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PROJECT EVALUATION

Sustaining Tsunami Recovery by Organizations
Networking at the Grassroots level through Promoting Local Accountability
and Capacity Enhancement Systems
(STRONG PLACES) Project

Final Report

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Information Sheet

Project	Project Evaluation-sustaining Tsunami Recovery by Organizations Networking at the Grassroots level through Promoting Local Accountability and Capacity Enhancement systems (STRONG PLACES) Project
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List of Acronyms

AGM	Annual General Meeting
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSO	Community Based Organization
CM	Community Mobilizer
CNGS	Centre for Non Governmental Sector
DAC	District Advisory Committee
DS	Divisional Secretary
DSO	District Support Officer
GN	Grama Niladhari
GND	Grama Niladhari Division
IO	Intermediary Organization
PMU	Project Management Unit
NAC	National Advisory Committee
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
RDS	Rural Development Society
SGF	Small Grants Facility
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
WRDS	Women Rural Development Society
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Executive Summary

Introduction

The STRONG PLACES project was launched by the UNDP, with the aim of supporting the empowerment and capacity development of the local Civil Society Organizations (CSO) that included local NGOs and CSOs. The main objective of the project was to help affected communities to participate in post-tsunami recovery and reconstruction in eight districts of Sri Lanka. The project comprised of training and capacity building components and a small grants facility to purchase equipment and furniture. The expectation was that the project would ensure sustainability of the CSOs through financing institutional strengthening and other areas not generally supported by tsunami assistance. In addition, a grant was provided to establish a revolving fund to finance livelihood activities of members of CSOs in certain districts. As the project has been completed, an independent evaluation of the project's impact was undertaken, to assess to what extent the stated objectives were realized and whether benefits received have resulted in the expected impacts. Other areas addressed in the assessment included the efficacy of implementation, implications for development assistance, and the feasibility of extending the project for a further period and replicating the project in other non-Tsunami areas.

A rapid appraisal of the performance of the projects was conducted in the districts of Matara, Galle, Batticaloa and Ampara, through interviews, meetings, focal group discussions and evaluation of secondary data. A more detailed study, including a questionnaire survey of CSOs was conducted in two districts, Trincomalee and Hambantota. A representative sample of the different categories of CSOs was selected for detailed study using stratified sampling techniques, from a list of CSOs such as Rural Development Societies, Women's Rural Development Societies, Farmer Organizations, Fisheries and other Cooperative Societies and local NGOs. The members of the Project Management Unit and the National and District Advisory committees were also interviewed in order to gain an insight on the implementation aspects of the project.

Project Implementation

At the central level a Project Management Unit (PMU) was established, headed by the "National Project Director" and a Project Coordinator (PC) to implement the project with the support of two deputy project coordinators. The project management unit was located within the Centre for Non-Governmental Sector (CNGS) at the Ministry of Finance and Planning. A National Advisory Committee (NAC) comprising representatives of key Colombo-based CSOs, district-based CSOs, the private sector and the Government (Social Welfare Ministry and TAFREN), was responsible for oversight and guidance for the programme. The NAC met quarterly to review progress and provide direction. The next succeeding level was the District Advisory Committees (DAC) established in consultation with the District Secretary (Government Agent) who was also represented in the committee. The DAC met periodically to perform its functions one of which is to serve as the selection panel for the Small Grants Facility. However, the NAC had overall responsibility for the guidance and direction of the project.

Intermediate Organizations (IO) were selected through newspaper advertisements, one to handle training and capacity building support and another to disburse funds for training and other activities in each district. Each IO received Rs.1 million (paid in installments) for its own institutional capacity building and for handling the component assigned. A District Support Officer (DSO) was recruited in each district through newspaper advertisements, to oversee project implementation, to support the DAC activities and to coordinate/manage the day to day activities of the project within the district. They were also expected to provide support and assistance for decision-making by the DAC and coordinate and guide IOs and Social Mobilisers (SM). The IO was also expected to assist the DSO in coordination, monitoring and managing the community mobilisers. The DSO was responsible for formulating the work plan in close consultation with the NAC and DACs and for preparing the annual progress reports, quarterly reports and the annual progress review meetings.

Social mobilizers were recruited for each district (one per DS Division), although there was no provision for SMs in the original project proposal. The SMs were expected to educate and mobilize the CSOs in the tsunami-affected areas on the Project and its prospects, identify their needs, assist in training, development of work plans and help in implementation and monitoring of the Project. Civil Society Organizations (CSO) were the main beneficiaries of the project. A selection process and criteria for selection were established for CSOs by the project. The DAC in each district was responsible for inviting applications for assistance from interested CSOs through the DSs, scrutinizing the applications, and preparing a final list of beneficiaries using a set of criteria and a marking scheme.

Study Findings

I. Project Implementation

Project Management Unit

- The PMU structure appeared to be adequate for the project as formulated.

- The staffing of the PMU also appeared to be adequate, except during the early stages of project implementation, when the staff was stretched to some extent.

- If the project is extended and the scope broadened, then additional staff may be needed to implement the project successfully.

National Advisory Committee

- Most members of the NAC felt that this was a good project and believed that participants of the project had benefited enormously from the project. The many stakeholders such as IOs, CSOs, DSOs and DAC members were appreciative of the good work done by the NAC in guiding the implementation of the project.

- One of the problems faced by the NAC was the lack of full participation of members due to various reasons.

- Generally the attendance at NAC was limited to about 4-5 persons, who were usually the active participants. There were many in the NAC, of good standing and high positions who did not attend the meetings regularly due to their busy schedules.

- A majority of the members had not visited the field sites and consequently did not have a clear insight of the field conditions and implementation problems at the field level. Such an insight would have been useful in decision making

- The overall purpose of establishing a national committee with representation from all interested groups and people with knowledge and understanding to guide the project had not been completely fulfilled.

- Thus one should consider some form of restructuring of the committee to improve the usefulness and realization of the objectives and purpose of the committee.

District Advisory Committee

- According to the various opinions of stake holders and members of the DAC, the performance of the DACs was good and they were able to achieve most of the objectives, despite many shortcomings faced.

- One of the problems faced by the DACs was the declining participation of the members as the project progressed in some DACs.

- Many members participated in the meetings at the beginning. However, the numbers attending meetings started to decline progressively for various reasons. This resulted in delays in decision making, somewhat affecting project implementation.

- In other districts there was a lack of participation of higher rung officials of governmental and non-governmental agencies.

- Some members of DACs of other districts said they were busy, some were unhappy with the way that meetings were conducted and decisions made and hence decided not to participate in future meetings.

- Some DAC members of another district were of the view that there was no local ownership of the project and ad hoc decisions were being made by the upper level hierarchy (NAC, UNDP, PMU) and handed down for approval by the DAC.

- Despite these shortcomings the DACs performed creditably. However, the DACs could be restructured to improve performance, in any future extension of the project.

Intermediate Organizations

- Overall the performance of IOs was mixed with IOs in some districts performing better than other districts.

- A few IOs assisted CSOs to establish linkages and share their knowledge with CSOs. Some IOs were not helpful or pro-active.

- The training programmes were not organized well by some IOs, while the SGF programme generally fared a little better, except in a few cases.

- In many instances the DSO had to organize the training, including the hiring of trainers, while the IO only made the payments. There were also delays in the release of funds, due to certain conditions having to be fulfilled.

- There was a problem of availability of suitable trainers in certain areas, thus establishing a pool of trainers for each area may be useful in any future project.

- Apparently, a few IOs had lost interest with the progression of the project and there was a gradual deterioration of their commitment.

- Most IOs did not make an effort to train their staff as TOTs for future training needs.

- Thus many IOs appeared not to have entirely fulfilled their role or functioned according to their TOR, which included such tasks as needs assessment, planning and implementation of training, monitoring, evaluation and follow up of training programmes.

District Support Officers

- In general the District Support Officers performed well, some of them having to take on responsibilities of IOs, which did not perform well.

- Most stakeholders including DAC members felt that the CSOs had performed very well and went out of their way to improve the performance of the project.

- According to a few DSOs, in some instances there were delays in the approval procedure at the DAC level, which caused a setback to implementation.

- Most DSOs felt that the project concept and the system of operation were good and should be continued with a few improvements. However, the training programmes needed to be updated and projects should be extended to non-Tsunami areas as well.

- Some DSOs could have improved their performance if more training was provided to them. Most of the record keeping, monitoring, reporting and paper work were done by the CSOs..

Social Mobilizers

- Many SMs received training to improve their skills for project implementation but some did not receive any practical training on social mobilization, which could have improved their performance.

- Large geographical area assigned to each SM in some districts, lack of own transport and dependency on public transport, absence of community level animators to serve

as the point of contact and ethnic difference between SM and community especially in the case of communities in the districts in the Eastern Province hampered the work of SMs, hampered their work.

- Some essential functions of SMs such as, keeping a close tab on how the material assets received were utilized, monitoring how knowledge acquired during training was utilized or transmitted to others in the CSO or community, providing backstopping for any lapses on the part of CSO office bearers and guidance on how knowledge gained could be applied to their real life situations, were not properly fulfilled.

- The above suggests that the performance of SMs can be improved with more training in appropriate subjects. In DS divisions with areas with a larger geographic spread of the CSOs, the number of mobilizers may have to be increased to improve effectiveness.

