How do you Build Back Better so no one is left behind?

Lessons from Sint Maarten, Dutch Caribbean, post-Hurricane Irma

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Abstract

The Sendai Framework and Sustainable Development Goals call for action to build back better in ways that leave no one behind. At the same time, ensuring local voice is increasingly central to humanitarian action. These ambitions contrast with limited analysis on how local actors might be supported through response and recovery so that no one is left behind, nor how far recommendations are specific or generalisable across richer and poorer country contexts. Starting with lessons learnt from the experience of survivors and community organisations in post-disaster Sint Maarten, a high-income state-led response, these are contrasted with priorities derived from lower income, humanitarian-led responses. Resulting differences reflect the importance of economic resources as the basis for individual self-reliance and a fragmented civil society with limited ambitions for leadership in Sint Maarten. Strong cross-cultural alignment nevertheless allows for a globally relevant and yet contextually sensitive framework for survivor led response and reconstruction.

Key Words

Resilience, Community-Led Response, Localisation, Build Back Better, Sint Maarten, Hurricane Irma, Leave no one behind

1 Introduction

Build Back Better (BBB) is a clarion call to create more resilient nations and communities supporting the global ambitions of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This paper finds that priorities for local recovery currently confined to evidence derived from humanitarian interventions in low-income contexts are similarly voiced by survivors in a relatively high-income jurisdiction undergoing state-led response and recovery. While development contexts differ widely, the experiences, aspirations and challenges faced by local actors

seeking to retain dignity and protect their self-determination and economic wellbeing through the response and recovery process is strongly consistent. This commonality provides the basis for learning across more predominantly humanitarian-led (lower-income country) and state-led (higher-income country) contexts. It demonstrates scope for concrete, global policy that can be taken-up by humanitarian and government agencies to turn the aspirations for a globally relevant Agenda 2030, including government commitments for BBB in the Sendai Framework, into joined-up policy frameworks and actions on the ground.

BBB is defined by the United Nations (UN) as, 'the use of the recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction phases after a disaster to increase the resilience of nations and communities through integrating disaster risk reduction measures into the restoration of physical infrastructure and societal systems, and into the revitalization of livelihoods, economies, and the environment (United Nations General Assembly, 2016). Build Back Better is championed in the fourth of five priority action areas under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 (SF). The SF aims to achieve the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental spheres.

A number of SF indicators have been adopted by the SDGs (UN Statistics, 2018) so that the aims of both international frameworks are intimately connected.[1] This, so called Agenda 2030, has led to the formal adoption of Sendai indicators for the SDG process and many viewing the former 'as a 'how to' for implementing the higher-level objectives on disaster in the SDGs' (Peters et al., 2016). However, the SF and its indicators are weakened by parallel processes of prioritisation from governments deploying national frameworks and reporting and humanitarian actors that work outside these formal frameworks yet with considerable impact on performance, especially for low-income, disaster prone countries. Although the Sendai Framework and associated processes recognise the importance of local and community based actors, particularly at the local level, the lack of coordination reflects the inexistence of local plans and platforms (Djalante and Lassa, 2019).

The separation of learning across humanitarian and state-led action and between poorer and richer country contexts is maintained also in the academic literature and reflects differences in resources and institutional capacities (WDR, 2014). Evidence from humanitarian action

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[1] e.g., 1.5, 11.5, 11.B, 13.1, .2, .3.

2

identifies challenges for BBB when temporary shelter becomes permanent or access to land-rights, livelihoods, social cohesion and psychological health are harmed during response and reconstruction (Davidson et al., 2007; Harvey, 2009; Walter et al., 2015). In richer country contexts concerns highlight how recovery is inhibited by actions that undermine recovery for the less wealthy, including minority groups, for example difficulties in accessing state funding by elderly and migrant groups, or renters (Kammerbauer and Wamsler, 2015; Fussell, 2015), response that is overly militarised or criminalises survivors (Eggers, 2011) or when systems for insurance payments are sown with psychological as well as economic impacts for survivors (Paranjothy et al., 2011). In both contexts individuals and communities may be involved in self-recovery efforts long before national or humanitarian assistance arrives (Twigg, 2017). Although not always explicit, recovery efforts are political processes with winners and losers. To prevent leaving people behind in BBB there is a common need to make sure that those who actually experience these events have a voice in reconstruction processes (Cretney, 2017). This is necessary for both democratic – respecting local agency and ensuring the legitimacy of recovery processes – and pragmatic reasons i.e. recognising the value of experiential knowledge to learn and build back better.

