaluation is the main tool for assessing the quality of humanitarian programmes that are providing accountability and the opportunity for learning from weak performance.

But the added value of an evaluation is not always appreciated. Often it is seen as an additional burden to answer donor's request and a tool for destroying the organization's reputation. Change is rarely seen after conducting evaluations. Therefore, it is often assumed that an evaluation has no added value.

This study aims to investigate an evaluation's utilization. The case selected is the Joint Evaluation of the international response to the Indian Ocean tsunami carried out in autumn 2005 in Aceh, Indonesia. The focus lies rather on its facilitation of learning than on providing accountability. The following study will asses to what extend the recommendations of the evaluation have been used and find out if the humanitarian performance improved.

Key Words: evaluation, quality, learning, local capacities, Tsunami Evaluation Coalition.

Resumen

Garantizar la calidad de la acción humanitaria viene siendo un reto desde hace ya tiempo. Se han llevado a cabo diversas iniciativas para mejorar la actuación en este ámbito. Sin embargo, alcanzar los estándares y evitar errores no es aún el punto fuerte de la organización. Hasta ahora, la evaluación es la principal herramienta para valorar la calidad de los programas humanitarios que cumplan con la rendición de cuentas y la oportunidad de aprender de los malos resultados. No obstante, no siempre se aprecia el valor añadido de la evaluación. Más bien se suele considerar una carga adicional para dar respuesta a la solicitud de los donantes y una herramienta para destruir la reputación de la organización. En contadas ocasiones se aprecia algún cambio tras las evaluaciones. Por lo tanto, se suele asumir que la evaluación no tiene ningún valor añadido. Este estudio tiene como objetivo investigar la utilización de la evaluación en un caso concreto. El caso seleccionado es la Evaluación Conjunta de la respuesta internacional al tsunami acaecido en el Océano Índico en otoño de 2005 en Aceh, Indonesia. La atención se centra más en la facilitación del aprendizaje que la rendición de cuentas. El siguiente estudio evaluará hasta qué punto se han utilizado las recomendaciones obtenidas de la evaluación y determinará si se ha producido una mejora en los resultados de la acción humanitaria.

Palabras clave: evaluación, calidad, aprendizaje, capacidades locales, Coalición de Evaluación del Tsunami.

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Introduction

Background: The Disaster and the Response

In the early morning on 26 December 2004, an earthquake in the Indian Ocean measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale shook the northeast coast of Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam (Aceh) on the island of Sumatra, Indonesia. The earthquake caused tsunami waves up to 12 metres high which reached the region within a few minutes later and led to a death toll of about 150,000 people, and to a displacement of about 700,000 people. Among the 14 countries hit by the series of tsunamis, Indonesia as the closest country to the epicentre was the most affected. Apart from the immense loss of human lives the damage to the local economy, damage to infrastructure and administration was unprecedented[2].

Apart from being faced with a natural disaster on an enormous scale, the humanitarian community had to take into account that this region was affected by thirty years of conflict between the government and the armed liberation group called the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM, the Free Aceh Movement). For this reason the presence of international organizations (IOs)[3] was very limited. On 15 August 2005 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the 2 parties bringing peace to the region.

Accompanied by an enormous attention by the media, the international response was supported by an exceptional generosity from every part of the world. The funds raised and the aid provided during the first months after the tsunami were never seen before. Due to this unprecedented response, a high standard of accountability was required and a good opportunity for learning by the international humanitarian community given.

Defining the problem

To assess the response to a disaster, evaluations have to be carried out. Following the example set by the Joint Evaluation of

Emergency Assistance to Rwanda (JEEAR) in the mid-1990s, the idea to form the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC) in order to realize the implementation of the Joint Evaluation of the international response to the Indian Ocean tsunami was born[4]. With the aim to evaluate key parts of the relief and recovery phase, the evaluation should show how the tsunami response has proceeded so far. Beside many examples of good practices in emergency response, the reports show several weaknesses in the agencies business, despite the generous funding. Many actions did not work out or even contributed to worsen the situation.

About 4 years have passed since the evaluation reports were published. Many examples of poor quality were revealed from the relief and recovery phase. Numerous recommendations were made in order to do better in the ongoing and the future disaster relief and recovery activities.

The literature and different experts such as Peta Sandison state that "[a]lthough evaluations are generally successful in identifying lessons and building institutional memory, only a minority of evaluations are effective at introducing evident changes or improvements in performance"[5]. In general, the literature describes an "inconsistent and, in some cases, a dismal record of evaluation use"[6]. The ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies states that the "[l]ack of use of evaluation findings and recommendations has been a concern for evaluation managers for some time"[7].

Research Question & Sub-Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to assess if the statements mentioned above also apply to the TEC. Therefore, it will be triangulated if the TEC recommendations have been utilized by the stakeholders in order to improve the international assistance. The focus will lie on the recommendations affecting the capacities of local actors mainly stated in the Thematic Evaluation Impact of

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[2] Masyrafah, Harry and McKeon, Jock, (2008): *Post-Tsunami Aid Effectiveness in Aceh. Proliferation and Coordination in Reconstruction*, 1st ed., Wolfensohn Centre for Development, Washington, p. 1.

[3] In this study the notion 'international organization' refers to both INGOs and UN agencies.

[4] In the following the abbreviation "TEC" will relate to the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition including the Joint Evaluation of the international response to the Indian Ocean tsunami.

[5] Sandison, Peta, "The utilization of evaluations", *ALNAP Review of Humanitarian Action. Evaluation utilization*, 1st ed., 2008, p. 90.

[6] *Ibíd.*, p. 90.

[7] ALNAP (2006): *Evaluating humanitarian action using the OECD-DAC criteria. An ALNAP guide for humanitarian agencies,* 1st ed., Overseas Development Institute, London, p. 16.

the tsunami response on local and national capacities[8], as well as in the Synthesis Report and further 4 thematic evaluations.

The research questions are the following:

Main Research Question
To what extend did the recommendations of the TEC related to local capacities influence the international tsunami response on local capacities in Aceh?

Sub-Research Question 1
What defines the TEC and what do the evaluation reports recommend to improve the international assistance on local capacities?

Sub-Research Question 2
What kind of local capacities were in place in Aceh before and immediately after the tsunami, and how were they developed?

Sub-Research Question 3
How were the recommendations of the TEC related to local capacities used, in order to improve the international tsunami response on local capacities in Aceh?

Structure & Justification

The study consists of 3 main parts which are the introduction, the core and the conclusion. The introduction opens with a brief overview of the disaster and the response, and then proceeds with the definition of the problem. Then the main research question and the sub-research questions are presented, which will be treated one after another in the main part of the study. Following the research questions, the reader will find an explanation and the justification for the chosen structure of the study. Then the methodology used in each sub-research question will follow. Finally, the theoretical framework is presented to provide the reader with the necessary theoretical knowledge on the two concepts, evaluation and capacity and their relation to each other. The conclusion aims to summarize the main parts of the study and to respond to the main research question related to the use of the evaluation's recommendations.

At this point the author would like to note that the present work is not the complete version. This thesis had to be shortened due to the publisher's requirements.

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[8] Scheper, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*
[9] UNDP (2005): *Capacity Assessment Report of Civil Society Organizations in Aceh* (Draft).

Methodology

The chance to take part in the joint research project between the NOHA Master's programme in International Humanitarian Action and their partner university the Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Yogyakarta, Indonesia was unique. It offered the possibility to do research for the Master's thesis in the field, and hence the possibility to meet key persons in Yogyakarta, Jakarta and Aceh.