II. Project Impact / Benefits

Training

- Most respondents who attended training are very appreciative of the fact that it was of a higher quality than what they had from elsewhere and that the training benefited them, but such training should be extended to other members of the CSOs.

- Most CSOs felt that the level of improvement was more than 50% of the pre-training situation in areas such as planning and decision making skills, as well as office and financial management, team work, transparency and governance. Improved teamwork within CSOs was a positive benefit of training.

- The level of improvement was less than 50% of the normal situation with regard to areas such as participation of members and women, coping with disasters, physical and social well-being and public-private partnerships.

- Training in food processing helped them to start some livelihood activities, while training in preparing proposals helped in obtaining assistance from other donors.

- Primary health care training helped in improving sanitation and health practices including improvement of home environment to avoid communicable and vector borne diseases. Five training helped us to keep everything clean and tidy, not only the water distribution site and office but also our homes."

- Disaster management training was said to be very useful as it now gave them an idea of what to do when there is a major disaster.

- Mass training was less effective as most trainees were ignorant of topics such as bookkeeping, accounting, and proposal writing that required personalized attention and supervision.

- There was also a need for retraining and extending the training to other members of the community. Community members were not given TOT training, which would have allowed the transfer of training skills. Younger trainees had more ability to absorb the training than older participants.

- The proportion of CSOs auditing accounts or using external audits increased to 60% after the project. Although cash in banks did not increase significantly, many CSOs provided with revolving funds had larger bank balances.

- There was a substantial increase in the proportion of CSOs displaying accounts after the project. One of the reasons for not displaying accounts was the lack of a office space and another was that members were not literate enough to read understand the accounts.

Small Grants Facility and Revolving Funds

- Office equipment provided helped in providing, particularly computer training, while photo copiers helped in reducing their photo copying expenses.

- Some women's organizations received hair salon equipment, which helped in increasing revenue as well as provide training to members interested in such a field. CSOs felt that more such useful equipment would help in improving livelihoods of members.

- Increased membership and more regular meetings were observed benefits of the project, as members received metal huts, loudspeakers, chairs, etc at low rates or free of charge and in some cases benefited from loans from revolving funds.

- Many CSOs appeared to have operated the revolving funds satisfactorily, fixing their own interest rates and repayment schedules.

- The repayment was satisfactory, with office bearers ensuring that repayment was made on time. Generally the loan repayments were re-lent to other members, so that the revolving funds were put to maximum use.

- The revolving funds helped the CSOs to improve their financial position and improved their financial management capacity.

- The amount given was considered insufficient by many CSOs, who suggested that in the future a good assessment must be done of the needs and the amount of funds provided should be according to the needs and should be proportional to the number of members in the organization.

- The success was also due to provision of funds at lower than market interest rates, which helped to reduce their cost of financing small livelihood activities, as market rates were much higher in other banking institutions.

Recommendations

Project Implementation

- As attendance was poor in NAC and decisions were made by a few members, it is recommended that instead a National Project Committee (NPC) be constituted for implementing the project. Conceptually the NPC will differ from the NAC in that it would combine both advisory and implementation functions in one body, with finances handled by the donor (UNDP).

- At the district level, District Project Committees (DPC) should be appointed by the government with similar powers as the national committee but applicable to the district, to implement the project.

- The DPC could be chaired by the District Secretary, wherever the District Secretary is willing to take up such responsibility, or a chairperson elected by the members. A majority of members should be from community based organizations and NGOs and should be active members. As before the Small Grants and Training Programmes should be the responsibility of the DPC

- The position of DSO can retained at the district level. Community or social mobilizers should be retained and trained to work as training coordinators as well with one of the mobilizers appointed as district training coordinator.

- The training of CSOs should e be executed by the DPC, through the establishment of a Training unit at the centre and through regional and district training coordinators, rather than through IOs, which have not delivered the goods according to the information gathered in the evaluation.

- In implementation, it is necessary to ensure that all CSOs in the district/DS division are informed ahead of time, when calling for applications. Selection criteria should be worked out and communicated to potential beneficiaries.

Training and Small Grants Facility

- Provide more TOT training in place of direct training by creating a cadre of trainers selected preferably from motivated and younger CSO office bearers with IT skills, so that training can be imparted to a larger clientele of members.

- Expose them to similar activities implemented successfully in other districts or countries affected by disasters, where CSOs have played a critical role in recovery. so that they may learn from such experience.

- The existing system of appointing IOs as training provider has not been entirely successful. Therefore a different approach may be adopted in the future. The IO may be replaced and training provided directly by Project Management, by appointing training coordinators and establishing a pool of training resources on a regional or district basis.

- A training coordinator should be appointed to each district to develop curricula, and organize training. A national training coordinator should be appointed to coordinate all training to be provided under the project. This would ensure quality of training and appropriateness of curriculum.

- If the training is provided directly by the DPC, then a pool of trainers should be established either at the district or regional levels for training of CSO members.

- If the DPC feels that training could be better provided through en existing NGO which has the necessary training and other resources, then the Committee should be given the authority to make such a decision. Nevertheless, the Training Coordinator should assist in arranging and conducting the training.

- A thorough training needs assessment should be undertaken by the Training Coordinator and Social mobilizers, prior to formulating the training programmes. The impact of past training should be used as a guide for evaluating training needs. The training class should be of a manageable size and spaced out adequately to reduce congestion. Community level supporters or animators should be appointed to work in close collaboration with social mobilizers.

- The training programme should be rural based and be of uniform quality and content, no matter where and when the training is arranged. Such training should be arranged closer to the residences of participants to reduce the need to travel long distances to attend training. A traveling allowance to participants would help to improve participation rates.

- More emphasis should be given to training in finding international and local markets and micro insurance facilities for goods and services produced through livelihood development activities, to improve the viability of such activities undertaken by members of the CSOs.

- The SGF should review the limit of the grants and provide higher amounts to CSOs that would benefit from such an investment, provided that these investments could lead to sustainability of the organization. Such review should be done by the DPC.

General Recommendations

- The project should be extended to non Tsunami areas as well. This was stated by many stakeholders including DAC members, CSO members and government officials as well as NGOs.

- CSOs should be organized at the DS level into a forum so that there is more cooperation and interaction among CSOs.

- Income generation activities should be facilitated by facilitating access to international and local markets as well as insurance for enterprises to recover from any unexpected losses or disasters.

- Establish inter and intra organizational monitoring mechanisms as well as an effective monitoring system at the CSO, DPC and NPC levels

Conclusions

- The project concept and philosophy was highly relevant to the social context of the impoverished communities since it focused on empowerment, interactive learning process and capacity building. The project beneficiaries were highly appreciative of the project, as it was the first time that the needs of the smallest and most impoverished CSOs were addressed.

- The implementation arrangements were well thought out, allowing for flexibility at the district level and giving more freedom to local initiatives although some of the implementing partners lacked the capacity needed for proper execution of the project.

- Monitoring of project interventions and backstopping for CSOs especially with regard to care of material and financial assets provided by the project and transfer of knowledge gained from training to other members was ineffective, although this was one of the three project components. Monitoring will facilitate the sustainability of the project interventions.

- The project can be considered as a qualified success taking into consideration the sum total of its achievements and weaknesses.

- The project management system and advisory committee approach need to be reviewed, to improve project implementation.

1   Introduction to the Study:

STRONG PLACES, a project launched by the UNDP, was aimed at supporting the empowerment and capacity development of the local Civil Society Organizations (CSO) that included local NGOs and CSOs. The main objective was to help affected communities to participate in post-tsunami recovery and reconstruction in eight districts of Sri Lanka. Since the project is nearing completion, an evaluation of the project's impact has been initiated with the broad aim of understanding the following:

   i. The efficacy of the project's overall implementation arrangements in its relation to its stated objectives
   ii. The feasibility of extending the project period for another term in order to fully realize its potential
   iii. The replicability of the project in other post-disaster scenarios and
   iv. Lessons learned from the project and their implications for development assistance particularly when addressing crisis situations.

2   Approach and Methodology:

Although the project was implemented in 8 districts of Sri Lanka, this evaluation has focused on two districts, namely, Hambantota from the south, and Trincomalee in the east, due to the short period of 3 weeks allotted for the assignment. One of the main reasons for selecting Hambantota district as a representative district for the southern area was that it is one of the poorest districts with 32% of the population below the poverty line in 2002 compared to 26% and 27% in Galle and Matara. Furthermore, this district was also considerably affected in terms of damage to infrastructure and to life and property by the Tsunami. Trincomalee, another district considerably affected by the Tsunami in the east was selected due to the easier accessibility to the consultants. In addition, the consultants were familiar with these two districts having worked in many studies/projects in these two districts. The information obtained from the two districts has been supplemented through discussions with DAC members, beneficiary members of CSOs, District Support Officers and District Secretaries from one or more of the following districts of Batticaloa, Ampara, Matara and Galle, and with members of the PMU and NAC in Colombo to gain further insights into the planning and implementation of the project.

2.1   Sampling of CSOs:

A stratified sampling technique was used to obtain a representative sample of the different categories of CSO such as Rural Development Societies, Women's Rural Development Societies, Farmer Organizations, Fisheries and other Cooperative Societies and local NGOs. A list of the samples selected in both districts in which the survey was conducted is provided in Annex 1.

Since the CSOs were incorporated into the project at different stages in time, care was taken to ensure that CSOs from all stages were included in the sample.

