



THE ROLE OF NGO'S IN THE CONTEXT OF POST DISASTER HOUSING IN TURKEY

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Abstract

Disasters had great affects on the region and community that they occurred physically, socially, economically and psychologically. The community sometimes uses most of its capacity to overcome the situation and sustain their pre disaster daily life. The most important problem revealed after the emergency phase is especially to meet the shelter needs of the affected population. After 1999 Earthquakes in Turkey during the rehabilitation phase temporary houses were built for the victims in a short time to 1–2 year period basis which were planned by the central government. The time extended to 3 year and beyond because of the permanent housing site expropriation problems. At the end of the 2002 the home owners moved to their permanent houses. Even tough some of the temporary housing sites were demolished some is still in use. Most of the users of these houses were tenants and low income families. This situation clearly shows the lack of organization for the tenants and low income families after the earthquake. This study analyzes the role of the NGO's established after the earthquake in order to defend the rights of the tenants, low income families and disabled peoples tenure in Turkey. The local and national associations' (Earthquake victims association, Blue Crescent association, Accessible Life association, Foundation for Supporting the Women's Work association) roles are evaluated according to their relation with central and local government and their location in the national organizational scheme. Overall the actual position of these NGO's stated in 8 year reconstruction process after the earthquake. The weak and strong part of these organizations and their sustainability processes are evaluated for long term as well.

Keywords: Post Disaster Housing, NGO, Community Participation

Introduction

Disasters are events which occur within some specified periods of time and spaces, and threat a society or a relatively self-sufficient part of a society with major unwanted consequences. They are unavoidable events coming in unexpected times. However, settings of pre and post disaster activities have important roles in reducing the future

hazard risks in disaster prone areas (Tercan, 2001). The number, type and losses from disasters are increasing worldwide. Not only is the number of natural and manmade disasters increasing but the cost in property human life. For natural disasters worldwide, the annual economic losses averaged \$4,9 billion in the 1960's, \$15,1 billion in the 1980's and \$75,9 billion annually in the 1990's (Siembieda et al, 2002). However, disasters create also technological, societal and environmental issues.

According to the conditions occurred on post-disaster period, the major issue is usually defined as re-building the physical environment by emphasizing housing in the recovery programs. For all ages the humanity tends to have a shelter to settle down and continue to improve their standards. Therefore, this basic attitude is generally seen at the afterwards of a catastrophic event; sheltering is a necessity to provide safety conditions, reduce the tensions and maintain community's security with protection from climate conditions and sanitation problems. It is also important for human dignity and to sustain family and community life as far as possible in difficult circumstances (Shelter Project, 2004). Shelter problem after the disasters are generally followed by four overlapping phases;

1. Spontaneous Shelter (first 72 hours) - to provide an interim, safe haven while the situation stabilizes

2. Emergency Shelter (first 60 days) - to provide emergency shelter and feeding to displaced population requiring shelter.

3. Interim Housing (first year and beyond) - to provide temporary housing - safe and secure shelter, water, power, and heating - to displaced disaster victims while efforts are underway to make permanent repairs to dwellings, or to find other suitable permanent housing.

4. Permanent Housing - to provide long-term, permanent housing solutions for disaster victims (HRWG, 1998).

Research Questions

The research is trying to define the role of the NGO's in post disaster housing activities and evaluates the process according to following questions;

What is the role of the NGO's in the disaster management system in Turkey?

What is the actual position of post disaster housing from the point view of NGO's in Turkey?

What are the strong and vulnerable parts of the NGO's in Turkey? How can they achieve more accelerated and sustainable housing reconstruction?

Research Methods

This study analyzes the role of the NGO's established after the earthquake in order to defend the rights of the tenants, disabled peoples and low income families tenure in Turkey. The SWOT analysis technique used to evaluate the risks and opportunities for the NGO'S involved in acquiring the housing rights of victims groups; disabled peoples,

low income families and tenants. A SWOT Analysis looks at an institution's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. SWOT Analysis aims to reveal the competitive advantages of the institution as well as analyse its prospects for sales and profitability and prepare the institution for problems which may arise, allowing for the development of contingency plans. An analysis of the institution's strengths and weaknesses is an internal examination. It is usually based on an analysis of facts and assumptions about the institution on research findings. The opportunity and threat analysis is carried out by examining external factors, eg. Economic, technologic, politic or socia-cultural trends, and internal factors, eg. determination of the sources and capacity of the institution (Table 1). The local associations' (Earthquake victims association, Blue Crescent association, Accessible Life association, Foundation for Supporting the Women's Work association) roles are evaluated according to their relation with central and local government. Interviews were made with the NGO's representatives. They were evaluated in the light of their actual position for housing conditions. The future projections were scrutinized in the context of sustainability as well.