Sub-Research Question 1

In order to answer to the first sub-research question, the synthesis report of the Joint Evaluation of the international response to the Indian Ocean tsunami and the thematic evaluation Impact of the tsunami response on local and national capacities served as the main resources. From here all necessary information was collected in order to provide a comprehensive answer to the question.

Sub-Research Question 2

The second sub-research question is treated through a broad review on existing literature that assesses the local capacities in Aceh before and immediately after the tsunami. The 2005 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) capacity assessment report of the civil society in Aceh served as the main source[9].

Sub-Research Question 3

The third sub-research question is responded through assessments and analysis. The study focuses on the performance of the international actors on field level in the time after publishing the reports until mid-2010. In order to triangulate if the recommendations were used by the IOs semi-structured interviews were developed and conducted with employees (local, national or international) working for IOs during the recovery and reconstruction phase. In order to triangulate the statements of the respondents of the IOs local organizations and the claim-holders

in Aceh were interviewed. The data of each group is presented, analyzed and summarized with regard to the respective recommendations in the core part of the study. All in all twenty-four people were interviewed, fourteen from IOs, 10 from local organizations, the local Red Cross, the local government and local people involved in the recovery and reconstruction phase of the response to the disaster.

Table 1
Interviewees

International	INGO	• CAFOD • Caritas Germany • CWS (2) • Oxfam (2) • Save the Children
	UN	• UNDP (3) • UNRC/HC
	Red Cross	• IFRC • American Red Cross • Red Cross (Anonym)
Local	Local actors	• Community Leaders (2) • Teachers
	CSO	• WALHI Aceh • Center of Community Development and Education • Indonesian Society for Disaster Management • Organization for Social Economic Development and Environment • Organization for Disaster Risk Reduction
	Red Cross	• Indonesian Red Cross
	Government	• Social Department of Government in Aceh

1. Theoretical Framework

In order to facilitate the readers understanding of the study, a theoretical framework is needed. It aims to give an overview of the most important concepts used and their presumed relationship to each other. Therefore this section reviews 2 distinct literatures: one on the utilization of evaluation and one on ca-

pacity. After the discussion of both concepts, the connections between the 2 are discussed.

1.1. The Concept of Evaluation

The literature on evaluation is highly developed, providing a broad quantity of documents on every subtopic. As the focus of this study lies on the utilization of evaluation more details will be given of this subtopic. Nevertheless the section will give a general overview of evaluation.

DEFINITION OF EVALUATION

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) suggested the following definition of evaluation which has been accepted by all major agencies:

Evaluation is the systematic and objective assessment of an ongoing or completed project, programme or policy, its design, implementation and results.

The aim is to determine the relevance and fulfilment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. An evaluation should provide information that is credible and useful, enabling the incorporation of lessons learned into the decision-making process of both recipients and donors.

Evaluation also refers to the process of determining the worth or significance of an activity, policy or program[10].

According to ALNAP the evaluation in humanitarian action is:

A systematic and impartial examination of humanitarian action intended to draw lessons to improve policy and practice, and enhance accountability. It has the following characteristics: i). it is commissioned by or in cooperation with the organization(s) whose performance is being evaluated; ii). it is undertaken either by a team of non-employees (external) or by a mixed team of non-employees (external) and employees (internal) from the commissioning organization and/or the organization being evaluated; iii). it assesses policy and/or practice against recognised criteria (e.g., efficiency, effectiveness/timeliness/coordination, impact, connectedness, relevance/appropriateness, coverage, coherence and as appropriate, protection); and, iv). it articulates findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations[11].

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[10] OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation (n.d.): *Evaluating development co-operation. Summary of key norms and standards*, 2nd ed., OECD/ Development Assistance Committee (DAC), n.p., p. 4.

[11] ALNAP (n.d.): *Evaluation of Humanitarian Action (EHA). Course Reference Manual*, n.ed., Overseas Development Institute, London, p. 169.

AN EVALUATION'S UTILIZATION

Spanning over 4 decades, different theories on the utilization of evaluations and the factors which may influence an evaluation have been discussed. A vast amount of theoretical literature was developed. The following section will give a brief description of what an evaluation's utilization determines.

Fig. 1
"Utilizing" Evaluation[12]

"I can honestly say that not a day goes by when we don't use those evaluations in one way or another."

Written by M. M. Rogers and illustrated by Lawson Sworh

One of the most common misconceptions about evaluation is that the process is finished when the final report arrives on the project leader's desk. In fact, the final report represents the completion of only the first two-thirds of a process whose main benefits are packed into the final third. [...] The latter third of the evaluation process focuses upon the use of the recommendations and conclusions[13].

A Definition

'Utilization' or 'use' is a very complex notion. It is strongly related to the context and can signify different things to different users. Often it is difficult or even impossible to measure utilization, or to make reference to an evaluation[14].

Types of Utilization

According to the theoretical literature, an evaluation's utilization can be classified into 4 types: instrumental, conceptual, process focussed and legitimising use.

The most familiar type is the instrumental use. Applied in the majority of humanitarian evaluations, it refers to visible effects measured through the assessments of strengths, weaknesses and the value of a programme. Findings and recommendations do directly affect the decision-making and lead to direct improvements in policy, funding or programmes[15]. Using the evaluation means implementing the suggestions.

Table 2
Types of Utilization

Type of use	Instrumental	Conceptual	Process focussed	Legitimising
Occurrence	Ex-post Accountability judgements Audits Real-time or mid-term evaluations	Ex-post Evaluation syntheses	Evaluation process	Decision-making process
Implementation	Direct implementation of recommendations affecting decision-making and leading to improvements	No direct actions; Influencing the user's thinking; Generating profound knowledge	Learning through participation in evaluation process; Increased confidence and ownership; Influencing the user's opinions and behaviour	Justifying already taken decisions
Visibility	Visible	Hardly visible	Partly visible	Partly visible

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[12] N.n. (n.d.): "Evaluation Utilization", *Designing for results*, p. 184. Available at: www.sfcg.org/Documents/dmechapter10.pdf [accessed 11 November 2010].

[13] *Ibíd*, p. 179.
[14] SANDISON, Peta, *op. cit.,* p. 90.
[15] *Ibíd*, p. 93.

Other forms of use are more indirect such as the conceptual use, which is more indirect and helps generate knowledge through stimulating the user's thinking and understanding. Actions will not take place immediately or the evaluation's recommendations will even be refused.

Another type is the process use whereby individuals and organizations learn through the participation in the evaluation process.

The fourth type is the legitimising use or as well called political or symbolic use, this serves as a justification for already taken decisions and as a reference useful for following actions.

Factors influencing Utilization

If and how an evaluation's outcomes are used, and have an impact on the on-going or future project or on the organization's policy is determined by many factors. These factors can be the evaluation's quality, relevance, credibility, timeliness, the evaluators, or factors influencing the evaluation from the outside such as the user's participation, the information, the political or the financial climate[16].

Whether evaluations are used or not is often unpredictable. The praxis shows that in the majority of cases, limited or non-use is common. Evaluations often have to struggle next to other rivals to gain an organization's attention. Often they lose. They just present one part of the whole decision-making process[17]. In the busy humanitarian sector, employees answer immediate demands. Evaluations do seldom call for direct actions and therefore are set aside.

Evaluations might not be the best tool for providing change in every case. Even though constant negativism prevails, evaluations can act as a catalyst, able to provide new ideas and push forward a certain process. Its potential for use both direct and indirect should not be underestimated.