2. Localisation, the SDGs and BBB

Localisation processes are crucial to ensure no one is left behind. The Localisation agenda is a specific response to the World Humanitarian Summit, Global Challenge on Localisation which identifies improved humanitarian outcomes where national and local actors lead and receive a larger share of funding directly, rather than via international 'funding intermediaries' (i.e. international aid agencies and NGOs) (Charter 4 Change, 2016). The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the forerunner to the SDGs, were heavily criticised for measuring average attainment within country and not fully taking into account those at the bottom of the performance bracket (Kabeer, 2010; Chang, 2015). To counter such criticism, the SDGs have been formulated as an agenda 'of the people, by the people and for the people' (Amnesty International, 2016) to ensure that the poor and marginalised are not 'left behind.' Localisation has an important role to play here, as it aims to put the last first and ensure that areas of relative deprivation are targeted when implementing the SDGs at the local level (African Civil Society Circle, 2016). However, there is still a lack of implementation and a corresponding evidence base for the localisation agenda (Van Voorst and Hillhorst, 2017). As part of this, there is a need to ensure local realities are captured. If not, there is

danger that some communities will be left behind. Already, high-level SDG framework (UN Economic and Social Council, 2016) indicators have been criticised for being too binary (which could lead to, for example, transgender or intersex communities not included in sex data), whilst minority populations may not want to be counted in state-run processes due to fear of discrimination (Moultrie, 2017).

Participation by local, so-called beneficiary, communities in development and humanitarian practice has been the subject of much debate over the last four decades (Hickey and Mohan, 2004; Tozier de la Poterie and Baudoin, 2015). Community participation has been both vaunted by academia and practitioners as the key line of travel to improve outcomes for beneficiaries whilst at the same time denigrated as a buzzword with the effect of depoliticizing projects, legitimize technocratic solutions and clandestinely reinforce existing power relations at both the local and the international levels. (Tozier de la Poterie and Baudoin, 2015). When communities are integrated into the upfront stages of project design, they can have an important impact on the project with long-term advantages to them and to the other stakeholders (Davidson et al., 2007). When humanitarian action does not involve so-called beneficiaries, it can lead to disaster relief that inadvertently rebuilds structures of vulnerability (Eadie et al., 2017). At its most destructive this can create inequities, gender and conflict-insensitive programmes, indignities, cultural offence and waste (Harvey, 2009).

For the humanitarian sector, although methods for the involvement of local and community actors are a subject for continuing debate (Edwards, 2017), formal recognition of the value of local perspectives, values and knowledges in recent high level policy and practice directives (see Grand Bargain; Charter for Change; ODI, 2016[2]) has reinterpreted local actors not "as helpless and dependent victims; rather…as agents for change in rebuilding their lives and their communities" (Archer and Boonyabancha, 2011: 351). This has stimulated a range of humanitarian engagement frameworks built around local agency. These range from 'community and/or survivor-led response' (Corbett, 2018), 'community-led reconstruction' (Crawford and Morrison, 2018), to 'owner-driven reconstruction' (Archer and Boonyabancha, 2011); and a diversity of approaches from, communities front and centre in negotiations with government (Crawford and Morrison, 2018); to communities being in control of small-scale resources to build resilience in disaster settings (Corbett, 2018); and local communities being

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[2] See Grand Bargain https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/initiatives/3861; Charter for Change https://charter4change.org/ ; ODI (2016) Time to Let Go https://www.odi.org/hpg/remake-aid/ (all last accessed on 19/7/18)

tapped for information that will support resilient and sustainable disaster relief strategies (Eadie et al., 2017). Existing work on localisation of relevance to BBB has then been characterized by context driven insights with little overarching scope for generalizability of principles.

Across contexts, it is the marginalised – the already left behind – who are harder to reach and can be missed by international and national disaster response efforts compounding exclusion. This experience is not confined to poorer states but observed also in wealthier but still unequal social contexts where humanitarian crises can reveal hidden or denied vulnerable populations and the "worrying reality behind positive economic data" (Ramalingam and Mitchell, 2014, p. 10). Great effort in the literature and practice is focussed on low and middle-income country contexts where vulnerability and associated governance weaknesses are most prominent. Much less effort is placed on relatively higher income country contexts where vulnerability can be hidden. These lacunae hide the presence of the poor in richer contexts and underplay the significance of relative poverty and scope for joined up global prioritisation for those marginalised by development (Pecha Garzon, 2017) through response and reconstruction processes that may perpetuate poverty traps (Carter et al., 2007). The BBB and global SDGs agendas make us look to the marginal and vulnerable in *all* contexts and ask how disaster management can be leveraged to enable sustainable development across societies. In contrast with this global vision, there is relatively little evidence of the transferability of lessons from disaster response and recovery between poorer-country and richer-country contexts. A gap this paper seeks in part to resolve.

To help open a more global and yet locally sensitive approach to BBB we present an analysis of perspectives from survivors of disaster experienced in a wealthy territory framed by priorities already identified from research undertaken in poorer country contexts. The aim is to demonstrate scope for policy thinking on fundamental and actionable principles that can work across the established divide of humanitarian-led poorer country and government-led richer country response and reconstruction action. This is part of a three-year study, Linking Preparedness, Response and Resilience (LPRR), which presents the views of survivors and first responders in disaster and protracted crisis settings. It used a methodology that gave space for survivors to shape the key messages coming from analysis. This is a break with more formalised processes, which often emphasise a policy-based differentiation of issues and in so doing pre-figure discussion and identified recommendations. As the evidence base

5

was informed and shaped by local survivor needs, insight generated pinpointed priorities for longer term resilience building sensitive to richer and poorer country contexts – global yet locally sensitive - for building back better and contributing to the SDG goals.