Table1. Situation Analysis - SWOT Approach

	Positive	Negative
Internal	Strong Points	Weak Points
External	Opportunities (Future perspective)	Threats

Post disaster Housing Problem in Turkey

On August 17, 1999 and again on November 12th of the same year, earthquakes measuring 7.4 and 7.2 on the Richter scale, respectively, hit Turkey in areas East of Istanbul. The first earthquake occurred at approximately 3:01 AM on August 17, 1999 near the town of Gölcük (Kocaeli Province) and rocked the Marmara Region of Turkey . In 12 November 1999 the devastating earthquake with 7, 2 magnitudes occurred in Duzce province. Approximately 43000 buildings were damaged. Generally 84 % of the damages occurred to the houses and % 16 of them to the work places. Also 980 people died and 38939 were injured (Duzce Governorship, 2002). The number of houses and offices that were damaged in the earthquakes were 25.113. Among them, 16.666 were houses and 3.837 were offices. The Turkish government, along with local and international agencies and NGOs, responded immediately to the emergency with the provision of temporary shelters, food, health care, counselling and other social services. More than 130 tent cities, with over 100,000 tents were initially set up to provide survivors with emergency shelter and thousands of temporary prefabricated homes were constructed within one year.

The General Directorate of Construction Affairs is responsible for survey, design, construction and rehabilitation activities to be carried out in disaster areas, taking the necessary measures regarding the implementation of development plans and infrastructure projects of new settlements to be built following the disasters, as well as monitoring of the construction works and provision of technical assistance for these services (www.bayindirlik.gov.tr, 2008).

The government's strategy of solving the housing deficiency and housing need emerged after the earthquakes was to conduct a few mass housing projects and to provide housing credits with low interest rates. But these were only for those who were the owners of damaged/badly damaged/collapsed houses and/or offices. In other words people who were house owners considered as the main targets of all the projects conducted by the state. These people as property owners were called "*Hak Sahibi*" (Holder of a Right those who have the right of making claims for the state funds, credits) (Yarar, 2005).

According to the 4th article of the regulation about 'Assessment of Holder of a Right' of Law. No.7269, "one is eligible to own a new, government built permanent residence after a disaster if his/her house is demolished or heavily damaged in such a way that it cannot be accommodated anymore. Moreover, owners of houses, which are located on the land that is going to be expropriated for the relocation of people, are also classified as beneficiaries". In other words there were three main principles that underlined the government's schemes of solving housing deficiency that has increased tremendously after the disaster with the criteria of; being house owner, houses should be badly damaged or collapsed capable of paying the credit fees which were relatively small (Demirel, 2005). This situation clearly shows the lack of organization for the tenants and low income families after the earthquake.

The Turkish Government launched the construction of permanent houses to be provided to all home-owners who can prove that they lost a home as a result of the earthquakes. However, vulnerable segments of the population who were affected by the quakes but living in rented houses continued to fall through the social welfare. The role of the local government in housing is very limited. The local government had only one member in central government decision makers. So the post disaster housing process excluded the local government and the community participation by means of NGO's becomes nearly impossible. Despite this facts in opportunity window period where the central government open to new approaches of housing The Blue Crescent which is a national and international NGO acquired a chance for housing with the help and political initiatives of the local municipality. But the other Ngo's were newly organised and missed the period and nearly after 8 year from the earthquake and with long struggles have just provided the housing land.

The Role of Ngo's in Disaster Management System in Turkey

The body current law in Turkey's emergency management situation is generally focused on post disaster efforts. However different ministries and institutions are responsible for different types of disasters (ITU DMC, 2002).