1.2. *The Concept of Capacity*

Reviewing the literature on concepts of capacity is difficult. No commonly accepted definition exists. Different disciplines have different understandings of the term capacity. According to Peter Morgan, capacity shows 5 central characteristics which could help to shape a concept. Morgan states that capacity is about *empowerment and identity,* which enables an organization or system to survive, grow, diversify and become more complex. Capacity is also the *collective ability,* meaning that it allows a system (individuals, groups, organizations etc) to act jointly and to renew itself. Furthermore Morgan defines capacity as a *systems phenomenon* which derives from interactions including a complexity of attitudes, resources, strategies and skills. Capacity is a *potential* state, elusive and transient. And finally it is about the *creation of public value,* which means making a positive contribution to public life[18].

Capacity can reach from macro level such as the capacity of a state to micro level such as the capacity of individuals related to their skills and resources. Therefore Morgan defines capacity as the following:

> "Capacity is that emergent combination of attributes that enables a human system to create developmental value"[19].

For its evaluation reports, the TEC defines the term capacity as the following[20]:

> [T]he term 'capacities' has been taken in a broad sense, i.e., to mean much more than technical skills, also encompassing the ability to access services and programmes, to influence and set policies and longer term recovery and reconstruction agendas, and to open and use the space to hold duty-bearers at all levels accountable. It includes the processes by which these outcomes are achieved, notably participation, consultation and information sharing[21].

1.3. *The Relationship between the Two Concepts*

The theoretical framework contains the concept of evaluation and the concept of capacity, which are interacting in between each other, and leading to the outcome of changing capacities. The concept of evaluation related to the TEC represents the international actor; the concept of capacity related to the local capacities in Aceh represents the local actor.

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[16] Bayley, John Scott: "Maximizing the Use of Evaluation Findings", 1st ed., Asian Development Bank, Manila, p. 2.

[17] Cf. *Ibíd*, p. 135.

[18] Cf. *Ibíd*, pp. 6-7.

[19] *Ibíd*, p. 8.

[20] This terminology of 'capacities' applies as well for this study.

[21] Telford, John; Cosgrave, John (2006): *Joint evaluation of the international response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami. Synthesis Report,* 1st ed., Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, London, p. 8-9.

The connection between both actors lies in their mutual relation to the standards for humanitarian assistance related to local capacities. An evaluation's task is to assess the response to a disaster and to discover its strengths and weaknesses. When the focus lies on learning recommendations are given which relate to the international standards[22] of humanitarian assistance in order to reach them. As mentioned in the TEC capacity report "[t]he importance of capacities is widely recognised in international principles relating to disaster response, [...] we [the TEC] examine the response to the tsunami disaster against international principles and consider the relationship of participation, consultation, capacity strengthening and rights"[23].

2. **Thesis results**

Main Research Question
To what extend did the recommendations of the TEC related to local capacities influence the international tsunami response on local capacities in Aceh?

The thesis result contains the 3 sub-research questions, leading the reader to the answer of the main research question. A comprehensive, summarizing answer will be given in the conclusion of the study.

2.1. *Sub-Research Question 1*

Sub-Research Question 1
What defines the TEC and what do the evaluation reports recommend to improve the international assistance on local capacities?

As the TEC and its recommendations are the main tool with which the study is carried out, this chapter aims to show its value and importance in the international humanitarian system. Based on information gained primarily from the synthesis and the capacity report, this chapter will focus on the findings and recommendations building the base of this study.

Soon after the tsunami members of ALNAP started to plan how to organize the evaluations of the response. The participants shared the common aim to strengthen learning from the tsunami response and to make efforts in answering conjointly the chronic system-wide problems occurring in humanitarian action. A joint evaluation[24] divided in 5 thematic subtopics[25] was intended to assess a sector-wide response rather than the response of individual agencies. The TEC was born.

The Synthesis Report mentions its objectives as the following:

1. To improve the quality of humanitarian action, including linkages to longer term recovery and development.
2. To provide accountability to the donor public and affected-country populations on the overall tsunami response (from the point of view of TEC member agencies).
3. To test the TEC approach as a possible model for future joint, multi-agency evaluation[26].

The Capacity Evaluation[27]

PURPOSE AND METHOD

The purpose of the study is to identify the impact of the international response to the tsunami on local and national capacities during the relief and the recovery phase. The results help develop lessons for reinforcing ongoing and future response activities, and to maximize the accountability of the international actors to their donors, as well as to the affected population[28]. The focus of the assessments lay at the community level because these capacities are often left out from evaluations of humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, capacities at national, provincial and district levels have been considered as well.

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[22] A standard acts as a basis for comparison or reference point against which something can be evaluated. It can contain both quantitative and qualitative criteria or requirements. (HAP).

[23] TELFORD, John; COSGRAVE, John, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

[24] *Joint Evaluation of the international response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami. Synthesis Report.*

[25] Coordination of the international response to tsunami-affected countries, The role of needs assessment in the tsunami response, Impact of the tsunami response on local and national capacities, Links between relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) in the tsunami response, The funding response to the tsunami.

[26] *Ibíd*, n.p.

[27] *Impact of the tsunami response on local and national capacities. Indonesia country report (Aceh and Nias).*

[28] Cf. *Ibíd*, p. 56.

This chapter aims to give an overview of the main findings of the assessment of the impact of the international response on local and national capacities in Indonesia. The focus lies on the international humanitarian response, nevertheless, the local response will be considered as well, in order to give a comprehensive insight.

The Immediate Response

Regarding the scale of the disaster and the loss of lives on the level of leadership, local government institutions collapsed and communities had to handle the first response actions on their own. Some survivors were housed by family members while others, as in remote areas of Aceh Jaya, moved inland. People organized themselves in CBOs in order to dicide what action to take.

Immediately after the disaster, the National Coordinating Agency for Natural Disaster and Refugees Relief (BAKORNAS PBP) arrived in the affectd region, but had to realize that there was no existing functioning local government to cooperate and therefore had difficulties to respond to the urgent needs on its own. The following day the government asked for international help and allowed foreign military to enter the region, undertaking search and rescue activities.

Starting the international response resulted difficult since the disaster happened between Christmas and New Year. Most of the agencies staff were on holiday and funds were difficult to reach because banks were closed. Only a few international agencies that had been working in Aceh already before the tsunami could respond immediately with all the resources they had in place.

The Early Recovery Phase

As most of the IOs have never worked in Aceh or Indonesia before, the lack of local experiences and contextual knowledge was a serious problem. Therefore it was common to recruit "the best and brightest staff from local organizations"[29] in order

to build up their own inter-organizational capacity. Some local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were havily weakened through brain drain and poaching practices and were added to IOs staff, thereby weakening local NGOs. That made it difficult for them to uphold their own programmes and gain a stronger influence in the reconstruction phase. Furthermore, IOs highly concentrated on setting up their own business instead of working through local organizations and saw the collaboration with the Acehnese Government more as an additional asset, rather then an essential starting point. A lack in coordination resulted in communication problems with remote village leaders by not involving them in the planning of response activities.

The most effective results came from international agencies and their method of employing their staff on a long-term basis. Some positive activities were seen in the participation and dialog of the affected population with some IOs, as well as in a participatory mapping exercise with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

The Transition to Reconstruction and Development

Refering to an UNDP assessment of the Acehnese civil-society capacities, the evaluation report stressed among other needs the "improvement of organizational and technical capacities of CSOs" as well as the "provision of technical guidance and capital grants for initiatives that contribute to community recovery, public participation and empowerment of local people"[30]. Some positive developments in capacity strengthening were revealed.

At the community level 3 very vulnurable claim-holder groups were indentified: "[...] remote communities with minimal service provision pre-tsunami, vulnerable women such as poor female-headed households and war widows, and communities affected by violent conflict"[31]. The needs of people belonging to these groups were not sufficiently addressed by the IOs. The response to the destruction in the remote and underdeveloped areas resulted complicated as there was basically no infrastructure in place before the tsunami. A few of these communities did not receive any assistance. Therefore, it is suggested to build up partnerships with CBOs in order to tackle the problems of such communities.