A larger sample was selected from the Hambantota district in proportion to the larger number of CSOs served by the project in that district. It is to be noted that no CSOs were selected from the DS Division of Eachchalampattu in Trincomalee District since the prevailing security situation was not conducive for the conduct of a survey.

2.2   Study Instruments:

A questionnaire containing the following items was used when interviewing office bearers of the selected CSOs:

1. Activities of the CSO before and after the project
2. Benefits realized from project interventions such as training programs, grant of funds to purchase office equipment such as steel cabinets and tables, equipment such as chairs, metal huts and loudspeaker systems that could be hired out for community events, telephones, and monies to operating revolving loan funds (in the case of Trincomalee District)
3. Impact of benefits realized from project interventions
4. Method of operation of revolving loan funds and problems faced in doing so
5. Contributions made by the different project officials of the project organization including social mobilizes, intermediary organizations set up to disburse funds or conduct training programs
6. Status of the CSO before and after the project with regard to; the number of male and female members, monies in bank accounts, auditing of accounts, holding of regular meetings and AGM, display of annual accounts for the notice of general membership, and setting up of committees to handle various activities.
7. Constraints faced by the CSO
8. Major management problems faced by the CSO
9. Relationship between CSO and governmental and non-governmental agencies before and after the project and
10. Future plans of the CSO.

2.3   Interviews:

In addition to the survey of CSOs, the study included interviews with the following categories of project personnel from both study districts whose numbers are given in parentheses: members of DAC (8), members of IO (4), DSO (2), and Community Mobilizers (7). Due to time constraints, other relevant stakeholders such as direct beneficiaries or members of CSO and community leaders other than CSO office bearers could not be interviewed.

In addition, interviews were conducted with members of the NAC members as well as District Support Officers, District Secretaries, IOs and other relevant personnel from other project districts

2.4   Observations:

Observations were also made of the condition of offices or places that CSOs used to hold meetings, and of financial and other records kept by them.

2.5   Secondary Sources:

The study was also able to benefit from secondary data and relevant project documents made available by the Project Management Unit in Colombo and from DSOs of the relevant districts.

3 Project Background:

In this section, an outline of the social and organizational aspects of the project is presented in respect of the two surveyed districts.

3.1. Beneficiary Population:

The beneficiary population includes not only the CSO members and office bearers but also the larger community within which the CSOs function.

Most project districts have predominantly rural and agricultural populations although ethnic composition varies significantly between the districts in the south and the districts in the north and east. For example Hambantota (97.1%), Matara (94%) and Galle (94%) had predominantly Sinhalese population, with between 3%-4% of Moors and 2%-3% of Tamil ethnicity. In Trincomalee, the ethnic composition was 33.4% Sinhalese, 34.3% Sri Lanka Tamils, 29.3% Moors and the remainder from other ethnic groups. In Ampara, there was a higher proportion of Moors (41.5%), with Sinhalese (37.8%) and Tamils (20.4%) making up the balance. In Batticaloa there was a higher proportion of Tamils (72%), followed by Moors (23.9%), and Sinhalese (3.4%), according to the census of 2001.

The rural population served by the project comprises of people mostly from poor socioeconomic backgrounds whose condition has been aggravated by the tsunami and by the civil conflict that has occurred during period of three decades in the Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara districts. Box 1. illustrates typical community profiles in the sample districts of Hambantota and Trincomalee.

Box 1: Some Community Profiles

Hambantota District:

The United Community Development Organization of Yodawewa is situated in the Tissamaharama DS Division of Hambantota District. It is one of the poorest GNDs of the district with low illiteracy levels due to lack of educational facilities and early school leaving. The GN rarely visits this village, which has about 300 households. About 75% of the households are either poor or very poor. The main sources of income of these households are from chena cultivation during the Maha season and labour work when agriculture is not possible. In addition, some residents obtain their livelihood from fishing or hunting. Labour work is reduced due to use of machinery for ploughing and other farming activities. Some find work in construction activity created by the new housing project for the community done by HABITAT and also in local restaurants. The village is ¼ km from the main road and borders the Yala wildlife sanctuary. Chena cultivation is done through rain fed minor irrigation tanks whose overflow goes into the Yoda Wewa reservoir. Cultivation areas are about 2 km from the settlement. People cultivate green gram, peanuts and sell to private traders who come to the village market or at the town. They sell at a loss when prices fall.

NAVODA United Community Based Organization serves about 600 families belonging to two GNDs. While about 80% of households depend on fishing and agriculture, 20% have government jobs and receive a regular income. The farming households cultivate chena crops such as vegetables during one (rainy) season of the year. While the market is good for their produce at present, prices drop when there is an agricultural surplus. Farmers have to take the produce a distance of 15 km to sell it at the marketplace at the nearest town and use tractors or bicycles to do so.

The Coir Products Cooperative Society is run by women living in a community known as Seenimodera in Tangalle DS Division. This community of 200 households was severely affected by the tsunami, as it was located about 500 meters from the coast. Many people lost their livelihood sources that included machines for making coir and most importantly a large pond that they used for soaking coconut husks for long period before extracting the coir. The tsunami brought with it a large amount of waste material including glass bottles from adjacent houses and tourist guesthouses virtually cutting off access to the pond and

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forcing people to purchase coir at higher prices from local suppliers. This has reduced their profit margin so that their incomes are used for subsistence alone.

Trincomalee District:

The Women Rural Development Society of Kumburipiddi South in Kuchchaveli DS Division is made up of 225 households belonging to the Tamil ethnic group in which widows are household heads of 58 households. The people mostly depend on animal husbandry and cultivation of onions and vegetables on barren soils that are being rejuvenated through use of compost. Additional incomes are earned through labour work in agricultural lands and construction activities that have mushroomed in the area due to post tsunami recovery and rehabilitation projects. The daily wage for women is Rs 300 while for men it is Rs 600. Most of the men are dead or missing from the conflict or have left the country to escape it. A number of INGOs have come to their assistance to provide livelihood support through goat rearing, provision of sewing machines and renovation of drinking water wells.

SRDO is a small NGO set up in 2001 in the Muslim village of Kuchchaveli in the wake of the tsunami that took many lives and destroyed houses and livelihoods. The community of 200 households has a total population of 350 that ekes subsistence from fishing, menial labour and running small retail shops for vegetables and grocery items. No cultivation has taken place after the tsunami since agricultural lands were inundated with seawater depriving the community of annual incomes from the cultivation of onions as a commercial crop. The tsunami also polluted drinking water wells so that today the households have to purchase drinking water from trucks.

3.2.   Project Objectives, Strategy and Expected Outputs:

It is important to place the impacts of project interventions at the grassroots level against the backdrop of the broader conceptual framework and objectives of the project, which are outlined in the original project proposal as follows:

According to the Project Document of July 29, 2005, the project was expected to support capacity building of CSOs and smaller district level NGOs in such areas as (a) general and financial management and administrative capabilities; (b) technical capacities (ranging from the relatively longer-term peace building processes to more immediate strategic interventions towards disaster recovery), and (c) the capacity to develop access and spaces for engagement with Government and non-state actors.

The above objectives were to be realized through two inter-connected but distinct initiatives. The first was by providing for a Training of Trainers (TOT) programme that would sustain the capacity development process beyond the tenure of this particular project. Specifically, provision was made for training and guidance for one year for 20 youth representatives selected from un-serviced communities in the CSO sector operating in the most vulnerable areas.

The second was to provide for a small grant facility to support vulnerable CSOs to ensure sustainability of their operations through financing institutional strengthening and other areas not generally supported by tsunami assistance. The SGF mechanism would resource CSOs to mobilize women and communities, facilitate the formation of other CSOs and to channel their participation in post-disaster recovery.

The envisaged capacity development was to take place at both the national, regional / inter-district, and local levels deriving lessons from the large body of knowledge and experience of the last decade in post-disaster recovery and development with UNDP facilitating learning among key stakeholders through such activities as sharing insights and innovative strategies and providing hands-on training by community representatives and practitioners within Sri Lanka and from neighboring countries, documentation of good practice, participatory assessment and monitoring, production of a grassroots capacity development guide or manual and support for community centers .

Project outputs were to include:

- Up to 20 Trained Trainers whose training would include the development of methodology for enhancing sustainable local capacity of CSOs and small NGOs. The training would enable the CSOs to become platforms of public participation and accountability in transforming from post-tsunami relief to a process of development.
- The production of a grassroots capacity development guideline/manual in Sinhala and Tamil, which can be used in all future district-level trainings
- Improved access to funds by local CSOs and small NGOs, as manifested by the ability to write better proposals and manage more resources
- Selection of appropriate candidates and organizations who will be represented in the training/community development process [40 individuals]
- 10 Training of Trainers workshops at district level, each of 05-day duration, and field monitoring
- 40 candidates to be paid a stipend of $150/- for working in their organizations or the communities where there are no organizations
- Briefing/training district-level trainers in the TOT process:
- Two five-day district-level training workshops and follow-up monitoring in the field

4   Project Implementation

The project has been able to accomplish some of its stated objectives, through the establishment of an implementation structure consisting of several layers of implementation. The following discussion outlines the both the positive elements of this implementation structure as well as some of the problems and bottlenecks the project faced in the two study districts.

