



A camp where people affected by the disaster have been living in for over four years. The landlord of the site had demolished some of the shelters the previous week in a bid to get some of the land back. February 2023

Do the Needs of a Disaster Recovery Project Remain the Same Five Years Later?

In September 2018, a devastating earthquake and tsunami hit Central Sulawesi in Indonesia, [causing over 4,400 deaths, displacing approximately 170,000 people, and resulting in over \\$1.3 billion in economic losses](#). Since then, the World Bank, together with other multilateral institutions, have been supporting the government of Indonesia to rebuild housing and public infrastructure. In June 2019, the World Bank Board of Executive Directors approved a [US \\$150 million loan](#) to Indonesia's Ministry of Public Works and Housing to finance the reconstruction and strengthening of housing and public facilities. Since 2020, the Bank Information Center and SKP-HAM, our partners in Palu, Central Sulawesi, have been [monitoring](#) the World Bank-funded [Central Sulawesi Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Project \(CSRRP\)](#).

The World Bank has used the CSRRP as an example of how key lessons in [data collection, inclusive planning, and consultation with communities](#) can lead to positive development outcomes. For example, in a World Bank

blog post on [5 tips for inclusive disaster risk management planning](#), the CSRRP experience is highlighted as one where the project “*prioritized gender-inclusive planning by integrating marginalized perspectives and empowering women through increased awareness of their rights and opportunities. The project effectively addressed the risks of gender-based violence (GBV) by implementing prevention measures during the reconstruction process.*”

However, while the end goal of the project is to build back better, there have been significant delays in the project, causing harm to communities who have not received the support they need during the construction phase of project implementation.

Following the disaster, affected communities were housed in temporary camps until their new housing could be constructed, with an estimated two-year timeline for completion. Construction has taken much longer than expected due to several issues, including long

processes, delays in land acquisition for new housing sites, and much of the originally inhabited land not being safe for construction due to liquefaction. Additionally, the identified sites for new housing required new grid infrastructure, such as water and electricity, that needed to be laid out, and the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant delays from 2020 onwards.

As of March 2024, the situation in Palu for those still living in camps continues to be quite dire, with thousands of families living in infrastructure and housing that was not meant to last almost five years. The significant delays in building permanent housing have meant that there are families living on privately owned land facing eviction (some live in camps owned by the State while some are on private land that was given for temporary housing). Families have no idea when their new housing will be ready - some sites haven't even laid the foundation for the housing. Communication regarding delays and estimated timelines has been extremely poor, with local civil society organizations finding it hard to obtain information from implementing agencies and World Bank staff. Housing delays aside, our monitoring has shown that camps are located a significant distance from schools and livelihood opportunities, increasing expenses for families to continue with education and income generation.

For persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups, there are added levels of precarity that they have had to navigate through these delays. The Bank already has specific reports on [disability-inclusive disaster recovery](#), including considering the needs and participation of persons with disabilities in post-disaster reconstruction and economic inclusion. However, none of the existing frameworks and guidance literature address the needs of marginalized groups beyond the project design and planning stage, particularly in dealing with significant delays in construction and addressing differentiated impacts. The Central Sulawesi reconstruction and recovery is the perfect example of this, as the universal design of public infrastructure in Palu funded by the Bank is continuously cited as a good practice of disability-inclusive recovery. While accessible public infrastructure is vital, there has been nothing said about the quality of life and plight of those living in camps that are no longer adequate to meet the various needs of affected families. In particular, the negative impacts of the project on children - irregular attendance in school and increased costs to travel to school - are irreversible and will ultimately undermine the Bank's efforts to facilitate development in Central Sulawesi.

Timely disclosure of documents is key in high-risk projects in particular, and SKP-HAM [noted in their monitoring that](#)

[even in late 2020](#), there was no disclosure of documents or protocols regarding Gender Based Violence or Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEA/H), including Child SEA/H. There was no coordination with any local stakeholders involved in gender or health work, and no clarity around the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) or protocols for complaints and case handling. By early 2023, the Gender Action Plans and the SEA/H documents that were supposed to be prepared were not disclosed on the Bank website, making it difficult for civil society to see whether protocols, mitigation measures, and other processes were adequate and being implemented on the ground.

Prolonged delays in reconstruction and recovery lead to affected communities being impacted in different ways beyond the impact of the initial disaster. There is literature on disability-inclusive Disaster Risk Management (DRM), including guidance notes produced by the [World Bank](#) and the [Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery \(GFDRR\)](#), which the Bank manages. However, there is little attention paid to post-disaster reconstruction that is unable to follow estimated delivery schedules. This is not unique to the Central Sulawesi reconstruction, and delays in construction following any major disaster have been the norm globally.

Taking this into account, the World Bank should incorporate the following lessons:

1. Consolidate lessons learned from the experiences of delays in post-disaster reconstruction and recovery in different countries and update existing frameworks to guide implementing agencies and Bank staff on effectively dealing with prolonged delays.
2. Building back better through permanent housing and improved infrastructure should not be the only objective of post-disaster reconstruction. It must also prioritize the well-being and quality of life of affected communities throughout the construction period, building in contingencies to provide this through delays and other unexpected events that may occur.
3. Where infrastructure delivery is delayed, repeat the data collection and enumeration conducted at the beginning of the project to assess if community needs have changed or have been met over time, and identify what new data points (such as increase in number of children, new needs of school-going children, infrastructural or environment concerns that may have since changed) may need to be considered in project implementation.

4. Timely information disclosure of project documents is vital for communities and civil society to access information they may not otherwise easily receive from implementing partners. Awareness material for communities must also include information on how to access project documents, GRMs, and the Inspection Panel. These documents must be disclosed in simplified, non-technical language, in local languages, and in accessible formats for persons with disabilities. They should also be available in a public space, such as a community center, and not rely on communities having to download and print documents themselves.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE ISSUES RAISED IN THIS REPORT, PLEASE CONTACT BANK INFORMATION CENTER AT:

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