3 Project Background

The overall goal of the LPRR project[3] was to see how disaster response could be strengthened to enable (and not undermine) long-term community resilience building. Over a two-year period, 327 first responders and survivors were interviewed from a mixture of poorer country post-disaster and protracted crisis settings[4] in order to decipher their needs and priorities. These translated into six key areas or principles, which respondents saw as critical to community resilience that could enhance wellbeing through building back better (see Murphy et al. 2018 for a detailed account and analysis):

1. Allow and enable the community to co-run the response.
2. Where feasible, coordinate interventions and work with the government.
3. Support community cohesion and establish effective two-way communication between crises survivors and implementing organizations
4. Address underlying causes of vulnerability: protect and prepare
5. Recognize psycho-social support
6. Livelihoods and savings

Following the devastation caused by of hurricane Irma, on Sint Marten a small territory in the Caribbean, the methodology used in the LPRR project and the principles already derived were seen as potentially relevant. Low-income impacted survivors post-Irma were vulnerable to being excluded from state-led response. In April 2018 following initial key informant interviews, a workshop was held with survivors, first responders and community organizations in Sint Maarten.

The key methodology was a workshop with participants[5] identified via a Red Cross registration list for local Community Based Organisations (CBOs). These were then

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[3] Ended April 2018. Part of the START Disasters and Emergency Preparedness Programme, funded by DFID https://bit.ly/2Hv9VrP
[4] The Philippines, Kenya, Indonesia, Pakistan, Colombia, Bangladesh and DRC *(see detailed explanation of respective crises in Annex, Table 1).*
[5] See Annex B

6

supplemented through contacts via a local organisation and through desk-based research. We cannot claim that the list is exhaustive or representative and particular communities of migrants were absent from the discussions. However, over 40 local organisations were contacted and the lengthy process to identify relevant organisations – no overarching organisations/umbrellas organisations emerged – is perhaps indicative of the disparate nature of civil society in Sint Maarten. The focus for participants was an open workshop discussion on rebuilding principles post-Hurricane Irma. These were grouped around emerging themes i.e. Sint Maarten CBO rebuilding principles. The six LPRR principles were then introduced and expanded upon, but only after the open discussion, so as to avoid pre-structuring participants' initial views. The focus group format meant it was impossible to disaggregate difference in viewpoint or explore power differences that might have been at play in the discussion – but this also provided a time efficient and culturally recognised format from stakeholder perspectives for gathering stakeholders and minimising the impact of the research on the recovery efforts they were engaged in. This was an action research exercise, in that it aimed to share lessons horizontally with and from other contexts, but also bring the findings to bear on an EU-sponsored post disaster assessment for Sint Maarten which the authors were also engaged with.

The paper will first detail the Sint Maarten context. It will then focus on the priorities of Sint Maarten survivors and first responders and how the principles derived from lower-income contexts contrast with the responses from Sint Maarten. This will both allow for an understanding of where the gaps are in comparison with the community derived framework in lower income contexts and provide an indication of what higher income states need in order to build back better and ensure an inclusive response, in the context of the governance and vulnerability of a small island Caribbean nation.

4 Disaster Context, Impacts and Response

Sint Maarten is a small island state with a total landmass of 34 sq. km (CIA World Factbook, 2018) and a population of 39 969, which translates into a high population density of 1 175.6 people per sq. km (World Bank, 2016)(one of the highest urban densities in the Caribbean region). It shares its border with St. Martin, a French overseas territory (Eurostat, 2015). Sint Maarten has the status of a constituent country within the Kingdom of Netherlands, having gained full autonomy in internal affairs since 2010 (de Wit, 2015). The Dutch government has

7

control over defence and foreign affairs and at times has had a fractious relationship with its former colony – the administration of former Prime Minister, William Marlin, collapsed in November 2017 after he refused to accept The Hague's terms for disaster relief funding post-Irma. Although now formally financially independent – albeit under certain fiscal rules set down with devolution – the recovery process post-Irma was heavily marked by this post-disaster dependence on the metropole. The Netherlands pledged €550 million to help rebuild the island, on condition that the local authorities set up an anti-corruption watchdog and temporarily (hand) over border controls (DutchNews.nl., 2018).

Sint Maarten is designated by the World Bank as a high-income state with a GDP per capita of \$22 000[6]. As one of the more prosperous locales in the Caribbean it attracts high numbers of migrants – both officially employed and informal – from the surrounding region. Migrants constitute a largely vulnerable, and in many cases, marginalised group on the island – some 15 000 are reported to be undocumented. Despite a relatively high mean level of income, there are stark inequalities – in 2011, a government census reported 22 per cent of the population without income (de Wit, 2015).

The annual Hurricane Season lasts from July - November, with most notable events occurring in August, September and October. Prior to Hurricane Irma, Luis in 1995, a category four, was the most destructive hurricane in recent experience. At 07.15 on September 6, 2017 Hurricane Irma made landfall on the island of Saint Martin as a force four hurricane. The total impact of Hurricane Irma in Sint Maarten is estimated to be more than US\$2 billion – including direct physical damage, revenue and other income losses. Irma damaged 70% of all structures and caused four direct deaths. It is calculated that it will take years for the island to recover economically (UNESCO-IHE, 2018).