4.1   Project Management Unit:

At the central level a Project Management Unit (PMU) was established, headed by the "National Project Director" and a Project Coordinator (PC) to implement the project with the support of two deputy project coordinators. The project management unit was located within the Centre for Non-Governmental Sector (CNGS) at the Ministry of Finance and Planning. The PMU had meetings with the donor every two months or more frequently if necessary, with the NAC every three months and with field officers (DSOs) every six months. In addition the members of the PMU met whenever required and also met field staff during field visits. The advice provided by the NAC was implemented by the PMU. In general, the NAC was very supportive of the project and tried to arrive at a consensus among NAC members and with the PMU as well as the donor representatives, and take a collective decision as far as major decisions were concerned. Thus these decisions were easier to implement. Problems arose when the full membership or the quorum needed to take decisions was not present. The PMU had established a reporting system of quarterly progress reports, which compared progress with the plans and comparative performance of the districts. The donor also undertook periodic evaluation which was discussed with the PMU. Thus the PMU had established a management system with adequate feedback to enable it to take informed decisions on any issue.

Some of the constraints or drawbacks of the project as expressed by the PMU staff, were:

    a) The lack of uniformity of the training programs, with quality differences in different districts, due to lack of proper curriculum and differences in the quality of trainers.
    b) There were delays in money transfer from IOs to beneficiaries.
    c) DAC was helpful to management only if the right people were picked as members.
    d) DAC should have more professionals and persons with research ability to improve the value of their input.
    e) Need to focus on assessing real needs (training and equipment) for greater success.
    f) Information management not adequate, there should a greater focus on this aspect in the future
    g) Coordination between government officials, the rest of the civil society inadequate.

The PMU structure appeared to be adequate for the project as formulated. The staffing of the PMU was considered adequate, except during the early stages of project implementation, when the staff was stretched to some extent. This was due to the number of field visits that had to be undertaken at the early stages and a few glitches that had to be sorted out at the start of the implementation of the project. If the project is extended and the scope broadened, then additional staff may be needed to implement the project successfully.

Some of the suggestions made by the PMU staff for an expanded new project were as follows:

i. The time period for a new project should be at least two years or there should be some flexibility in the fixing of the project period.
ii. The project should be expanded to non-Tsunami areas as well.
iii. Being a nationally executed project, there should be better coordination among similar projects in the field.
iv. Selection of representatives to the DAC and hiring of Social Mobilizers, should foster strong ownership.
v. The current level of funding ($1 Million) not adequate.

The use of the same management team to manage a new expanded project would facilitate implementation, due to their familiarity with the project. If a new team is appointed, then the learning process will be repeated and delays may be experienced at the initial stages of implementation. The feasibility of retaining the same team must be explored first before a decision is made to appoint a new one. A new management structure is proposed for an expanded project, based on the findings of this study and the PMU team should be able to fit in within the proposed new structure.

4.2   National Advisory Committee

The National Advisory Committee (NAC) comprising representatives of key Colombo-based CSOs, district-based CSOs, the private sector and the Government (Social Welfare Ministry and TAFREN), was responsible for oversight and guidance for the programme. The NAC meets quarterly to review progress and provide direction. At times, it also meets on a needs basis to review and approve Small Grants Facility guidelines and advise on implementation. The first task of the NAC was to establish the basic criteria and modality for the selection of project proposals.

The principal functions and duties of the NAC included:

a.   Overall oversight and guidance for the STRONG PLACES project.

b.   Quarterly review of projects approved by the DAC selected in accordance with   procedures established in consultation with the NAC.

c.   Take lead responsibility along with UNDP for the overall review of project and   SGF (Small Grants Fund) component of STRONG PLACES and for establishing   the criteria in consultation with UNDP for the monitoring and evaluation of the   STRONG PLACES project as a whole. The district level monitoring and   evaluation modality was to be established in consultation with the DAC,   Administrative NGO and stakeholders.

d.   Participate in ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities associated with the SGF, as well as to provide technical knowledge wherever necessary.

4.2.1   Observations and comments on NAC

Most members of the NAC felt that this was a good project and believed that participants of the project had benefited enormously from the project. Some members confessed that they attended only one or two meetings at the beginning and could not comment on the project, except for a vague notion that it was a good project. The attendance at meetings was limited to about 4-5 persons, who were usually the active participants. There were many in the NAC, of good standing and high positions who did not attend the meetings regularly due to their busy schedules. A majority of the members had not visited the field sites and consequently did not have a clear insight of the field conditions and implementation problems at the field level. Such an insight would have been useful in decision making. Some had visited the field sites on their own initiative as there was no financial provision made in the project for field visits. Some members expressed that a few NAC meetings should have been scheduled in the implementing districts. However, the logistical problem of

arranging such meetings would have been enormous, considering the fact that even meetings in Colombo were not well attended. Some members of the NAC were from outstation and had many difficulties in attending meetings. Thus it appears that the overall purpose of establishing a national committee with representation from all interested groups and people with knowledge and understanding to guide the project had not been completely fulfilled. Their source of information for basing decisions came mostly from progress review reports and presentations made by members of the PMU and in some instances by district support officers or DAC members. Thus one should consider some form of restructuring of the committee to improve the usefulness and realization of the objectives and purpose of the committee. This report has made some recommendations as to how this may be accomplished in a later section of the report on recommendations.

4.3 District Advisory Committee:

The next succeeding level was the District Advisory Committees (DAC) established in consultation with the District Secretary (Government Agent) who was also represented in the committee. The DAC met periodically to perform its functions one of which is to serve as the selection panel for the Small Grants Facility. However, the overall responsibility for the guidance and direction of the project as executed by the National Project Unit lay with the National Advisory Committee.

The principal functions and duties of the DAC included:

1. Oversight and guidance for the selection of Proposals submitted by each district for STRONG PLACES institutional capacity building project including identifying beneficiaries with needs
2. Quarterly review of projects approved by the DAC selected in accordance with procedures established in the selection guidelines
3. Lead responsibility along with UNDP for the district based review of project, especially the SGF component of STRONG PLACES
4. Help identify immediate capacity development needs of the CSOS as well as help identify an intermediary organization (NGO) from the district based on local knowledge and in accordance with UNDP procedures
5. Establish the criteria in consultation with UNDP for the monitoring and evaluation of the STRONG PLACES project within their district of operation for district level monitoring and evaluation
6. Participate in ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities associated with the SGF, as well as to provide technical knowledge wherever necessary
7. Assist in disseminating the information to marginalised or vulnerable CSOs/NGOs/civil society organizations
8. Assist the consultant and DSO to enhance the guidelines for selecting beneficiaries with district specific nuances/information

4.3.1 Observations and comments on DAC

Many members participated in the meetings at the beginning. However, the numbers attending meetings started to decline progressively for various reasons. This resulted in delays in decision making, ultimately affecting project implementation. In other districts there was a lack of participation of higher rung officials of governmental and non-governmental agencies. Although their participation was desirable, logistical and security situations were also not conducive. Some members of DACs of other districts said they were busy, some were unhappy with the way that meetings were conducted and decisions made and hence decided not to participate in future meetings. Some DAC members of another district were of the view that there was no local ownership of the project and ad hoc decisions were being made by the upper level hierarchy (NAC, UNDP, PMU) and handed down for approval by the DAC.

In Hambantota district, DAC had two nominees from the GA (Additional GA and DS of Hambantota), representatives from PLAN, OXFAM, CARE (1 each), and 7 representatives

from local NGO including one from WDF. In the opinion of the DSO, local NGO participation was important, as they knew about CSOs in the district. However, attendance was usually limited to 6 to 8 members since many had to come from some distance. According to the DSO, although Rs.1000.00 honorarium was paid to DAC members for travel, those who were from INGOs felt that this amount was insignificant, while DAC members of Local Civil Society thought that this amount was sufficient. Moreover, it was more important in terms of contribution to have the members of Local Civil Society representing the DAC in order to provide much required insights and to identify the real requirements of the communities.

In the Matara and Galle Districts, the DACs were chaired by the District Secretary and all DSs of the district were present at the meetings. About 75% to 80% of the DAC members usually attended the meetings and the participation was greater in these two districts. One reason may be the high profile of the Chairmen, which helped in increasing the level of participation. The District Secretaries also took great interest in the project and were able to improve the coordination and support needed from government agencies, which was vital for the successful implementation of the project. In the Eastern province, the District Secretaries rarely attended DAC meetings as they were busy, and usually nominated other officers from the Kachcheri to represent them. In Ampara the DAC meetings were held in the office of the Assistant GA, and attendance was about 5-6 out of a total of 9 members and held. In the case of Trincomalee District, DAC had 10 members including the Deputy Director of Planning (Engineering Section) as chairman, 3 DS (one each from Kinniya, Muthur and Town & Gravets Divisions, and representatives from NGOs (5) and the NGO Consortium (1). In this case, too, the attendance was limited to not more than 4 members due to busy work schedules and the changing nature of the security situation. Members were appointed based on geographical representation with the DAC having 5 members representing 5 DSD. However, 3 such members (from Muthur, Pulmuddai and Kuchchaveli) could not attend regularly due to their remote location. Thus, attendance was virtually limited to persons living in the town area1.

DSOs of a few districts were of the view that DAC advice was good. However, according to a few other members, the DAC was more conservative in approach seeking to implement the project through existing and established channels. They felt that some DACs did not want to try any innovative approach to meet local needs, but rather opted for established and set procedures. One of the consequences of this approach was that some deserving but not so well-established CSOs could not participate in the project.