After the disaster the local representative of the central government where the event occurred is responsible for all emergency interventions and aids (Table 2). The explicit characteristic of this system is that all the responsibilities and authority are collected in the central government or its local representatives (Ozerdem and Jacoby, 2006). Besides, the local government is not presented institutionally but functioned hierarchically as a sub unit of the governorship. So the role and activity of the local government in emergency situation is restricted.

Table 2. The Disaster Management Hierarchy in Turkey (Sengezer and Kansu, 2001)

National Level	
Prime Minister, Related Ministers, Red Crescent President, representative of military staff	To form crisis centre in post disaster phase and make decisions by a large majority
Province Level	
Governor, Related province directors, Mayor, Representative of Red Crescent, province military staff	Meet by the invitation of governor, work according to 24 hour principle and convey the post disaster needs to the central government (The Ministry of The Public Works and Settlement)
Citizen Level	
	Have responsibilities which were arranged by legal regulations. Very limited and indirect participation to post disaster processes

The disaster management system in Turkey is highly centralized where many of the works are in the responsibility of the central government. Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Reconstruction and Settlement plays an important role in relation with the disaster management and reconstruction.

From the point view of NGO's it can be pointed out that; after the disaster the affected community continuously must not be seen as "helpless citizens who wait for aid" instead they can be seen as "productive and decision maker citizens who can rebuild community life". But there is a lack of politics that does not give opportunities for organizing social milieu. Consequently "socio-psychological collapse" and "social behaviour erosion" occurred (The Chamber of Architects of Turkey, 2000).

The Evaluation of the Ngo's (SWOT Analysis)

Four NGO's (Table 3) are evaluated and analysed according to SWOT analysis method that covers strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threatens.

Strengths

- Although most of the NGO's are newly established all (more or less) have improvements as acquiring land for housing, construction of the houses, etc. Some have finished the construction process and some could only acquire land from the central government.
- The NGO's create "public awareness" in the community about the vulnerable parts such as disabled peoples, low income families, etc. Sometimes this awareness forms public opinion (e.g. DEPDER, Earthquake victim's association, conduct 60.000 sign for support to their rights).

Table3. The Focus group, reconstruction activities and existing positions of the selected NGO's

NGO	Year (Establishment)	Focus Group	Facilities	Housing	Projects	Existing Position
DEPDER (Earthquake victim's association)	1999	Tenant Disaster victims who lives in; -slums -cheap houses -gecekondu	Secure and safe shelters and Housing rights for t he tenants	Self aided housing	1 housing cooperative established	Negotiation for land allocation and low credit
KEDV (Foundation for Supporting the Women's Work FSWW)	1986	Low income women	Improve quality of life	-Governance -Housing& reconstruction -Economic initiatives and sustainability -Child care	4 housing cooperative established Participatory planning and housing	Negotiation for land allocation and low credit
UYD (Accessible Life Association)	2000	Small or landless peasants -low income disabled people -children -women	Community based rehabilitation	Mass housing projects for disabled people	25 housing unit and social centre	Acquired land and find finance for the housing project
IBC (International Blue Crescent)	1999	Improve the life's of most disadvantaged section	Civil Society and Development Relief and rehabilitation Housing reconstruction and rural development Health Education and training	Housing and reconstruction	community centre beyciler assisted self help project 168 housing unit 75 tenants 71 temporary house resident 22 tent resident	Finished in 20 months

Weaknesses

- The actual problems are not well defined. The NGOs don't have a criticising view for their efforts. People are only aware of their personal needs and seeking for "individual solutions".
- The potentials of women is decreased because of the man focused family structure.
- The land allocation can be delayed and by politic approach. Some new cooperatives established for housing needs of the peoples who are not disaster victim can achieve land allocation in one year whereas the disaster victims' NGO can achieve in 4 year period. The NGO's are not strong enough to defense and show their rights to mass media.
- There is a general financement problem for the housing projects. The credit possibility are very restricted (e.g. UYD (Accessible Life Association) find financial support from an international NGO)
- Yarar (2005) stated that NGOs are facing the debate about the relationship with the politics. So the NGO's must be careful in defending their rights as non governmental and non political organisation. They could force the politics but not be the part of a political view. DEPDER (Earthquake victim's association) is too much criticised by the public as it is tend to be perceived as a political figure by the community.