The governance context for recovery reflects the historic marginalisation of Sint Maarten within the Kingdom of the Netherlands and sets the context for community inclusion. The long-standing influence of elite landowning families and related clientelism in a starkly divided society means that government-community relations are highly politicised and the public function of civil society groups historically weak. Government ministries are resource and capacity constrained under a highly unstable political system, with political interests

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[6] There are a lot of competing figures – World Bank data is unclear/unavailable. These are 2014 figures based on data from the Central Bank of Curacao and Sint Maarten and the Dutch Financial Supervisory Council (de Wit, C.W., 2015).

8

often bound by patronage and personal interests in land and property development (Fraser 2016). The island therefore shares similarities in its relationship with the metropole with other overseas territories and with decentralised governance systems elsewhere, whilst exhibiting internal tendencies in line with the politics of other island states, which tend to exclude the interests of vulnerable groups (Wilkinson 2015).

While governance weaknesses in Sint Maarten strongly influenced the nature of the recovery process, the process has been principally state led. Negotiations between the local and Dutch government have set over-arching priorities for the island, with Dutch funding guiding the process. The majority of Dutch funding for reconstruction was not channelled directly through the national government but administered by the World Bank (UNESCO-IHE, 2018). Compared to major disasters in other relatively developed contexts, however, (and given that as a high-income state St Maarten is not eligible for Overseas Development Assistance) a large number of international humanitarian organisations also became involved in the rebuilding post-Irma, with many arriving on the island for the first time. This presented an unprecedented governance situation in the context of already constrained capacities. The organisations comprised International NGOs (INGOs) such as Samaritan's Purse, White and Yellow Cross, the Salvation Army and the Red Cross, plus various UN bodies. These organisations used different criteria to prioritise who benefits from their activities. Poor coordination amongst international actors and constrained local government capacity for coordination and implementation meant that the distribution of roles and responsibilities between the local government and NGOs was not always clear. The resulting complexity led to some parts of the population (e.g. undocumented people who may want to avoid being on official government records) being left out of recovery assistance and planning. The political context and need to legitimate activities with local government meant that INGOs were often cautious to undertake complete rebuilding activities, preferring repairs, so those illegally settled (who had been the most affected by the disaster) missed out on support. Local organisations and first responders had some small-scale partnerships with international actors, but this was not systematic nor widespread.

As a semi-autonomous small-island state, Sint Maarten is not representative of a post-disaster higher-income country. Its small island status has imposed an historic resource constraint while its politics and institutions are marked by it being a small society, typically run on personal relationships. Its geographic location means it is highly exposed to weather

9

and climate-related shocks, which can lead to economic losses outweighing national GDP. However, as it shares a number of key drivers with middle-income contexts, and those transitioning from lower-income status, it is a relevant case study through which to test the transferability of survivor priorities for response and recovery reported from low-income country contexts. These include high levels of inequality in terms of income and access to goods and services (due to large numbers of 'illegal' migrants); pockets of persistent poverty (with one in five out of work); under-developed social welfare systems and large-scale immigration. As such it has a significant, marginalised and vulnerable population.

5 Findings and Analysis

The interest of this paper is in testing the relevance of principles for survivor led response and reconstruction developed in low-income country contexts with the stated experiences of local actors in the high-income case of Sint Maarten, to ask how transferrable these principles might be. In this section the views of local survivors in Sint Maarten are reported and then analysed against the principles set out in Section 3, to inform its further development.

5.1 Rebuilding Principles
Four key areas emerged from open discussion in the April 2018 workshop:

Vulnerability and social protection: CBOs confirmed a need to protect the most vulnerable. The elderly population and poorer communities (particularly migrants) struggled for basic needs i.e. for foodstuffs and adequate shelter. There is only a small amount of social housing stock on the island, and the government house rebuilding programme was very limited. For the majority of pensioners and migrant workers at the lower end of the income scale insurance was too costly to afford. Poorer individuals also struggled to access aid disbursement points – some saw no aid for over two weeks post-Hurricane. Where there had been efforts to register survivors for aid, undocumented migrants did not speak out or register for fear of being deported. In part this reflected the lack of recognition and support given to undocumented migrants by the Sint Maarten government. Many undocumented migrants illegally rented property from local land-owning elites. Despite being among the most impacted groups, this government position constrained access for international NGOs. This was particularly the case for interventions to deliver post-disaster shelter and housing

10

with programmes focused on psychosocial support or behavioural change being more accessible.

Livelihood support: Hurricane Irma decimated the tourist industry and with it by far the biggest employer, with over 80% of the workforce dependent on the sector (CIA World Factbook, 2018). With no social safety net and state and private capital focus on building work to reconstruct tourist infrastructure female workers and the low skilled, who were most dependent on service sector jobs in tourism were struggling. With many single female-headed households on the island, CBOs highlighted a need to support and re-train this constituent. Participants confirmed that undocumented migrants would work for less than locals, and in poorly regulated environments. Many were turning to the informal sector to support themselves – this included working as unregistered taxis and minibus transport; traders in scrap metal; and sub-contractors for the on-going (re-)construction industry (women were also working as traders and sub-contractors). Workshop participants stressed that Sint Maarten government should have made it easier for people to formally access these two sectors and make licences more available. Lack of trained labour – for example, to carry out technical assessments of housing repairs – led to imported foreign labour being used over local labour, particularly by international NGOs, rather than greater support being made available for local training programmes. This has slowed the pace of the recovery overall.