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[29] *Ibíd*, p. 30.
[30] *Ibíd*, p. 37.

[31] *Ibíd*, p. 38.

An important issue was the signed peace agreement between the government and the GAM on 15 August 2005 in Helsinki. If this was a result of the disaster and the influx of IOs had still to be found out at the time of the evaluation.

The report summerizes that both local and national capacities have been insufficiently identified so far. The humanitarian community was neither able to adequately support the existing capacities nor was it able to strengthen sustainable solutions. Instead, inequality and tensions increased. Furthermore, the report states that the international tsunami response did not:

> [...] act on locally-expressed needs and conditions; address fundamental issues of equity and inclusion within and across sectors and geographical areas; utilise gender- and conflict-sensitive approaches; integrate poverty and marginalisation concerns; and, most importantly, set in place transparent mechanisms and modalities of downward accountability to claim-holders[32].

RECOMMENDATIONS

The humanitarian system has to rethink its role and its way of acting in a disaster response. Local capacities have to be recognized as the base of every response. The role of the international actors is to facilitate and to strengthen these capacites.

The recommendations of the capacity report are grouped into the following 3 core messages:

1. Sustain a respectful engagement with local and national capacities
2. Improve equity, inclusion and downward accountability
3. Foster an enabling policy framework and safe environment[33],

Further recommendations affecting local capacities used for the triangulation of the main research question were found in the synthesis report and other thematic evaluations.

Summarizing the recommendations drawn from the findings state that international actors should strengthen local capacities through:

[promoting] comprehensive information-sharing; [setting] up appropriate contextually sensitive communication strategies; [developing] sustainable community-based disaster preparedness systems; [facilitating] inclusive and gender-sensitive governance modalities; and [maximising] the use of available political space to enable sustained, meaningful participation[34].

Always mentioned on the same level as the Rwanda multidonor evaluation in the mid-1990s, the TEC evaluations represent the most intensive study of a humanitarian response since that time. Through the participation of a significant number of IOs and the comprehensive sectoral assessments, the TEC gained its recognition. The recommendations striving for a successful collaboration with the local actors and for strengthening their capacities are an important step in the improvement of one key part of humanitarian assistance.

2.2. *Sub-Research Question 2*

Sub-Research Question 2
What kind of local capacities were in place in Aceh before and right after the tsunami and how were they developed?

The next chapter is dedicated to the second sub-research question. It will provide information on the strengths and weaknesses of local capacities immediately before and after the tsunami. It will facilitate the understanding of the circumstances in which the international actors were operating and of the contextual situation of the recommendations.

THE PRE-TSUNAMI CONTEXT OF ACEH

The conflict situation between the GAM and the Indonesian military made it very hard for IOs to enter the region and set up projects. Therefore, just few agencies were present when the tsunami hit the region on 26 December 2004.

Aceh's economy is well known for its richness in farming, plantation, fishery, forestry, home industry, as well as in mining, oil and gas extraction. Nevertheless, according to an Aceh Poverty Assessment 2008 "[p]overty in Aceh pre-tsunami was 28.4

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[32] *Ibíd*, p. 48.
[33] *Ibíd*, pp. 53-54.

[34] SCHEPER, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.

percent of the population in 2004, this was substantially higher than in the rest of Indonesia at 16.7 percent"[35].

Livelihood conditions were very difficult. Basic services provided by the government such as public health and education varied highly in their quality between urban and rural areas. Power, transportation and irrigation systems were scarce[36]. A lot of physical capital was broken or destroyed due to years of conflict. In some areas, the local population repaired or rebuilt infrastructure on their own. Financial institutions were insufficiently existent at the provincial level. Since people from rural areas live from farming and fishing, they are highly vulnerable to natural disasters and resource exploitation that may affect or even destroy their livelihoods. Oil, gas and fisheries are already severely exploited by several companies. The local population is mostly living on subsistence farming accompanied by further activities through animal husbandry or handicraft or brick production.

Even though the level of poverty is very high and people can hardly meet their basic needs the Acehnese population demonstrates various capacities. Due to Aceh's turbulent history, it shows a very strong social capital based on traditional values and the voluntary will (gotong royong). Communities rely highly on the social networks which serve to discuss problems and to take decisions democratically. Women were not involved in the discussions and decision making, but they have some power within the household.

Since 1998 CSOs were formed mainly addressing issues of democracy building, human rights, advocacy and humanitarian support and rehabilitation related to conflict. Only some CSOs have been working in promoting sustainable livelihoods through strengthening communities. At the time of the tsunami, and the early stage of the response, the organizational capacities of CSOs were not sufficiently developed.

The Context of Natural Disasters: Hazards and Vulnerability

The Aceh province faces several natural hazards such as floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, storms, etc. The main threats of Acehnese history up to 2004 were of a social-political nature. Although Aceh is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, the term disaster was related to the impacts of the conflict.

People living near rivers are highly vulnerable. Embankments to diminish the impact of floods or sufficient transport facilities to dislocate belongings quickly do not exist. A further aspect, which increases people's vulnerability, is their resigned attitude towards disasters; the tendency to forget previous disasters caused by flood, and their belief that floods occur due to curses or as a form of punishment for sins.

Followed by the risk of floods is the risk of earthquakes which occur frequently in the region of Aceh. The weak structure of buildings, the lack of information on earthquakes and their handling, as well as the little attention of local institutions paid to address risk reduction and earthquake management structures multiplies the seriousness of the disaster.

Local Knowledge of Disaster Management

The Acehnese population is aware of the natural hazards that exist in their community, and over time have acquired certain knowledge to decrease the risk of disasters. Traditional institutions which reduce disaster risk are for example "Ulee Seneuboek, Ketuha Uteun, safeguarding forest management in their settlement and the Panglima Laot responsible for regulating use of marine resources and ensure their preservation"[37] and major people "[...] were able to predict more accurately the period when floods would occur, so that the cultivation season could be adapted to avoid the coming of floods"[38].

Further capacities of the Acehnese community such as the production of traditional medicines against diarrhoea, malaria or other diseases supported the survivors of the tsunami in the aftermath of a disaster. CSOs, which dedicate their work to the field of natural disasters, were almost non-existent.

Appearing Capacities during the Tsunami

The tsunami was an unprecedented disaster which hit the poorly developed region severely. The loss of life of about

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[35] THE WORLD BANK (2008): *The impact of the conflict, the tsunami and reconstruction on poverty in Aceh. Aceh Poverty Assessment 2008*, 1st ed., The World Bank, Jakarta, p. 12.

[36] Cf. UNDP (2005): *Civil Society in Aceh. An Assessment of Needs to Built Capacity to Support Community Recovery*, UNDP, Jakarta, p. 10.

[37] UNDP, *op. cit.*, n.p.

[38] *Ibid*.

150,000 people and of property totalling to about 41 trillion rupiah[39] weakened the capacities and challenged the remaining capacities as well. As the many lives of leaders of every level of society, from government to village level were washed away within minutes, the local population faced a particular challenge. Still traumatized and overwhelmed by the extent of the damage in their communities, survivors began to organize themselves. New CSOs emerged in order to take decisions how to respond to the disaster.

Summarizing this section, some important points that the international aid community was facing have to be stressed. Due to the conflict, and Aceh's special position, it was difficult for IOs to enter the area and set up programmes. Despite being faced with different problems and lacks in capacity, the population still possessed solid social capital. Little capacities to cope with natural hazards existed among the population, but CSOs were not working in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and seldom responded to emergencies caused by disasters. The local government did so, but was severely weakened at the time of the tsunami response.