A proper assessment of the availability of prospective candidates to the DAC should be made prior to engaging them for such a crucial role. In order to get more participation by government and non government officials at the DAC, middle level officials of both governmental and non-governmental agencies such as Rural or Community Development Officers attached to the DS offices and Programme Managers of district based NGOs and other representatives of committed and truly local level organizations may be included in the committee. It is also necessary to ensure that there is no conflict of interest when selecting members. Overall, the DAC appears to have performed adequately, despite many constraints. However, there is scope for improvement, by reducing delays in decision making and through improved clarity of day to day operations and routine procedures and independent key decision making powers including financial authority. Some DAC members suggested that the Chairman of the DAC should be appointed first and other DAC members selected subsequently with the assistance of the Chairman and Project Management officials, so that the Chairman would also have a say in the selection of DAC members. There should be greater devolution of local level decision making powers including more flexibility in financial decisions with increased participation of members in such a restructured committee. This implies that there is a need for changing the composition, structure and

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1 In terms of ethnic representation, there were 2 members representing the Muslim community, 1 member from the Sinhala community and 1 Muslim DAC member who later was selected as an IO representative while the Sinhala member failed to participate in DAC meeting after April 2006

mode of operation of the DAC. Recommendations on the structure of DAC are also provided in later sections of the report.

4.4   Intermediary Organizations (IO):

The IOs were selected through advertisements placed in the national newspapers from each district depending upon the district requirement, one to handle training and capacity building support to CSOs in and the other to disburse funds for training and other activities. Each IO received an amount of Rs.1, 000,000.00 as own institutional capacity building for handling the component assigned to it but to be paid in installments after evaluation of their performance.

In administering the direct capacity development component of the STRONG PLACES project, the intermediary organizations (IO) were expected to play a substantial role. The IO was required to assist the DSO in organizing, coordinating and selecting district-based trainers in order to conduct a series of direct capacity development workshops in the district

The IO was also responsible for hiring (through memoranda of understanding) and coordinating a group of social mobilisers for each district selected by the DAC/PMU and through the NAC throughout the project cycle. The intermediary organization was also expected to assist the DSO in coordination, monitoring and managing the community mobilisers.

With regard to the two components, two (or more, depending on the district requirement/capacity of selected IO), IOs were selected to coordinate SGF and DCB activity in the district. The IOs are required to help with administering the SGF as well as be the central point within the district to coordinate the capacity building workshops and assist the process of monitoring/managing the STRONG PLACES project within the district. In administering the SGF the intermediary organization provided support to the District Advisory Committee, which was responsible for selecting and recommending CSOs to be funded (with the assistance of the District Support Officer). The intermediary organization reported to the Project Management Unit based at the CNGS and were also accountable to the DAC in partnership with the DSO.

Overall the performance of IOs was mixed with IOs in some districts performing better than other districts. A few IOs assisted CSOs to establish linkages and share their knowledge with CSOs. Some IOs were not helpful or pro-active. The training programmes were not organized well by some IOs, while the SGF programme generally fared a little better, except in a few cases. In many instances the DSO had to organize the training, including the hiring of trainers, while the IO only made the payments. There were also delays in the release of funds, due to certain conditions having to be fulfilled. There was a problem of availability of suitable trainers in certain areas, thus establishing a pool of trainers for each area may be useful in any future project. Apparently, a few IOs had lost interest with the progression of the project and there was a gradual deterioration of their commitment. Most IOs did not make an effort to train their staff as TOTs for future training needs. Many IOs appeared not to have entirely fulfilled their role or functioned according to their TOR, which included such tasks as needs assessment, planning and implementation of training, monitoring, evaluation and follow up of training programmes.

The following chapter discusses the performances of IOs in two districts, where a more detailed assessment was made. The assessment suggests that the performance of the IOs depended on the type of organization selected for the purpose. In the Trincomalee district, local NGOs called "AHAM" and "Kinniya Vision" were selected for capacity building support and financial management respectively. In the Hambantota district, an NGO consortium and the District Chamber of Commerce were selected for capacity building support and financial management respectively.

In the area of capacity building, it appears that, AHAM has shown a better level of performance than its counterpart in Hambantota District. This was due to two reasons:

i. Before starting the project, AHAM had built up experiences from 1996 in the areas of establishing CSOs especially WRDS and in non-food relief such as community level peace building, educational activities for young women, early childhood development, and psycho social and skill development especially after the tsunami.

In contrast, the NGO consortium in Hambantota known as "Rural Organization Development Foundation" consisted of representatives from sixteen, district-level NGOs. According to DSO of Hambantota, members of the IO were more interested in looking after the welfare of their own NGOs rather than those of the project thereby increasing the DSO's workload. For example, the DSO had to recruit trainers and arrange and conduct training venues and programmes on his own whereas these were responsibilities that were entrusted to the IO. On one occasion, the installment paid out of the Rs 1 million grant to every IO was stopped due to poor performance.

ii. Staff training capacity was also an important factor. AHAM's better performance was due to its large staff of 65 members distributed among 1 main office in Trincomalee town and 3 sub offices.

The poor performance of the NGO Consortium of Hambantota was due to the fact that it did not have staff, who could impart training to others although they were working in field activities.

However, in the area of financial management, it appears that the Chamber of Commerce showed a better level of performance than its counterpart in Trincomalee district.

The Chamber was established in 1993 under the Companies Act, has a director board, finance and other committees, a total of 42 staff with 4 manager, 5 field officers with degrees, and lease line internet facilities. The Chamber appointed one manager to oversee the project and purchased facilities such as a multi media projector with some of the grant. The Chamber deposited SGF funds amounting to Rs.10 million in a savings account and used the interest earned (Rs 121,000) to provide facilities for more CSO. It also used the commission of Rs 228,000 given by the service providers, Damro, Metropolitan etc, to benefit more CSO. There was 100% transparency in financial dealings with CSO. To make a payment operative, each payment had to have 2 signatories[2]. The Chamber also conducted a two-day program in accounting and bookkeeping for CSO and an internal audit of its performance at the end of the project.

However, the IO from Trincomalee district did not and could not have the above type of financial arrangements due to lack of capacity and experience. It is also reported that certain financial claims for transport were incorrectly made and therefore such payments were not approved. In addition, beneficiaries experienced delays in realizing cheques payments since the IO had to work through the People's Bank branch in Kinniya via the Bank's regional branch in Kurunegala whereas dealing with the Commercial Bank branch in Trincomalee would have been easier and quicker, although this facility was not made available due to the security situation.

The experiences of these two districts appear to confirm the conclusion that the performances of IOs were mixed and to a large extent depended on the availability of local level organizations including NGOs, with skills required to accomplish the required tasks. In addition, appropriate local organizations were not selected either due to flaws in the selection procedures or that the selection was done hastily without assessing the capacity of the IO, due to lack of information or other causes. Thus it is necessary to examine whether, changing the operational procedure (improved selection procedure of IOs), such as undertaking a more detailed assessment of the IOs capacity would be adequate to improve performance. Alternatively, one has to examine whether such an intermediate organization is needed for implementing the project, if not, these functions could perhaps be more

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[2] This was common practice in other districts too and having two separate organizations also helped to maintain a system of checks and balances; signatories to payments by cheques consisted of one from an IO and another from PMU.

effectively undertaken by the changing the management structure of the PMU and by recruiting additional staff to undertake these functions.

4.5 District Support Officers

District Support Officers were recruited in each district to support the DAC activities and to coordinate/manage the day to day activities of the project within the district. They were also expected to provide support and assistance for decision-making by the DAC and coordinate and guide IOs and social mobilisers (SM). The DSO was responsible for formulating the work plan in close consultation with the NAC and DACs and for preparing the annual progress reports, quarterly reports and the annual progress review meetings. The DSOs for the each district were recruited through newspaper advertisements and many of the officers have demonstrated their capacity for dedicated hard work both at office and field levels.

According to a few DSOs, in some instances there were delays in the approval procedure at the DAC level, which caused a setback to their programmes of implementation for training and provision of small grants. The training programmes needed to be updated and projects should be extended from the coastal areas towards inland, but the current level of funding was inadequate for such an expansion.

In general the District Support Officers performed well, some of them having to take on responsibilities of IOs, which did not perform well. Some DSOs could have improved their performance if more training was provided to them. DSOs in the Eastern province indicated that it was not difficult to work with people from all three communities, as these communities supported them in their work. They felt that the project concept and the system of operation were good and should be continued with a few improvements. Most of the record keeping, monitoring, reporting and paper work were done by the CSOs. Most stakeholders felt that the CSOs had performed very well and went out of their way to improve the performance of the project. DAC members also felt the same way and suggested that for continuity and post project monitoring the services of the DSOs should be continued if the project is extended.

4.6 Social Mobilizers (SMs):

Although there was no provision in the original project proposal for this cadre, the project opted for recruiting a team of social mobilizers for each district (one per DS Division). This was done as an alternative to the initial proposal to select a team of 20 youth within the community who would be trained as community workers, and would continue to function as trainers even after the project was concluded.