Coordination (and communication) for the response: CBOs and first responders felt the government was very poor in coordinating the response to Irma (despite working groups between the government and INGOs being set up by international agencies and relevant ministries). An emergency response plan was in place before the event and identified emergency support responsibilities, including through evacuation, shelters, relief and mass care. However, the functioning of this plan was undermined by different factors including political circumstances (which prevented the national disaster coordinator playing his part); lack of training and rehearsal, as well as the scale of Irma, with first responders also victims.

There was no formal or centralised information source on aid disbursement which instead survivors heard about through rumour and word of mouth. Some international NGOs contributed to this poor transparency environment with communities unclear why others – rather than themselves – qualified and received aid (leading to mistrust and suspicion). For

11

CBOs they were unsure how to support the response. There was a very poor information-sharing culture in Sint Maarten and no coordination or support from government – national disaster plans were not shared, nor government information coordinated or accessible. There was also no culture or history of partnership with government, with difficulties enhanced by weak local governance mechanisms – local community councils were largely dormant or non-functioning. The fact that civil society itself was also not coordinated or organised hampered its ability to be a strong partner for government (and undermined a joined-up response).

Despite being a high-income state, this reflected the limits of a constrained local government and public sector that had been historically de-administered as a colonial dependency in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. While there was a culture of informal working with non-governmental partners due to historic capacity constraints (Fraser, 2016), partnerships with communities had historically relied on clientelistic and party-based ties. External intergovernmental agencies (e.g. UNICEF) contributed to the reinforcement of government capacities in different sectors, such as education and justice, but long-term commitment was uncertain.

Psychosocial Support: For CBOs the principle barrier to providing psychological support was being able to identify those in need – there were cultural sensitivities to admitting mental health issues, across both migrant (particularly Indian/Chinese) and Caribbean communities. The shock of the hurricane aside the key driver of mental health problems since Irma was the loss of livelihoods, which on broad consensus had contributed to a sharp rise in domestic violence in Sint Maarten. Participants also highlighted looting before, during and after Irma also as having a severe effect on psychological wellbeing. There was a palpable sense of upset that fellow islanders could engage in such activity, with a sense that the social fabric had been damaged as a result – this is addressed in the 'social cohesion' section below. There was also recognition amongst CBOs that first responders needed psychological support too.

5.2 A Comparison of Rebuilding Principles

After discussion on rebuilding priorities the six core principles set out in Section 4. were introduced to respondents. This elicited shared agreement in a number of areas, including:

12

- a lack of information on response interventions caused anxiety and frustration i.e. timing, location, which groups are supported and why;

- the need to address root causes of vulnerability – the phrase 'vulnerable before a disaster, vulnerable after a disaster' particularly resonated;

- the importance of support for those suffering from mental trauma, for example a faith leader.

The following table summarises the preceding analysis and draws out the robustness of the underlying principles first derived from low income country contexts and tested against the experiences of survivors in the high-income context of Sint Maarten.

Table 1: Alignment LPRR principles and Sint Maarten CBO principles

Original LPRR principles, derived from low-income country, humanitarian-led response contexts	Sint Maarten CBO priorities, derived from high-income country, state-led response context	Areas of overlap / divergence Sint Maarten
Allow and enable the community to co-run the response	Not a priority	Limited alignment. Expectation that action from government or the capacity of individuals will determine response (even when these fall short in equity or resilience)
Coordinate interventions and work with the government	A priority for the coordination and communication of response activity	Strong alignment. Expectation mainly on government actors to manage the response. Weaknesses here were a key criticism.
Support community cohesion and establish effective two-way communication between crises survivors and implementing organisations	A priority for coordination and communication of response activity	Limited alignment. Two-way communication was a priority and weaknesses strongly criticised. Community cohesion was less emphasised with more reliance on individual resource access.
Address underlying causes of vulnerability: protect and prepare	A priority to address underlying inequality in labour market access in the absence of state social protection	Strong alignment. Protection of the most vulnerable in society – the isolated elderly, female headed households and illegal migrants.
Include psychosocial support	A priority for healthy recovery	Strong alignment. Emphasising local capacities over external professionalisation for mental

13

		health support
Invest in livelihoods and savings	A priority for building household economic resilience through diversification of economic opportunity and enabling secure working conditions	Strong Alignment. Skill enhancement to enable more diversified livelihoods remains a priority though focus is on formal sector and waged labour

Such similarities suggest that requirements for integrating survivor-based BBB into response and recovery are largely the same across socio-economic and geographical environments. Perhaps this is not surprising, to build back better community needs and priorities, encompass universal tenets of human need from sustainable livelihoods; housing; health (and mental well-being) to civic engagement and governance (OECD, 2013).