2.3. *Sub-Research Question 3*

Sub-Research Question 3
How were the recommendations of the TEC, related to local capacities, used, in order to improve the international tsunami response on local capacities in Aceh?

This last section will now complete the answer to the main research question, showing to what extend the TEC's recommendations were used by the IOs in order to improve their cooperation with the local actors. The questionnaire is divided into sections by different issues. Each of the issues has a direct or indirect impact on the capacities of the local actors. The following chapter will keep this subdivision. Every part will be introduced through the respective recommendations[40] made by the TEC, followed by the presentation of the data of the questionnaire and finally an analysis and summary of each section in order to give an overview of the most important findings.

Contextual knowledge of expatriate employees

Enhance contextual knowledge and increase community participation in accordance with international standards[41].

This section aims to triangulate if expatriate employees possessed knowledge of the political, social and cultural situation of Aceh when they started working there. Questions on how they were informed, if they had problems due to not being informed about the context and if their organization had to adjust its programme to the local context were asked.

Fig. 2

Contextual knowledge of expatriate employees
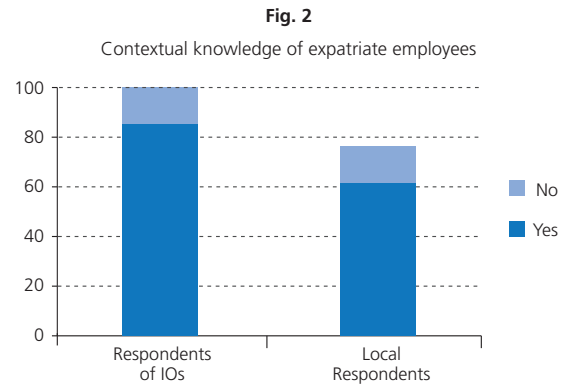
Of the IO's representatives asked, eighty-five percent stated that themself, if expatriate employee or their expatriate colleagues were familiar with the context in Aceh (see fig. 2). Seventy percent explained that they gained their knowledge from briefings. Mostly, these briefings took place before arriving in Aceh. On a few occasions they took place in Aceh. Several local people said that expatriate employees had some problems with the context such as traditions, habits or language. These respondents[42] added that they, or the expatriate employees, ed-

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[40] It was not always possible to triangulate the entire recommendation. Therefore the part scrutinized is in italics.

[41] SCHEPER, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

[42] The term 'respondent' or 'interviewee' refers to the employees of IOs whereas the term 'local respondent' or 'local interviewee' refers to the respondents from local organizations, government and community in Aceh.

ucated themselves later about the context while already work-ing in Aceh. All of the interviewees answering the question ac-knowledged that their organization had to adjust its programme to the local context. This was the case due to the conflict, which was the reason most mentioned, but also in terms of language and culture. One respondent reported that they adjusted to the local culture in terms of taking off their shoes in the office and closing the office earlier during Ramadan.

Local respondents and claim-holders were asked if expatriate employees of IOs spoke their language and if they were familiar with the context in Aceh. The answers were very diverse. Half of the interviewees stated that expatriate employees spoke the lo-cal language, half of the interviewees stated that they did not. Over sixty percent said that the international personnel were fa-miliar with the local context (see fig. 2). The local respondents mentioned that the international staff knew about the Aceh-nese culture and tried to adapt themselves. They were inter-ested, polite and showed understanding.

Due to eighty-five percent of the IOs and sixty percent of the local respondents stating that expatriate employees were in-formed about the Acehnese context, one could reason that they were well prepared. The question is how well the international staff was informed. But even though one assumes that a very profound preparation has taken place, it is not a guarantee for acting correctly in every situation. Interest into the culture was shown as local respondents stated. A good outcome is that the programme of every IO answering the question was adjusted to the local context. It is not approved if the programme changed again after detecting contextual challenges.

PERSONNEL

Specific agreements and protocols should be made to *limit 'poaching' of staff*. This will help ensure local capacity is not under-mined[43].

To *avoid high turnover of staff*, HR departments should *deploy long-term (at least one-year) personnel* in the field quickly. Urgent at-tention should be given to the speed with which staff members are recruited, and to expanding the registry of suitable standby staff[44].

All agencies need to *reduce the high rates of turnover* commonly seen in emergencies by providing contract and conditions of employ-ment that encourage staff to remain in post[45].

In additional to full-time standby personnel, agencies need to de-velop or improve response rosters accompanied by *appropriate train-ing to allow the rapid deployment of 'regular' personnel in emergen-cies* [...][46].

This section is dedicated to the personnel of IOs, the recom-mendations highlight the avoidance of 'poaching' of staff to stop weakening the capacity of local actors. Furthermore, high staff turnover must be prevented to ensure internal and external stability. Therefore questions about who is working for the IOs, how many personnel and how long have they been employed, if they were trained in humanitarian assistance and if they em-ployed local people that worked for local organizations before ('poaching' of staff) were asked. It is furthermore important that adequate training for all staff is provided in order to quickly re-spond to emergencies.

Seldom, interviewees remembered exact numbers of the people employed by their organization, but it was always men-tioned that the number of new expatriate staff was very high at the beginning. This situation changed in the recovery and re-construction phase when the employment of expatriate staff de-creased and the employment of local Acehnese or national staff rose. The local population and CSOs confirmed this fact. There were very few expatriates already working in Aceh or Indonesia before. One respondent stated that many local people were em-ployed since the beginning, but they were working in low posi-tions such as driver of the IO.

The 'poaching' of staff was confirmed by 6 of 9 respondents (see fig. 3) and mostly justified with the high demand on human resources and their needed knowledge of the local context. 3 local respondents confirmed this fact.

According to the interviewees people were deployed for more than 6 months during the recovery and reconstruction phase. Thirty-six percent stated that in average the staff was de-ployed between 6 and 12 months, sixty-seven percent stated

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[43] TSUNAMI EVALUATION COALITION (2007): *Consolidated lessons and rec-ommendations from the TEC Synthesis Report and TEC Thematic Evalua-tions*, 1st ed., Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, London, p. 36.

[44] *Ibíd*, p. 37.
[45] *Ibíd*, p. 38.
[46] *Ibíd*, p. 24.

that the staff was deployed for about 12 months (see fig. 4). To the question if the personnel of the IOs changed very often 4 of 5 local respondents answered with yes.

All respondents answering the question said that expatriate employees were trained in humanitarian assistance. In the case of local employees it is seventy-three percent. 3 people of 11 said that there was no training for local staff.
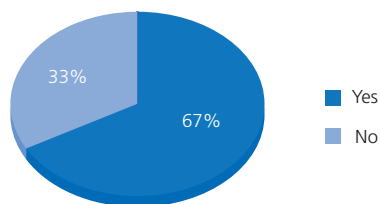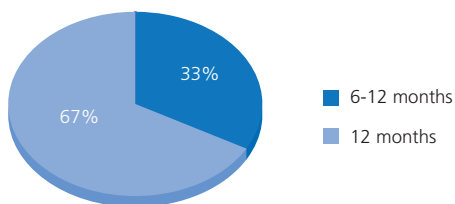
Fig. 3

'Poaching' of staff

Fig. 4

Duration of personnel deployed in the field

In terms of local ownership, the shift from employing many international staff to the employment of local staff was a good development in the recovery and reconstruction phase. Since the 'poaching' of staff was confirmed by a high number of IOs, it is questionable if the recommendation concerning this issue had any visible impact so far. More positive results were the duration of the employment of humanitarian actors, even though local respondents still evaluate the time of their employment as short. Very positive is the fact that all expatriates, and almost

three quarter of local employees were trained in humanitarian assistance.