The SMs were expected to perform the following duties and responsibilities:

1. Educate the CSOs in the tsunami-affected areas on the Project and its prospects.
2. Assist the CSOs to strengthen their identified needs through extensive dialogue and training
3. Assist the DSO/ DAC (District Advisory Committee) in CSO mapping in the area of his / her responsibility and help develop a database
4. Function as the link between the DSO and the CSOs in carrying out the projected training and institutional capacity building initiatives
5. Provide assistance in monitoring and evaluation
6. Provide progress reports to the District Support Officer on a regular basis
7. Help identify long-term institutional capacity building requirement of CSOs in the areas of his /her responsibility
8. Help and support DSOs to identify lessons learnt and best practices in developing CSO institutional capacity development
9. Assist the CSOs in developing sustainable and realistic development plans and implement them
10. Assist the Intermediary Organizations in developing work plans for social mobilization and local resource mobilization
11. Performing other tasks as required by the Project

SMs were recruited either through newspaper advertisements or through recommendations of knowledgeable local organizations, persons or officials and were responsible to the IO in charge of direct capacity building. There is room for improvement in the selection process as it was reported that some SMs selected did not fit the needs of the CSOs. In the case of Hambantota recruitment was made through newspaper advertisements, while in Trincomalee district, recruitment was through recommendations. One of the main criteria used was that the candidate should be from affected communities and living within a DS where the project had a presence. They were between 19 and 30 years of age belonging to both sexes, had GCE AL qualifications along with some experience in community development and/or relief work with an NGO (with the exception of one who was a graduate).

Special two-day, residential training was given to the SMs in how to create awareness of the project at Division and village level, how to identify and select CSO, and benefits to be received from the project. In addition, SMs also participated in training given for CSOs to gain familiarity with such areas as capacity building, institutional development, accounts and bookkeeping, management of revolving funds and improving efficiency of the CSOs. However, many SMs did not receive any training on social mobilization including small group formation, participatory planning, participatory rural appraisal, participatory needs analysis and rapport building especially when working in a different ethnic community. For example SMs in Hambantota district did not receive such training. Further, no practical training was given in field situations while practice was confined to simulations of problem situations and problem solving through the use of games. From interviews with SM and staff of IO, the above lacunae negatively affected their performance at the community level.

Other factors that diminished the impact of SMs were:

- Large geographical area assigned to each SM in some districts (one per DS Division)
- Lack of own transport and dependency on public transport (usually one or two buses operating on one day from town to the field)
- Absence of community level animators to serve as the point of contact
- Ethnic difference between SM and community especially in the case of communities in the districts in the Eastern Province.

Given these constraints, almost all SMs limited their activities to the following:

- Creating awareness about the project among GN at Divisional monthly meetings
- Creating awareness about the project in the community through influential people
- Conducting an assessment of CSOs and their training and other needs and help in selecting CSOs for project
- Functioning as medium of communication between project and the CSOs and informing the latter about the planned training events

In many instances, considering restrictions in transport and the security situation, visits to beneficiaries were somewhat limited in duration especially in the Eastern Province. The daily routine was to leave home at 8.00 in the morning and reach the village by 9.00, spend two hours in each village, and stop working at 4.00 in the afternoon, since buses did not operate after that. Most took food from home or came home to have lunch whereas others had more contact with the community since they lived within the community already and traveled around in bicycles.

Due to the above constraints many could not perform the following essential functions:

- Keep a close tab on how the material assets received were utilized
- Monitor how knowledge acquired during training was utilized or transmitted to others in the CSO or community
- Provide backstopping for any lapses on the part of CSO office bearers
- Provide guidance on how knowledge gained could be applied to their real life situations

The above suggests that the performance of SMs can be improved with more training in appropriate subjects. In DS divisions with areas with a larger geographic spread of the CSOs, the number of mobilizers may have to be increased to improve effectiveness.

4.7   Civil Society Organizations:

Civil Society Organizations were the main beneficiaries of the project. A selection process and criteria for selection were established for CSOs by the project.

4.7.1   Selection Process:

The DAC in each district was responsible for inviting applications for assistance from interested CSOs through the DSs, scrutinizing the applications, and preparing a final list of beneficiaries using a set of criteria and a marking scheme. Field visits were also an important component in the CSO selection, especially in lieu of supporting documentation/previous experience of CSO. Usually, the SMs played a key role in communicating information about the project to the concerned communities. Such communication was successful in some areas and not so effective in others. In the case of Hambantota district, the communication process was quite successful with more than 500 applications being received from CSOs whereas the number that could be accommodated by the Project was less (78 CSOs benefited).

However, the selection process had some limitations since, it was found during field interviews that there were instances where not all CSOs in a given community learned about the project or learned it too late leaving them with the feeling that they had missed a good opportunity and even created a feeling of jealousy toward those who got benefits. The DSO also received letters from applicants expressing their disappointment about not being selected and wondering why they were not.

This implies that the selection process could be improved to ensure transparency and neutrality by employing several strategies:

- Use all available media including mass media to communicate about opportunities created through the project
- Be transparent about criteria for selection when communicating about project opportunities
- Explain to rejected applicants why they were not considered for benefits

4.7.2   Selection Criteria:

In some districts, the GNDs in each DS Division were separated into tsunami directly/indirectly affected categories. The CSO selected from the former were given training plus equipment, telephones etc while CSO from the latter were only given training. In other districts, no such categorization was made and all received small grants to operate revolving funds while some received office equipment and other material assets.

The core selection criterion was that the applicant CSO should be from a tsunami-affected (direct or indirect) DS Division while individual districts had their own secondary selection criteria. For example, in Hambantota:

1. Only one CSO was to be selected from any given GND; however in some special cases more than one CSO was selected.

2. The CSO should be registered and

3. The CSO should have a moderate level of achievement (CSO that were too weak or too strong were rejected) although rejected ones were called for training programs

The DAC prepared a guideline specifying selection criteria that covered present role and functions of applicant CSOs, their organizational and financial structure, organizational capacity and existing and planned programmes, sources of external support, assistance

requested and project proposal submitted. A ranking of the applicant was arrived at giving a score for each criterion using a qualitative scale.

However, when applying these criteria some departures were noted. For example, personal knowledge of the applicant CSO assisted in selecting genuine beneficiaries and also assisted in CSO revisiting its requests while knowledge of DAC members, supplemented by their experience in the field helped CSO to better define its needs. In special cases, DAC decided on selecting more than one CSO depending on performance and special needs. It is noteworthy that all ethnic groups and gender based CSOs such as Women RDSs were represented in the beneficiary list. According to some CSOs, priority in selection should be given to the level of development and viability of the organization in order to improve the chances of success. A more stringent assessment of the CSOs and their needs should be undertaken before inclusion in the programme.

4.7.3   Staged Manner of CSO Selection:

It was observed that not all the CSOs were selected for participation in the project at once. Instead, the selection was done in several stages in all districts (for example, 5 stages in Hambantota and two in Trincomalee). According to DSO/Hambantota, the staged manner of selection was necessary due to lack of time given for selection. However, such a procedure helped the DSO to learn from early experiences and also better understand the CSO needs. It also helped to select more CSOs especially for SGF. By the same token, it did not give all CSOs the same amount of exposure to the Project and to its benefits especially with regard to receiving training.

5 Project Benefits:

Project benefits were in the form of training programmes and material assets such as chairs, metal huts, and loudspeakers in the case of Hambantota and material assets such as chairs, metal cabinets and grants to operate revolving funds in the case of Trincomalee.

5.1 Benefits from Training:

It was originally envisaged that community workers trained under a TOT programme would provide training to CSOs. However, it was observed that training was imparted directly to CSOs by trainers recruited by the IOs and not by the TOT trained community workers as envisaged.

When trying to impart training to CSOs directly, the project came across several difficulties in all districts. For example, in the case of Hambantota, assuming that there would be at least be a single representative from the total of 155 CSOs, the number of participants at for any one event would have exceeded 100. Firstly, there was the problem of finding a suitable training venue that could accommodate such a large number for a residential training programme. Secondly, and from the point of view of the trainees, mass training was perhaps not the most desirable method especially for training in such areas as bookkeeping, accounting, and proposal writing that required personalized attention and supervision since most of the trainees were totally ignorant of these topics to begin with.

The level of participation in training was low as can be seen from the data provided for Hambantota in Table 1. This may be due to the long distances that participants had to travel to reach the training sites (ranging between 10 and 150 km depending on their location of the training center). Also the cost of travel had to be met by the trainees, which may have discouraged some participants. Of the total number of CSOs selected in the district, 55% had participated in the Japanese S5 training dealing with methods of making management efficient while participation in all other programmes was much lower. These problems were encountered in other districts as well.

Table 1   Participation in Training (All CSO). Hambantota

Training	Japanese S5	Accounting & Book keeping	Personality & Leadership	Social Empowerment	Disaster management	Positive thinking	Proposal Writing	Good Governance
No of CSO's	85	57	45	44	42	45	36	68
%	55%	37%	29%	29%	26%	29%	22%	44%

Data; UNDP Field office * Total no. of CSO's 155

It is noteworthy that lowest participation was in respect of proposal writing, an area in which most CSO are not competent although this was identified in the original project proposal as a major need to be addressed. DSOs agreed that it is virtually impossible to impart training for all intended beneficiaries and that lack of resources such as training venues and funds were the main constraints.

On the other hand, participation was relatively high in the Eastern Province. In the case of Trincomalee (see Table 2), the participation was high ranging from 70% to 90%. This could be due to the fact that the target beneficiaries were smaller in number and training was done division-wise while in some other districts, training was district-wise, catering to beneficiaries from the entire district, with the associated problem of traveling long distances to attend training programmes.