Divergencies though also point to the need for sensitivity to balance context in fine tuning general principles. Sint Maarten CBOs did not directly express the need to co-run the disaster response, despite this being a key condition for low-income country survivors faced with humanitarian led response and reconstruction. This is a significant departure. In addition, community cohesion was largely absent – again this was an important issue for low-income country survivors who had witnessed the negative effects of external aid interventions on social harmony in their immediate locale. These divergencies are discussed below.

It should be noted that for the Sint Maarten respondents the most important rebuilding principle was protection of the most marginalised survivors and the need for social protection in the absence of a state financed social safety net. This was followed by livelihood support; however, one participant noted that without coordination for the response 'you have nothing.'

The following section provides detailed analysis on each original principle in comparison to the views of survivors from Sint Maarten to draw out any particular or additional characteristics that need to be addressed in order for higher income societies to build back better – and in ways that leave no one behind:

Allow and enable the community to co-run the response

This principle was not expressed directly by the Sint Maarten respondents. There was an assumption that government would solely manage the response, with citizen agency

14

unnecessary. There are several possible explanations for this view. Firstly, the Disaster Risk Management (DRM) structure in Sint Maarten is top-down, reflecting the system set up by the Dutch government for the Antilles as a whole following the 1990s hurricanes. This is similar to many richer and middle-income countries, where formal government structures and mechanisms are mandated to respond to disaster.[7] Secondly, the history of weak civil society, unsupported by government, and dependency on government through clientelistic relationships (de Wit, 2015), accompanied by societal mistrust in government and the marginalisation and silence of migrant groups, has undermined citizen agency. Thirdly, the heterogeneous nature of Sint Maarten society, and division into ethnicity and church-based civil associations, undermined a broader sense of community action. This embedded the view that civil society capacity and experience in Sint Maarten was weak. It was perhaps outside of the purview of local actors to lead a response – from a knowledge perspective and also due to a lack of exposure to aid interventions since the 1990s and the last major hurricanes. In contrast survivors from lower-income contexts who helped define the original set of principles lived in contexts of protracted crisis and were experienced in navigating a long, embedded humanitarian response in their locale (Di Vicenz and Murphy, 2017).

Local access to resource also shaped survivor action. Sint Maarten included survivors with access to personal wealth with which to absorb shock and potentially adapt. For migrants on the island access to financial resources was associated with social capital via networks in the wider Caribbean. A number of migrants returned to their native country following the hurricane, encouraged by the government of Sint Maarten. In addition, at the time of the research there were still limited public resources available for organised recovery projects. However, the high burden of reporting and disclosure procedures attached to the management of recovery projects precluded smaller and more local-based organisations from accessing funds.

A further key driver for community-led response was the need to express citizen agency. As evidence from the original low-income cases show, "calls for survivor-led response was a reaction to the experience of survivors who had been marginalized from their own recovery through a lack of decision-making power" (Murphy et al., 2018, p. 138). Interestingly, this has emerged in Sint Maarten. A group in the St. Peters district organised the local community to prepare for the upcoming hurricane season. In the face of a non-functioning community

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[7] The Dutch government's decision to channel aid via the World Bank is further evidence of this top-down structure.

council they formulated preparedness plans and reached out to share information with other districts. Furthermore, agency and coping strategies included migrants returning to their native locales; workers engaging in the informal sector and communities organising and engaging in illicit activity (looting).

Coordinate interventions and work with the government

There was shared agreement on the need for government to take responsibility in ensuring a coordinated response, with low-income country respondents also highlighting local government as integral to local leadership in response and reconstruction (Murphy et al., 2018). In Sint Maarten devolved local governance through community councils was largely dormant and non-functioning creating a gap that CBOs were challenged to fill. Both low-income and Sint Maarten respondents also identified a role for humanitarian actors and programmes to support and strengthen government capacity in disaster response (Murphy et al., 2017). It caused disquiet amongst workshop participants in Sint Maarten that this was not happening[8]. Local government was left out of strategic funding and implementation for response and recovery projects which was dominated by a large World Bank loan administered by the Dutch government (although a steering group composed of the Sint Maarten government, Dutch government and World Bank oversaw project disbursement). This reflects Sint Maarten's constitutional settlement with the Kingdom of the Netherlands, a Dutch Caribbean model of negotiated autonomy which also differs from French and British governance arrangements with their overseas territories, (Wilkinson, 2015). The lack of Sint Maarten government control over aid funds – and consequent lack of self-determination despite democratically-mandated political autonomy – highlights the particular challenges for overseas territories with on-going constitutional and political ties to wealthy nations.

Support community cohesion and establish effective two-way communication between crises survivors and implementing organizations

Community cohesion was not emphasized by Sint Maarten respondents who maintained wellbeing through more direct resource access than was the case in poorer country contexts. There was only small-scale evidence of inter-community tension arising from the limited and difficult to access government response. Workshop participants from the Haitian community, as representative of a significant migrant community, saw no real issues at all. Community

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[8] The participants response could reflect a 'popular' narrative about political events post-Irma despite the fact that national priorities have been reflected in the World Bank plan (see https://bit.ly/2LdKoZj) and the Dutch government is pushing transparency reforms in SXM that many of the population would favour.

cohesion, key for wellbeing in the lower-income case studies, (Murphy et al., 2017) is at risk for those who are solely dependent on aid to mitigate the shock of a disaster. Indeed, as evidence from the Murphy et al (2018) states, "social cohesion was vulnerable to both the disaster event *and* external interventions, especially for large events with multiple, often overwhelming, external agency activity" (p. 141) – so that two-way communication between survivors and implementing agencies is key. In contrast, a significant proportion of the population in Sint Maarten had access to resources, which permitted a level of independence from aid interventions – and in the absence of any social welfare or public support system, they were historically accustomed to self-reliance.