COLLABORATION WITH OTHER ACTORS

All actors should strive to increase and review periodically their disaster response capacities. *They should seek to improve the linkages and coherence between themselves and other actors in the international disaster response system, including those from the affected countries themselves*[47].

The International Community should have clear partnership strategies from the start in order to avoid glitches during the transition to recovery[48].

The recommendations underline the improvement of the collaboration and coherence between the actors involved in the disaster response. One should strive for clear partnership strategies from the very beginning. Therefore in this section questions about the nature of partnerships before, right after and at the time when the survey took place were asked.

To the question if IOs had pre-tsunami partnerships in the affected area, fifty-four percent mentioned to have had a partnership with a local NGO, forty-six percent were having a partnership with the local government, fifteen percent with local institutions and the university and 8 percent of all IOs were cooperating with the local community. 4 interviewees stated that their organization did not have pre-tsunami partnerships.

According to the questionnaire, IOs set up several collaborations with other organizations right after the tsunami. All representatives interviewed stated that they worked together with local organizations and the local government. Seventy-nine percent mentioned to have a partnership with other IOs, fifty percent with international and fifty-seven percent with local institutions. One respondent mentioned the university and seventy-one percent worked in partnership with the local community. All local respondents said that IOs built up a relationship with them. Some of the relationships are very close and some indirect through the IO's implementing partner or through mediators such as Forum LSM Aceh or International Relief & Development (IRD).

To the questions if there are partnerships still ongoing all the respondents answered with yes. Seventy-one percent men-

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[47] TEC, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[48] *Ibíd*.

Fig. 5
Collaboration with local actors
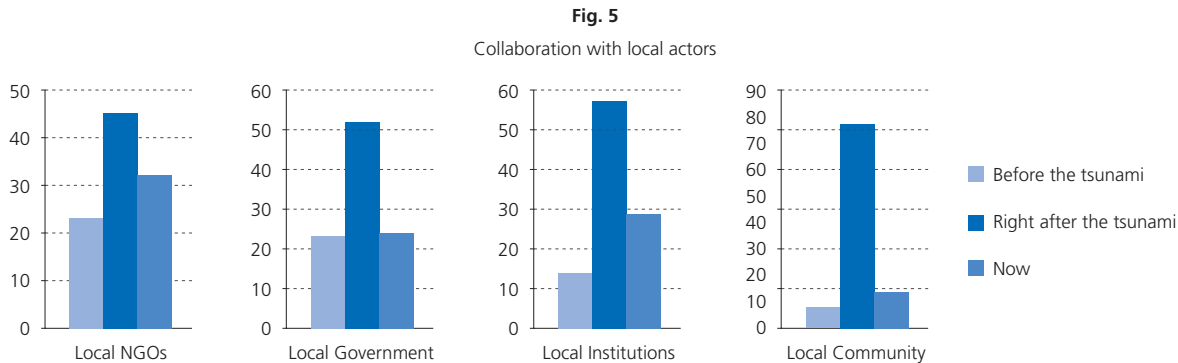
tioned to have a partnership with one or several local CSOs, twenty-one percent with the local Red Cross, forty-two percent with the local government, twenty-nine percent with local institutions and fourteen percent with the local community (see fig 5). The ways in which the IOs stay in contact with their local partners are manifold. Some organizations are still in Aceh and can easily ensure an ongoing collaboration. Some have regular or irregular meetings, some stay in contact through ongoing trainings in capacity strengthening, through the delivery of donations or via e-mail. 8 of 10 local respondents said that they are still in contact with some IOs.

Ninety-three percent of the respondents said that its policy prescribes the engagement with local capacities since the beginning, and that there are strategic plans or rules for collaboration with them. Many IOs have project implementation strategies such as prescribed partnership procedures. There are guidelines, research programmes and workshops in order to build and to strengthen local capacities. Despite a set of criteria the implementation depends on the local context, on the needs and on the availability of funds.

Because the province of Aceh was a conflict area with special regulations, just few IOs possessed pre-tsunami partnerships. With the beginning of the tsunami response, this situ-

ation changed immediately. Many linkages existed with local organizations, the local government, local communities and with other IOs as the recommendations strive after. According to the IOs many partnerships, mainly with local CSOs and the local government still continue. The existence of strategic plans for the engagement with local capacities was confirmed by the majority of IOs which therefore is in line with the recommendations.

LOCAL CAPACITIES

Recognise and validate, at both individual and institutional levels, national and local capacities in the local context, particularly in the immediate recovery phase[49].

International agencies should 'map' and support host-authority capacities in a manner similar to that for mapping capacities of affected people. This should be conducted prior to any disaster event and updated during the response/…/international agencies with a development mandate are best placed for providing such support[50].

Provide institutional support to CBOs, including capacity-building in order to repair 'brain drain' damage and applying fair grant-making standards[51].

The recommendations above highlight the recognition and appreciation of local capacities in the local context. Local au-

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[49] SCHEPER, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
[50] TEC, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[51] SCHEPER, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

thority capacities should be mapped such as those of affected people. Institutional support and capacity building for local organizations are emphasized. Therefore in the following section questions about measuring, mapping and strengthening of local capacities were asked.

Most IOs assessed local capacities through direct consultation such as interviews, focus group discussions, community meetings and door to door assessments. One respondent mentioned that in his IO, a capacity needs assessment, an identification of weaknesses and a plan to strengthen the capacities of government, CSOs and the community were set up in February 2005. Another respondent mentioned that the participatory rural appraisal (PRA) was the method through which the capacities of villages or individuals were assessed. Some organizations assessed the capacity with the help of their local partners. One representative mentioned that their IO developed an assessment questionnaire in order to facilitate the provincial level to do their own assessments on district level.

Ninety-three percent stated that they contacted their claim-holders once again before starting the recovery actions. Reasons mentioned were that there was the need for new assessments with the local organizations in order to get information for the design of the programme; that the local population is the one dealing with the disaster and therefore has the ownership; that the IOs strived for a simultaneous and continuous process; the development of local partnership at this time and that the IO works continuously together with the claim-holder.

Fig. 6

IO's assessment on the engagement of local actors in the tsunami response
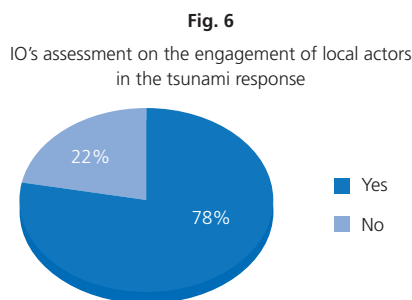
About eighty percent of the local respondents confirmed that IOs asked them about their engagement in the tsunami response and about their possessing capacities (see fig. 6). This

was done in meetings before starting the activities. Here the community was asked what they can contribute to the project on their own and which kind of project would be suitable for them. The local Red Cross for example was trained in their capacities on Water and Sanitation (WATSAN) and provided first aid courses to the IOs. All respondents stated that their organization was working in the improvement of organizational and technical capacities of CSOs.

To the question if the local population was supported in their activities, eighty percent of them confirmed the answer. On the one hand, there was material support with items such as fishing boats, nets, sewing material and local transport. On the other hand, IOs provided capacity building trainings to the local community, boards, staff and volunteers of CSOs, as well as funding. The local respondents mentioned a wide range of activities taken place such as vocational training for women, trainings and workshops in DRR for teacher and trainings on teaching methods, conflict resolution, advocacy, microfinance, on how to empower local community, financial management and funding.