Table 2   Participation in Training (Trincomalee)

Training	Needs & importance of org.	Accounting & Book keeping	Personality & Leadership	Office management	Project management	Peace building	Report Writing
No of CSO's	32	38	36	34	36	30	36
%	76	90	86	81	86	71	86

Data; UNDP Field office   * Total no. of CSO's 42

With regard to improved teamwork as a positive outcome of training, the following comment by the President of RDS of Sippikulama is noteworthy: "Our team strength was improved after training. The members were mentally at low ebb because of the damages and deaths caused by the tsunami. Many NGOs had come here and distributed things so that people became used to getting help since NGOs gave something for nothing. But there is nothing left of what they did whereas the UNDP project has left some visible results."

With regard to changes suggested in the training programme, many stakeholders commented on the need to reinforce the training given to office bearers by having two categories of training inputs:

1. Re-training for office bearers on such "complex" subjects as accounting and bookkeeping that were too new and complex for them since two days of training was not enough and include practice in writing proposals (although this was done for trainees in Trincomalee programme as they were a small number and training was given at divisional rather than district level[3]

2. Expanding the scope of trainees by including core group from the community who could be potential successors of the present generation

President of RDS/Sippikulama: "If we give the training to the other members, we will only transfer 50% of what we learned. Further, the average villager will not accept anything when a fellow villager says it but will accept if it comes from an outsider. They need to hear from someone who has acceptance in society. The training was also important since there is no mental development in the tsunami recovery program but only emphasis on giving things".

Most CSOs were of the opinion that the training benefited them, but such training should be extended to other members of the CSOs. Training in food processing helped them to start some livelihood activities, while training in preparing proposals helped in obtaining assistance from other donors. Primary health care training helped in improving sanitation and health practices including improvement of home environment to avoid communicable and vector borne diseases. Disaster management training was said to be very useful.

5.2   Benefits from Material Assets

Material assets were a new feature in the CSO inventory and also a source of income and method of increasing membership. It is noted also that all CSO do not see having telephones as a means of making an extra income since many people in the community, particularly youth, have hand phones. There are also remote villages that have not received phones due to lack of network coverage and unavailability of power services. However, distribution of SUNTEL CDMA phones was not a part of project tasks but materialized at a later stage of the project through UNDP-Private sector partnership. However, this could have been considered as a legitimate project component at the design stage since they would have facilitated communication between project staff and beneficiaries. Many CSOs considered this a good asset as it facilitated communication between members and with project staff and other stakeholders. Members of CSOs who wanted to use the phone could purchase their own telephone cards and use the phone for their personal purposes as well. In remote areas this was a boon to the members.

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[3] Lack of facilities in Hambantota prevented training to be decentralized to the divisional level.

6   Project Impacts:

This section will deal with the impacts of the project through training and other activities.

6.1   Impact of Training:

One of the significant and perhaps lasting impacts of the projects and consists of the following:

6.1.1   Exposure to Good Quality Training:

All respondents who have attended the training are very appreciative of the fact that training given was of a higher quality than what they had from elsewhere.

Quote from President of NAVODA Water Management Society: "We never had training like that anywhere else. We learned how to work in village communities and how to anticipate problems. Before the training, when we had problems with the community over matters such as collecting dues for installing pipes etc. their responses discouraged us. The community has large number families we have to cover and they come from different backgrounds, as this is a new housing scheme. The training we got helped us to cope with the difficulties and not give up. One other thing that we picked up from the training was that the decision of the majority might not always be correct and also not have arguments among the office bearers in public but have them out at the executive committee level. Another result was how to prepare quality reports (using colors and lamination in the front cover) and not just have the report in the old format. The trainers were also good. We also liked the idea of mixing training with sports activities". Comment from Treasurer (female) of the Society: "The lessons on S Five helped us to keep everything clean and tidy, not only the water distribution site and office but also our homes."

Comment by President of RDS/Sippikulama:

"It was good to meet other RDS people at the training program. RDSs are isolated societies and never meet one another. We were able to hear success stories of others and we got encouraged."

6.1.2   Positive Impacts of Training:

In most instances, training received had a positive impact on all aspects of CSO management as indicated in Annex 2 Tables 1 and 2.

Most respondents from CSOs felt that the level of improvement was more than 50% of the pre-training situation and was felt in areas such as planning and decision making skills, as well as office and financial management, team work, transparency and governance. The level of improvement was less than 50% of the normal situation with regard to areas such as participation of members and women, coping with disasters, physical and social well-being and public-private partnerships. This could mean that either that they did not understand the training well or that they were not interested in such training. A re-evaluation of training programmes may have to be undertaken to fit the requirement of the CSOs and perhaps improve the quality of training. The pattern of responses was similar in Trincomalee, as well.

According to one trainer "Usually the majority of members are passive and only a few are active or vocal". During training, members were given responsibilities. Leaders of CSO liked the new things they learned. "The trainer also held the view that younger trainees had more ability to absorb the training than older participants. There was also a need for retraining and extending the training to other members of the community.

6.2   Benefits from Material Assets:

There is a definite sense that the material assets donated are the assets of the CSO with the reference to them as "our assets" (ape wathkamak). Assets such as metal huts, chairs and loud speakers are rented out at a competitive price and earn some income for the CSO.

Although there is common ownership of such assets and incomes from them put into a common purse and to common uses, there is the risk of such assets ceasing to be common after some time and instead become private property. This is due to the fact that, in many l CSOs, the assets are stored in a private house or a room in a private house that belongs either to an office bearer or to a relative of an office bearer. The risk is ever present although at the time of handing them over, the CSO had entered into a written agreement with the project that it was common property to be used for the welfare of the community. The agreement was entered into at a public meeting held with all members of each CSO and the project field staff. While some office bearers are genuinely interested in finding land and funds to build an office where the assets could be stored, not a single one has so far succeeded in this venture.   Office equipment provided helped in providing, particularly computer training, while photo copiers helped in reducing their photo copying expenses. Some women's organizations received hair salon equipment, which helped in increasing revenue as well as provide training to members interested in such a field. CSOs felt that more such useful equipment would help in improving livelihoods of members

6.3   Increase in Membership

Increase in membership was reported as a direct result of the project particularly since CSOs had made it a rule that material benefits such as metal huts and loudspeakers will be given out to members either at rates lower than those charged from non-members or even give them free of charge or since they could benefit from the revolving funds (as in Trincomalee). In some districts the membership increased, because they could take loans at a low interest rate, from revolving funds provided to the CSOs. In the Hambantota district about 50% of the CSOs reported increased membership, while in Trincomalee district nearly 100% of the CSOs reported increased membership. In many districts there was increased membership due to the demonstrated benefits experienced by members, which induced others to join the organization.

Similarly and with regard to holding of regular meetings, the proportion of CSOs having monthly meetings increased from about 25% prior to the project to 75% after the project. The reason given was that there was more interest among members and office bearers to communicate to members about the new developments resulting from the project. This was the case both in Hambantota, Matara and Galle districts as well as in Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara districts.

6.4   Improved Financial Management:

Many CSOs started to audit their accounts after the project. There was between a 25% to 50% increase in the proportion of CSOs that had begun auditing of their accounts after the project, with a small proportion using external audits. With regard to this aspect, a higher proportion of CSOs began auditing in the Eastern Province districts, mainly using external auditors. In general, it was observed that over 60% of the CSOs undertake the auditing of their accounts, particularly those that have participated in this project.

6.5   Increased amounts in bank accounts:

Amounts of cash in bank accounts have not seen a significant increase before and after the project in most CSOs, since most have not been able to generate large increases of funds through renting of assets as yet. However, in a few districts, there has been a significant increase in funds deposited in bank accounts, particularly those CSOs receiving revolving funds, which have successfully operated this fund to obtain surpluses. Collection of membership and other fees have also increased, thus increasing the balances. In some of

the districts in the Eastern province, there has been a decline in level of cash in banks in many CSOs, excepting Trincomalee, where about a third of the CSOs had increased bank balances after the project. In the case of the Hambantota district, about 15% of the CSOs showed an increase in bank balances after the project, mostly those at the lower end of the scale.

6.6   Display of Accounts:

There was a substantial increase in the proportion of CSOs displaying accounts after the project. For example, in the Hambantota and Trincomalee districts, the proportion of CSOs displaying accounts increased from nearly zero percent before the project to between 25% and 50% after the project. However, this was not the case in many other districts, with still a substantial proportion of CSOs not displaying accounts even after the project. One of the reasons given by them is the lack of a proper office to display the accounts and another being that people do not or cannot read the accounts due to lack of literacy. Some CSOs indicated that they read the accounts at the general meeting of members and considered this to be adequate. This is still an area that needs further emphasis and backstopping since accounts could be displayed on the day of an AGM or a monthly meeting.

6.7   Handling of Revolving Loan Funds:

Many CSOs appeared to have operated the revolving funds satisfactorily, fixing their own interest rates and repayment schedules. The repayment was satisfactory, with office bearers ensuring that repayment was made on time. Generally the loan repayments were re-lent to other members, so that the revolving funds were put to maximum use. There were exceptions to this, particularly in the Eastern Province, where funds lent were not repaid, either due to the relocation of the beneficiary to other places or abroad (India) and due to internal displacement as a result of the conflict situation. In general revolving funds were effectively handled by:

a) CSOs that were gender based (i.e. had women members)
b) CSOs that had office bearers who had received training in how to operate a revolving fund and in:
c) CSOs that had prior preparation through a process of social mobilization with small group formation and promoting these small groups to develop their savings as individuals and as groups.