Furthermore, the scale of the disaster and attendant response was very different from the low-income cases. In the 2010 floods in Sindh Valley, Pakistan, for example, 880,000 houses were completely or partially damaged, 200,000 people were killed, and 1.8 million people displaced (Murphy et al., 2016). Such a large-scale disaster does seem to necessitate large external agency activity. In contrast, four people were directly killed by Hurricane Irma out of an official population of 40 000. International actors were in attendance on a scale unprecedented for St Maarten's history but the scale of the intervention was very different. There were not the same pressures on community cohesion through competition for resources in Sint Maarten compared with disasters that affect large populations and who are reliant on external agency to survive.

Address underlying causes of vulnerability: protect and prepare

CBOs in Sint Maarten shared the low-income country respondents' priority to not only protect the most vulnerable, but address the underlying causes that reproduced and reinforced vulnerability and poverty. This resonated with Sint Maarten respondents who coalesced around the concept of being 'vulnerable before a crisis, makes you more vulnerable after it.' However, low income country respondents also recognised that post-disaster interventions were a key moment to campaign for human rights and social protection, an opportunity for social transformation processes and to 'focus on challenging the unequal power dynamics within society.' (Murphy et al., 2017). In Sint Maarten opportunities for transformation were not sought or expressed. Emphasis was on critique of government response rather than seeking leverage for rights and wellbeing gains through response and reconstruction.

17

The general low capacity, knowledge and skillset of Sint Maarten civil society perhaps limited aspirations and activities, and is in stark contrast to many of the low-income country contexts, which had highly evolved, networked and engaged non-governmental bodies. The exception to this was local unions who had successfully advocated for the rights of their members. Local CBOs had not followed this approach and were more focussed on gap filling for basic needs than enabling rights claims. The workshop itself provided a rare space for exchange and learning between trade unions and CBOs and helped facilitate a nascent collective and strategic approach from civil society. As participants said immediately post-workshop, "we know what we have to work on now – we need to get together as organisations and go to government…It was a good start for collaboration and getting organised."

Include psychosocial support

This was also clearly recognised and expressed by Sint Maarten CBOs. For women over 50 the loss of livelihoods, compounded by the damage caused by Irma, led to a significant rise in mental health issues. Also common with low-income country contexts was a desire not for external professional interventions but for those trusted social actors already locally present to be supported. In particular faith leaders were praised for their roles in helping survivors recover from trauma (Murphy et al., 2017). As a religious country, with many churches and attendant groups, they were well represented in Sint Maarten, it was evident that faith leaders and communities were a valued, and important resource for psychosocial support in the post-Irma environment.

Invest in livelihoods and savings

The economy of Sint Maarten is very different to the studied low-income country contexts where the majority population was rural and reliant on subsistence farming, following long-established livelihood models. In Sint Maarten subsistence agriculture was not found with agriculture only employing 1% of the workforce. Livelihoods in Sint Maarten were generated from wage labour and this was reliant on tourism and light industry (CIA World Factbook, 2018).

However, in terms of disaster recovery, there is a key parity. Evidence from the low-income cases highlighted the difficulties that post-disaster agriculture dependent communities face in finding alternative livelihoods in the midst of land ruined by storms and floods (Murphy et

18

al., 2017). In Sint Maarten the majority also had to face the economic shock of losing employment and so livelihood. The immediate economic priority was the same – as Sint Maarten CBOs stressed: to re-train those affected in order to access alternative livelihoods. This was also a major finding from the low-income cases, with survivors urging for more training opportunities to strengthen their abilities and to diversify in (their) post-disaster settings (Corbett, 2018).

One key difference in Sint Maarten derived from the migratory behaviour of Sint Maarten's low-income, impacted population. Data shows that a large proportion of Sint Maarten migrants are highly mobile, with 30 per cent transferring to the US and Western Europe to find alternative employment within a five-year span (de Wit, 2015). In addition, those with less skills, savings and lower-incomes in Sint Maarten resorted to alternative livelihood options in the informal sector as a result of losing formal employment post-Irma.

Conclusion

The high level of consensus between Sint Maarten survivor and first responder priorities with the views of low-income survivors studied in Murphy et al (2016) pulls out the universality of the six priorities for BBB presented in this paper. Shared needs around protecting the most vulnerable, psychosocial and livelihoods support, and better coordination of DRM (particularly from government) were most clearly expressed. Where there was variance – around community-led response and community cohesion in particular – this can be partly attributed to differences in household resources and the more state-centric model of response deployed in Sint Maarten. However, for Sint Maarten, although government responsibility for risk management including disaster response was in place and had driven public expectation, the country's status as a semi-autonomous small island state offered neither the capacity nor national funds required to adequately fulfil this responsibility.