According to the IOs CSOs were very glad and thankful for the trainings. They were very interested and appreciated that they gained new knowledge. Seventy-nine percent of the interviewees said that the CSOs had problems to implement the newly gained knowledge. But experience showed that a single training is not enough. It is advisable to do follow ups. If the CSOs will apply the new knowledge in the future, ninety-three percent answered yes because even if they will work with other organizations in the future, it will be the same procedures. But of course not every CSO will do in the same way. Some knowledge will be applied, some will not. Due to high staff turnover, it is difficult to maintain technical staff which possesses this knowledge.

Eighty percent of the local respondents working in CSOs stated that they were very satisfied with the trainings. They needed it, because they had no skills in certain areas before the training. To the question of having problems in implementing the new capacities, 2 respondents answered yes, while 2 with no.

For measuring local capacities in the recovery phase, one can say that there is a diverse spectrum on doing so. The recognition and validation of local capacities has taken place according to the IOs interviewed. A very high percentage of IOs mapped capacities of affected people and host- authority capacities as

the recommendation suggest. Another high percentage was measured in getting in contact with claim-holders once again, due to the need of new and updated information for starting with the recovery actions. Many local interviewees confirmed the IO's attention focused on the capacities of local actors. The recommendation that institutional support to CBOs should be provided is accomplished by the IOs. The local population confirmed the broad support not only with material items, but also with trainings on capacity building and strengthening and stated that they were very delighted about it.

Beneficiaries and vulnerable groups

Reach vulnerable groups currently overlooked in the asset replacement programme, particularly in remote, under-resourced areas of Nias, Aceh Jaya and East Aceh[52].

Inclusion of the most marginalised should be treated as a fundamental principle or right, regardless of costs[53].

Strategies should be developed to ensure that women and marginalised groups have full access to information[54].

Planning should also take account of the complexity of community structures and the need for knowledgeable local intermediaries with power to influence decisions[55].

The recommendations underline that vulnerable and marginalised groups have to be included. Strategies should be put in place to enhance women's and marginalised group's access to information. The humanitarian actors have furthermore to be aware of the complexity of community structures. It is advised to deploy local intermediaries. Due to the recommendations, the survey focused on questions on the IO's beneficiaries including vulnerable groups, questions on gender issues, on how IOs dealt with the complexity of community structures and if they employed local intermediaries.

All IOs interviewed worked with vulnerable groups, if not directly then indirectly through their implementing partners. Over eighty-five percent of the IOs worked with women in difficulties, children, elderly people and disabled. Twenty-nine percent worked as well with remote fishing communities and fourteen percent with war widows or victims of violence. Most IOs knew about their existence from assessments and community leaders. Due to previous experience, the local partner, the local government and coordination meetings with other NGOs, were further sources through which IOs gained information on vulnerable groups.

Seventy-five percent of the local interviewees said that IOs addressed all people in need, twenty-five percent said that they did not. Some groups were neglected and until now there are people who did not receive a new house for their lost one. Several people were left behind because some organizations covering a certain area did not allow other (I)NGOs to enter the same area. But the organization in place specialized on a particular spectrum of aid was not able to entirely respond to all needs of the community, which resulted in gaps during the response. As well overlapping was an issue. Both led to conflicts between IOs and the community.

Within all IOs interviewed, gender issues were taken into consideration in the projects. This is justified with the policy of the IOs or international standards, but also by explaining that women have different needs and that it is an important issue in order to work in a better way. Therefore, ninety-three percent stated that they employ staff responsible for gender issues. Fifteen percent of them hired a consultant and 8 percent employed an international gender advisor. All 5 local respondents who answered this question confirmed that there was a person in charge of the participation of women in the IO's activities.

In eighty-three percent of the IOs, women were involved in the planning and management of their relocation. 7 local interviewees answering the question confirmed this issue.

Particular strategies to ensure that women and marginalised groups have full access to information are possessed by all organizations. One strategy adopted by most IOs is the direct consultation of the vulnerable or marginalised group separately from the others. One IO provided specific activities for women such as cooking together in order to gather information from this activity. Another common strategy is the publication of project information on wooden boards and the distribution of bulletins.

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[52] Scheper, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
[53] TEC, *op. cit.,* p. 7.

[54] *Ibíd*, p. 4.
[55] *Ibíd*, p. 6.

Of 5 local respondents, 3 confirmed that women and marginalised groups had full access to information and 2 respondents negated the response saying that the problems were the local traditions and the language. One respondent mentioned that the access to information was given, but in English, so that all people depended on an interpreter or sometimes tried to interpret the information on their own.

How the IOs dealt with the complexity of community structures was very diverse, but the collaboration with the community leaders and the employment of local staff was mentioned very often. IOs hired staff or employed volunteers who were living in the village where the project took place. Furthermore, IOs worked closely together with local organizations or through local implementing partners that knew the local population, the military, etc.

All IOs worked with vulnerable groups and included them in their programmes. According to IOs, there were no problems in reaching vulnerable groups, but very few IOs worked with remote fishing communities. Hence the fulfilment of the respective recommendation is still challenging. All IOs stated to have employed a person responsible for gender issues and involved women in their planning and management. In compliance with the recommendation, IOs had strategies in place to ensure women's and marginalised group's access to information. The complexity of community structures were taken into account through the collaboration with local actors and the relatively high employment of local intermediaries. But the recommendation concerning this issue has just been partly accomplished, as intermediaries did not take part in the decision-making.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Establish transparent public information and accountability systems and boost opportunities for claim-holders to set their own agendas[56].

International agencies should share information about their systems and practises with the affected population, so that they can also participate in planning/programming[57].

Those responding to a disaster should ensure that full information about their activities is available to affected populations. Suggestions include putting up public notices and giving financial information, and public audits[58].

Support should aim to empower affected people to articulate claims, demand accountability and to make their own choices[59].

Agencies should regularly conduct joint surveys of affected communities to determine whether they are aware of agency plans and are satisfied with the support they are getting[60].

The TEC recommends providing transparent information about the organization and their activities within the humanitarian aid system and to claim-holders. The affected population must have the opportunity to participate in the planning and programming process of IOs, to articulate claims and to make their own choices. Surveys should be conducted regularly to monitor if claim-holders are informed about the organization's activities and if they are satisfied. Related to the recommendations questions on information sharing, complain mechanisms and the claim holders' participation and influence in the planning and programming was asked.

Getting the local population's attention was mostly achieved through visibility, meetings with the community and their leader and through the information boards. Furthermore IOs established local working groups or worked through local partners, which then informed the community. Others distributed brochures with the organization's plans and activities explained, or put the programme in the local newspaper. One respondent mentioned that a local artist went to several villages informing about the organization's activities. All local respondents said that they were informed about the organization's presence and activities.

The local population can comment to all IOs interviewed. The possibilities are very diverse. The most common ways to articulate remarks or claims were community meetings, direct consultations with the field officer and the participation in monitoring and evaluation processes. 7 of 8 local respondents confirmed that they had the opportunity to comment to the IOs.

Ninety-two percent of the respondents said that claim-holders participated in the organization's planning and programming (see fig. 7). 5 of 6 local interviewees confirmed having the

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[56] SCHEPER, Elisabeth, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
[57] TEC, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
[58] *Ibíd*, p.4.

[59] TEC, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
[60] *Ibíd*, p. 5.

Fig. 7

Accountability towards claim-holders

possibility to participate in the organization's planning process. All IOs communicated with the local government, even though it was very weak at that time. Albeit, the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency for Aceh and Nias (BRR) was not a local actor, but national; it was described several times as very effective by employees of IOs and by local actors.

The empowerment of affected people to articulate claims, demand accountability and to make their own choices was confirmed by 9 of 10 respondents. Regular surveys among affected communities in order to determine whether they are aware of the agency's plans and are satisfied with the support they are getting were conducted by seventy-nine percent of the IO interviewed.

