

hpg

Humanitarian
Policy Group

Remittances during crises: implications for humanitarian response



Remittances during crises

- Over 300 Billion USD to developing countries
- Primarily used for daily needs
 - Therefore probably important in crises
 - Probable implications for humanitarians

Research Questions

- What role do remittances play in people's survival and recovery from crises?
- What impacts do crises have on remittances?

Case Studies

- Sri Lanka (tsunami)
- Sudan (Darfur conflict)
- Pakistan (earthquake)
- Haiti (hurricane)
- Indonesia (tsunami)
- Somalia (crisis)

Findings

- Households use them primarily for daily needs, often highly dependent on them, so especially critical during crises
- May be less affected or restored faster than other sources of income and better enable people to recover

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 - Transfer mechanisms disrupted

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Implications

- Further appreciating people's own abilities and strategies
- Programming and policies to support continuation and restoration of remittance flows
- Further engagement with migrant communities and diaspora

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- Mitigating negative effects of government policies
- Assessments: better understanding of the importance of remittances pre-crisis
- Targeting: consideration of the effects of crisis on remittance flows

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- Consideration of how to make assistance more complementary to people's own resources
- Programming to support remittance flows: family tracing, communications, documentation
- Engagement with and support to senders

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Final remarks

- Remittances are important and should be better taken into account in emergencies
- Often disrupted so not a substitute for timely humanitarian assistance
- Humanitarian actors could usefully help to support receiving and sending them