For the Sendai Framework Building Back Better agenda to support the poor and marginalised a concerted shift towards survivor and community-led response and reconstruction is required. Humanitarian response may endeavour to leave no-one behind, but without formal partnerships with such local actors, state and humanitarian agencies have been shown to struggle to identify the core needs and priorities of survivors (which are outlined here) and will become reliant on externally-imposed indicators, which, by their very

19

nature, will have difficulty in measuring whether humanitarian process is fully inclusive. Indeed, the SDGs themselves specifically call for international actors to, as part of goal 17, 'encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.' As the Sint Maarten case study indicates, CBOs are needed as that crucial bridge between local communities and government to ensure that the marginalised are not left behind in those higher income and wealthier states, where the traditional focus of international aid is not normally trained.

Annex

A: the eight interventions examined by the LPRR project (2015 – 2018)

Location	Partner Organisation	Hazard	Additional crises drivers	Year and duration of humanitarian intervention	Context and impact of crises variables
Philippines, Manila	Christian Aid	Typhoon Ketsana	Marginalization of urban poor Lack of land rights	2010: 3 years	Context: Urban Crises Impact: Displacement, loss of housing, loss of livelihoods, loss of land rights
Philippines, Ormoc	Help Age	Typhoon Haiyan	Remote location Poor access to area for emergency response Livelihoods reliant on one crop (coconuts)	2014: 2 years	Context: Rural Crises Impact: Large scale loss of life, loss of housing, loss of livelihoods
Kenya, Nairobi	World Vision & Concern Worldwide	Food Insecurity	Poor seasonal rains and political insecurity surrounding the elections (2011-2012) pushed food prices up	2012: 6 months	Context: Urban, informal settlement Crises Impact: Increased malnutrition, in particular child malnutrition, increased rates of violent crime,

20

					prostitution and school dropouts.
Indonesia, Banda Aceh	Muslim Aid	Tsunami	Ongoing conflict between the government and GUM rebel group	2004: 4 years	Context: Peri – urban & rural, protracted conflict Impact: Large scale loss of life, destruction of housing, infrastructure and livelihoods
Pakistan, Sindh	World Vision	Floods	Government control over which locations international agencies were allowed to work in	2012: 3 years	Context: Rural Crises impact: Loss of life, loss of housing, loss of livelihoods
Colombia, Cacarica	Christian Aid	Conflict & Displacement	Lack of land rights	1998 – present 3-year project within long term, 20 year Marginalization of Afro Colombians Ongoing conflict between government, paramilitary and rebel groups	Context: Rural, protracted conflict, Crises Impact: Loss of life, displacement, loss of land rights, loss of livelihoods
Bangladesh, Patuakhali	Action Aid	Cyclone	Reoccurrence of seasonal floods and cyclones	2013: 3 year project	Context: Rural, women led response Crises Impact: loss of life, loss of housing, loss of livelihoods
DRC, South Kivu	Christian Aid	Conflict & Displacement	Ongoing conflict between government and rebel groups Continuous displacement	2012: 9 months	Context: Rural, protracted conflict Crises Impact: Loss of life. Ongoing and recurrent displacement; loss of homes and

					livelihoods

N.B. The LPRR studied these eight interventions as per organisation, with their duration giving an indication of the length of external aid programming in the respective locales. There are anomalies here though which do not give a representative picture i.e. the DRC is a protracted crisis, with multiple external aid interventions over a long period.

B: Participating Organisations

- Council of Churches
- Samenwerkende Fondsen (Dutch funding organisation for Sint Maarten CBOs)
- Senior Citizen Recreational Foundation
- The Windward Islands Federation of Labour (WIFOL) – local union
- Haitian Catholic Community
- Permanent Electoral Committee (Haitian)
- Sunrise Rotary Club
- Sint Maarten Pensioner Social Advocacy

Also interviewed:
Sint Maarten Youth Council Association

Notes

1. See reference later in text (page 2)
2. See reference later in text (page 3)
3. See reference later in text (page 3)
4. e.g., 1.5, 11.5, 11.B, 13.1, .2, .3
5. Ended April 2018. Part of the START Disasters and Emergency Preparedness Programme, funded by DFID https://bit.ly/2Hv9VrP
6. The Philippines, Kenya, Indonesia, Pakistan, Colombia, Bangladesh and DRC *(see detailed explanation of respective crises in Annex, Table 1).*
7. See Annex B
8. There are a lot of different figures, with World Bank data is unclear/unavailable. This is from the Transparency International report previously highlighted (p.22) and is, as they say 2014 figures based on data from the Central Bank of Curacao and Sint Maarten and the Dutch Financial Supervisory Council.
9. The Dutch government's decision to channel aid via the World Bank is further evidence of this top-down structure.
10. The participants response could reflect a 'popular' narrative about political events post-Irma despite the fact that national priorities have been reflected in the World Bank plan (see https://bit.ly/2LdKoZj) and the Dutch government is pushing transparency reforms in Sint Maarten that many of the population would favour.
11. For the LPRR community surveyed in Banda Aceh their agriculture never recovered from the tsunami in 2004.

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Acknowledgements

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