



United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Creating new sources of livelihoods. Companies and communities in partnership

Project Brief

Project Summary

Issues addressed

Alternative sources of livelihoods in rural and backward areas, especially those hit by natural disasters and conflict

Project objective

To design and test a model of partnership where communities and private companies can develop business opportunities jointly.

Target group

Government officials, private companies, NGOs and business associations

Starting date and duration

The project started on 1 May 2006 and will continue until 31 October 2007.

Donor

This project is funded by the Government of the Republic of Korea, as part of a regional initiative to build the resilience of communities to natural disasters.

livelihoods, other than migration. Women and other disadvantaged groups have even less opportunities for gainful employment.

Private investment is the primary source of economic development and job creation. But it is difficult to promote investment and enterprise development in areas that are remote, lack infrastructure or human capital or have been hit by natural disaster or conflict. Even when investments in new activities take place, local communities may not be able to benefit, and could even be harmed if land and natural resources are taken away without adequate compensation. Relations between private companies and the communities where they operate are often difficult and may lead to conflicts, which may prevent investments and retard development.



The issue

The benefits of economic development and industrialization are distributed unevenly within countries. At the same time that economic growth generates new opportunities in certain places other areas are still dependent on traditional economic activities with low productivity. People living in these areas face few alternative options to their traditional

In these situations new arrangements are needed to ensure that the benefits of new economic activities are distributed fairly. Business partnerships between communities and private companies, in which NGOs and Government agencies act as facilitators, could be one of these solutions.

Intervention

The project will build capacities of the national governments, local governments and NGOs in forming public-private partnerships (PPP) to support livelihoods of vulnerable communities.

The project will achieve this goal through the implementation of a pilot project in India, the documentation of the experience and the dissemination of the lessons learned. The pilot project is being implemented in partnership with the local NGO Development Promotion Group (DPG).

Needs addressed

The intervention focuses in the district of Nagapattinam, in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. This was one of the worst affected areas by the Tsunami of 26 December 2004. Over 6,000 people died and almost 200,000 were evacuated in this district, from a total population of 1.5 million.

Most of the relief effort that followed the disaster focused on reconstruction of houses and other infrastructure. By early 2007 most damaged houses had been replaced or were close to finalisation. Since fishing is the main economic activity of the affected communities, livelihood support concentrated in replacing the fishing equipment that was lost in the disaster. Unfortunately the fishing resources were already overexploited before the Tsunami and the reconstruction efforts have actually increased the capacity of the fishing fleet, aggravating the problem.

There are very few alternative sources of livelihoods outside fishing in the affected communities. The situation is considerably worse for women, who traditionally don't go fishing and have even less opportunities for gainful employment.

Implementation strategy

The project will develop a new business opportunity in Nagapattinam and will build a partnership between the community and a private company that will jointly own and manage this business.

Three different investment opportunities were pre-selected as viable options to implement the pilot project and a feasibility study was

conducted to analyse them. After extensive consultations with communities, private companies and other stakeholders, garment manufacturing was selected as the most promising business opportunity.

The project is now creating a small manufacturing unit, where 50 young women from the affected communities will work. The total investment for this unit is in the range of US\$85,000 and it will initially be managed by DPG in collaboration with an established manufacturer.

The project will build the capacity of the community to take its responsibility in the management of the unit. After the first months of trial period the community will seek the partnership of a private company that will inject extra capital and will bring technical expertise and marketing channels.

The outcome of the pilot project will be a viable garment manufacturing unit in which the local community has a relevant degree of ownership and participation, and in which there is active participation of a private company (be it through equity or other sort of agreement).

The process and its results will be documented, and the findings will be disseminated by ESCAP in collaboration with other international agencies, the Government of India and private sector associations who show an interest in the practice.

More information

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