Information on the IO's presence, their activities and the possibility to comment on it was given to the claim-holders and the local government. According to the majority of the IOs and local respondents, claim-holders participated in the organization's planning and programming which would partly accomplish the recommendation. But sometimes information was given in English, and therefore not understood by claim-holders. The recommendation to empower affected people to articulate claims, demand accountability and to make their own choices was mostly accomplished. This is the same case for carrying out regular surveys of affected communities, although it has to be added that these were rather informal discussion with the claim holders.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

All actors should strive to reduce disaster risks and increase disaster response capacities at all levels [from local – national] and within the framework of local development processes and plans[61].

Communities should be encouraged to develop their own contingency plans for disasters and receive material support with the proviso that adequate provision must be made for poorer and marginalized groups. This should extend to a wide range of civil-society organizations including women's groups[62].

The recommendations underline the need for DRR programmes in order to enhance disaster response capacities. Communities should be supported in developing their own contingency plans for disasters and only receive material support.

Ninety-two percent of the IOs possessed DRR programmes in order to build capacity, to prepare and organize themselves, to enhance mitigation, to learn identifying and mapping risks, vulnerability, capacity and hazards, to implement disaster management procedures and to develop contingency and evacuation plans and early warning systems.

All local respondents confirmed that activities, in order to reduce disaster risks and to increase disaster response capacities, have taken place. According to the local interviewees, IOs provided preparedness trainings, DRR trainings for schools and students, risk mapping, tsunami trials, first aid seminars, the development of emergency paths and the distribution of preparedness and mitigation equipment. Several respondents supported that communities should be encouraged to develop their own contingency plans for disasters and just receive materials. Local respondents confirmed that this type of support is very important.

The majority of the IOs fulfilled the recommendation above in striving to reduce disaster risks and working in the empowerment of disaster response capacities. This was also confirmed by local respondents. The encouragement of communities to develop their contingency plans for disasters and to simply receive material support was taken up very positively by the IOs. Through the numerous DRR activities, the way to accomplish this recommendation should be prepared.

[61] TEC, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

[62] *Ibíd*, p. 7.

FUNDAMENTAL RE-ORIENTATION

The international humanitarian community needs a fundamental reorientation from supplying aid to facilitating communities' own relief and recovery priorities[63].

Most IOs agreed with this statement. One respondent said that the first month of the disaster response should be top-down driven. This then has to stop and new participatory assessments (bottom-up) for the village planning have to be undertaken. It was mentioned that the international community just gives aid, but Indonesia is not too underdeveloped. The country is able to learn, so the IOs should provide a service to enhance knowledge and skills on disasters in order to make people more prepared. It was said that people do less need "hardware" like items for their basic needs rather than "software" in order to establish a "culture of safety". A further interviewee said that in the first days, it is the community helping itself, so a focus on DRR at community and government level is very good.

To reach this goal, each IO should develop its own internal procedures to achieve it. But it highly depends on local capacities and the local government. Expectations should be put into context. The key in reaching the goal is education. IOs already working towards this goal do this with the help of the evaluation of their work in order to try to bring change. They are asking the communities about their needs and try to meet the expectations, but it must be considered that there is also always a policy they have to follow.

The recommendation was agreed by the majority of the IOs, which stated that they are already working on implementing the recommendation. Due to restrictions such as funds and policy it will be hard to accomplish it.

Summarizing the last section one can say that what is stated in the recommendations was used according to the analysis of the questionnaire. The scope of utilization extends from very low utilization (value: 1) to very high utilization (value: 5). In average, the value of the utilization of all recommendations lies at 3.7 (seventy-four percent) for the respondents of IOs and at 3.5 (seventy percent) for the local respondents. A good to satisfactory level of utilization of the recommendtions has been reached.

Some limitations were already mentiond above. As it was previously explained, the concept of evaluation contains different types of which some can be observed directly such as instrumental use, some are indirectly such as the conceptual use and therefore difficult to observe. The direct implementation of trainings in order to strengthen local capacity is easily noticed in contrast to non-use which still leads to generating knowledge and possibly to instrumental use in the future.

On the field level, about half of the respondents working for IOs have not heard about the TEC, neither received the reports. Few of them knew if the TEC had any impact on the strategic plans of their organization. This might be due to the respondent's low position in the organization and not being the addressee of the evaluation report. There might have been changes, but they may just partly be attributable to the TEC or other evaluations. As it is mentioned above, evaluations do not present the most important factor in an organization's decision-making process. Furthermore, it has to be taken into account that the findings of the TEC mainly relate to the relief phase. In this time, and within such a scale of disaster, the response might be chaotic and attention to norms and standards of humanitarian assistance limited, even though this should not be the case. In the recovery and reconstruction phase things 'normalize' and the opportunities for implementing projects in line with the international standards rise.

Even though several restrictions have to be accepted, data and analysis gives an insight to the improvement of the international actor's work in the field.

3. **Conclusion**

The most important results to answer to the main research question will now be presented in this last part of the study. A conclusion with recommendations for evaluations in the humanitarian sector and some ideas for future studies will be given.

The TEC known by experts for its qualitative, joint and sector-wide assessements serves as a accountability and learning tool in oder to improve the quality of humanitarian assisstance at policy and field level. The focus lies on five thematic issues

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[63] TEC, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

selected due to their chronic weakness: coordination, needs assessment, the impact on national and local capacities, Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) and funding. The capacity report assessing the impact of the international tsunami response on local and national capacities of the relief and the recovery phase served as the base of this study.

A few days after the tsunami, international assistance arrived. The enormous generousity of donors gave the humanitarian actors the possibility to adequately respond to the disaster. Nevertheless, many cases which showed severe weaknesses in the response were revealed. Hence, the recommendations given by the TEC aim to avoid mistakes and strengthen the ongoing and future response. In this study, the recommendations related to local capacities were now triangulated in order to reveal to what extent they were used and facilitated an improvement of the disaster response. As stated above, the average utilization of the recommendations can be concluded as a good to satisfactory level of implementation. Therefore, based on the examination, the impact of the international response on local actors has improved in the recovery and reconstruction phase, but it did not fulfil the recommendations with complete satisfaction.

As shown in this study, an evaluation's place is not the most influential in the organization's decision-making process. Nevertheless different types of utilization exist, and if not immediately, they might influence the organization's performance and policy over time. In order to facilitate good performance, the idea of certifications arose several times among the humanitarian sector. As well, the TEC synthesis report recommends that "[t]he international relief system should establish an accreditation and certification system to distinguish agencies that work to a professional standard in a particular sector"[64]. Some efforts were made such as the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP), certifying its members that comply the standards of accountability and quality management. But so far no comprehensive system has been established. It might be useful to strengthen the systems which are already in place such as evaluation. Its utilization has to be facilitated jointly by the evaluators and the users themselves in order to find ways on learning from the mistakes revealed, and how to implement the recommendations.

Consequently the evaluation process should not stop after distributing the reports and providing some seminars or presentations on the results. For a certain time, the organizations should either be accompanied by an evaluator or appoint an organization's empoyee who is in charge of the recommendation's implementation and in permanent contact with the evaluator. Counter-arguments might be the lack of time, personnel and financial means. They could be compensated through avoiding mistakes, improving performance and therefore using time, personnel and money much more efficiently.

The study focused on the use of the recommendations at the local level, which were implemented either directly on the ground or through instructions from policy makers. Further research tying on to this study could investigate the same topic, but focussing the inclusion of national capacities or the question of implementation of the recommendations on policy level. Furthermore a comparison between the use of evaluation in the tsunami response and in the the response to the earthquake in Haiti on the 12 January 2010 could be interesting.

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