Opportunities

- The efforts of community should be canalized to form and improve civil community spirit that covers voluntary participation.
- Local government could be open to new projects and encouraged to assist the land demand. So the collobarative works can be organised by the contribution of local government. Because the reconstructed housing sites will also effect the city plan and has long term consequences.
- The participation methods could be defined in national legal system in order to improve the community participation in different levels and for different genders, groups such as women, disabled and elderly peoples in an equal way due to their physical and psychological position.
- The experience of NGO's could be used for better design of housing provision systems.

Threatens

- During the reconstruction process some of the NGO do not have a "solution productive approachs" and the members oriented to the NGO leader's to overcome all situations.
- The legal constraints are very important in and give no chance for acceleration of neither community nor citizen participation.

- After the rehabilitation period the central government is not eager to give part in reconstruction process to the NGO's as the interest of the national mass media decreases.
- The post disaster housing need are evaluated as normal housing problem. But the emergency of the situation and psychology of the affected people must be taken into consideration and a selection chance for the disaster affected people could be given for also supporting the psycho-social reconstruction of the region.
- The sustainability of the NGO's are in risc. Some of the NGO find solution to their problems by individual relations and some of the NGO's member number decreased too much which can cause not to sustain their activities.
- Long time state aids (nearly 2 year) prevent people to be organised and struggling for their rights in reconstruction phase.

Research Results

This study clearly found out below lessons;

- “ Opportunity Window” is very important in solving legal constraints and planning issues in post disaster reconstruction. The first months beyond to first year of the disaster can be used to boost the reconstruction activities by making pressure on politicians and/or local governments. Although there are very limited examples such as Beyciler Houses in Turkey, the case clearly shows that without legislations it is difficult to design and implement Ngo and community based solutions for post disaster housing.
- Civil initiatives achieved working together and constitute new organizations to help affected people in disaster region. Still, the existing level of work is inadequate in the name of civil initiatives especially in collaboration with governmental organizations. The role of the Local government (Municipality) can be increased to a pivotal role for accelerating collaborative housing projects with the NGO's.
- The post disaster housing reconstruction need an overall (whole) design and planning approach which covers all vulnerable parts of the disaster affected community. But all the NGO's in the case had different housing projects. They do not have an upper level plan to adjust. So this situation affects long term social and physical reconstruction.

Discussion and Conclusions

The role of the NGO's can be designated as in Table 4 in order to accelerate the physical and social reconstruction of the affected region. The short term and long term targets must be defined for adjust the sources.

Table4. The General Approach of Ngo's on Post Disaster Activities

NGO'S MISSION	POST DISASTER ACTIVITIES		
Short Term Need	Rehabilitation: Distribution of urgent needs (tents, foods, etc.)	Slow down function and turned back to their routine	Short time is not sustainable for the community after the immediate and rehabilitation phase (1 year or beyond)
Long Term Need	Reconstruction and rebuilding: physical reconstruction (house and social centres, etc...)	Keep their presence active in reconstruction activities	Struggle for sustainable communities for future disasters

Disaster management system of a country is very important for the NGO's because it is not only restricted the institutions capacity but also prevent them for rapid actions. The research clearly shows long term planning is crucial for acquiring reliable solutions to post disaster housing. The community is ready for new challenges in the aftermath (first to 6 month) of the disaster. By the time passes (one year or beyond) the concern of the community and media decreases and it becomes too hard to find solutions and get results.

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Authors' Biography



Hakan Arslan studied architecture at Faculty of Architecture, Trakya University (TU) between 1994–1998 and completed her master's degree program in architecture Gebze Institute of High Technology (GIHT) with the thesis “Study of Temporary Housing Planning, Organisation, Production Phases and Research of Re-Use Potentials After Usage; Example of Duzce Province” in 2004. He still works as a research assistant at Istanbul Technical University. His major areas of interest are Post-disaster Reconstruction, Place Attachment, Socio-spatial aspects of Disasters, Temporary and permanent housing reconstruction, Life Cycle Assessment. He is studying about socio spatial aspects of post disaster reconstruction for Ph. D. in I.T.U.



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