The revolving funds helped the CSOs to improve their financial position and improved their financial management capacity. The amount given was considered insufficient by many CSOs, who suggested that in the future a good assessment must be done of the needs and the amount of funds provided should be according to the needs and should be proportional to the number of members in the organization. CSOs with larger membership should be given higher amounts. The success was also due to provision of funds at lower than market interest rates, which helped to reduce their cost of financing small livelihood activities, as market rates were much higher in other banking institutions.

6.8   Constraints:

It was observed that inadequacy of assistance, dependency on higher levels of project management, by which is meant dependency on the DSO, dependency on aid, poor relationship with higher levels of the project, physical distance and poor communication were the main constraints faced by CSOs. In the two study districts of Hambantota and Trincomalee too, the above were the main constraints faced by CSOs. See Annex 3 Tables 1 and 2 .

6.9   Management Problems:

Among management problems, the most crucial was the lack of adequate finance to support livelihood activities. Other problems faced by CSOs included, lack of building and space for

operation, and lack of adequate amount of revolving fund loans. The management problems were similar in Hambantota and Trincomalee districts as shown in Annex 4 Tables 1 and 2.

6.10   Relationships with other CSOs, state agencies or INGOs/NGOs:

A comparison of the activities before and after the project for CSOs shows that one of the important outcomes of the project was the establishment of contacts with other CSOs, a trend that most informants attributed to the close interaction of participants in training programmes. This was further developed through establishment of CSO networks in a few other districts such as Galle, Matara and Batticaloa. Some CSOs suggested that the formation of a CSO forum, say within a DS division would help to foster greater coordination and cooperation among CSOs. The interaction within the membership of the CSOs also improved as a result of the project, with members meeting more often, and having closer relationships to improve the common benefits accruing to the community from the project.

In all districts, CSO/government interaction specifically with the Divisional Secretaries, increased and/or were reinforced as a consequence of the project. CSO interaction with NGOs and INGOs had also increased remarkably in all districts. The selection of CSO from Matara district for a USAID project is a strong example.

6.11   Changes Proposed by CSOs:

The changes proposed in a future stage of interventions as indicated by CSOs are: increasing the amount of grant, providing adequate training in how to manage the revolving fund and increasing the scope of the loans to cover more beneficiaries.

Other needs relate to training and awareness creation on areas of social and economic development that respondents believe the project should address in the future and include:

1. Agricultural knowledge and market prices– for all farmers or members.
2. Educational trips – knowledge transfer programs
3. Programs for social problems (child prostitution, blue films, domestic violence, drug abuse) to cover parents and children.
4. Income generation activities and programs.
5. Awareness in organic farming and fertilizer programs.
6. Food possessing technologies.
7. Training in how to create a disaster management task force at community level.
8. Training in freshwater fisheries.
9. Spiritual development (a need not addressed by tsunami recovery programs and also by local clergy); spiritual awakening in the wake of the tsunami has disappeared by now.
10. IT training to bring knowledge of and contact with donors.
11. Ethnic and cultural programs to create national harmony.
12. Health awareness programmes
13. Methods to counteract drug and alcohol abuse (especially in Trincomalee district due to loss of traditional livelihoods in   agriculture and fishing).

6.12   Impacts on Wider Society:

6.12.1 Counterpoint to Politicization of the Community:

According to 2 DAC members, the strengthening of CSOs have served to create a viable community organization that is an alternative to the system of political party branches that

had superseded CSOs such as the RDS and thereby posed a challenge to the political order.

7   Lessons Learned:

Lessons learned could be presented under the different categories of stakeholders could be presented as follows:

All:

Personal interest and motivation were important to achieve the goals of the project and that should be expected of all personnel. This could have been achieved through more exposure.

Project duration of one year is not adequate, it should be extended for another two years at least. It is difficult to change attitudes and they will change only under our influence.

NAC:

Need for more commitment and involvement from NAC in all activities of the project needs to be stressed especially in developing and implementing a participatory monitoring programme for the project.

Restructuring the committee may improve impact.

Need to recruit people with skills in monitoring and evaluation skills at this level.

DAC:

Need for proper assessment of the availability of prospective candidates to the DAC prior to engaging them for such a crucial role. The alternative would have been to increase participation from middle levels of both governmental and non-governmental agencies including possibly Rural or Community Development Officers attached to the DS offices and programme managers of district based NGOs.

Having government officers in the DAC was important as it gave legitimacy and acceptance of the project interventions although, at the same time, having government participation also influenced decision-making to some extent.

IO:

Selecting IO with good financial management capacity and practices for handling SGF was important and good practices such as having one separate officer to handle the project affairs, depositing the SGF funds in a savings account and using the interest earned to reach more beneficiaries, and conducting in-house evaluation at the end of the project period and conducting own training programmes for CSOs in auditing and bookkeeping

Avoid circuitous financial arrangements in dispensing funds and prevent delays in payments to beneficiaries and select banks that are most convenient and have the best service

A single NGO with training capacities for training should ideally have been the proper IO to conduct training activities while using a consortium consisting of representatives from NGOs having their own businesses to attend to was not the best option.

Capacity development of IO for training should have been a prerequisite and attended to before the project began

Select trainers who know how to conduct TOT programmes in addition to the main subject areas to be covered.

Having division-wise training programmes as in Trincomalee district was good since it allowed for more participation from CSO as otherwise they would have to travel longer distances and even helped to overcome the problem of traveling through hostile ethnic communities and undergo checks by the military and police. This was the case in other districts too..

Paying IO in installments was a good idea and making it conditional to good performance

DSO:

DSO role is critical for implementing the project and to work as liaison between project and implementation levels at district level and with other partners. Having young officers with competency and background in project management are useful qualifications.

Large amount of paperwork is involved: handling applications, sending communications about selection and training, and also explaining to applicants why they were not selected. Recommend a clerical assistant to DSO to handle such responsibilities and also provide own transport.

Community Mobilizers:

Need more exposure to TOT, facilities for own transport and support of community level workers

Ensure that they know how to work in a community not of their own ethnic or religious background (rudiments of cultural anthropology and rapport building to be included in training)

CSO:
Selecting CSOs that were doing well was also important, as it made sure that the project would not collapse.

Events connected with the project such as handing over cheques for goods provided was done with some ceremony to emphasize the importance of the activity rather than just dispense them as was done in tsunami situations. It also ensured transparency and accountability.

The selection process could be improved to ensure transparency and neutrality by employing several strategies:

- Use all available media including mass media to communicate about opportunities created through the project
- Be transparent about criteria for selection when communicating about project opportunities
- Explain to rejected applicants why they were not considered for benefits

Use of guideline specifying selection criteria and a ranking of the applicant was a positive achievement.

Select all CSO at the same time and thereby give them the same degree of exposure to the project and its benefits.

A re-evaluation of training programmes may have to be undertaken to fit the requirement of the CSOs and perhaps improve the quality of training.

8   Conclusions:

The main conclusions from the study are as follows:

(1) The project concept was highly relevant to the social context of the impoverished communities of both districts since it focused on empowerment and capacity building as opposed to simple granting of aid that was adopted in the wake of the tsunami and the civil conflict

(2) The project philosophy of creating an interactive learning process and an enabling environment among stakeholders was a novel initiative although it did not receive adequate attention at all levels of project implementation

(3) The implementation arrangements were logically appropriate particularly by allowing for flexibility at the district level and giving more freedom to local initiatives although some of the implementing partners required capacity building prior to getting them on board.

(4) There was little or no monitoring of project interventions and backstopping for CSOs especially with regard to care of material and financial assets provided by the project, and transfer of knowledge gained from training to other members although this was one of the three project components. Only the above activities will guarantee that the sustainability of the project interventions.

(5) The project can be considered as a qualified success taking into consideration the sum total of its achievements and weaknesses.

(6) The project management system and advisory committee approach need to be reviewed, to improve project implementation.

9 Recommendations:

The following recommendations have been suggested for improving the project

1. Changes to Project Implementation Structure

The NAC as it is presently constituted appears not to be performing its functions properly. The attendance is poor and decisions are made by a few members. Hence the following changes to the committee are proposed

  i. It is recommended that instead of a NAC a National Project Committee (NPC) be constituted, for implementing the project.
 ii. The present PMU will be merged with the NPC, and the Project Director will chair the NPC, while the national and deputy project coordinators will service the project committee and handle day to day management functions.
iii. Conceptually the NPC will differ from the NAC in that it would combine both advisory and implementation functions in one body.
 iv. A few actively participating members of the NAC can be reappointed to this new committee, along with government officials, the donor representative and others as needed.
  v. The majority of the membership of the NPC should be representatives of relevant community or non-governmental organizations, while the funding agency could participate purely in an advisory capacity.
 vi. The composition and size of the committee should be manageable and important decisions should be taken either by consensus or by majority vote.
vii. The NPC should be provided with powers of decision making on selection procedures, recruitment, training, financial matters including the determination of employee salaries, as well as be responsible for the overall management, operation and monitoring of the project.
viii. The handling of finances can be undertaken by the donor (UNDP) as otherwise, an accountant has to be appointed to the Project Management Staff.

A similar structure or a District Project Committee (DPC) can be established at the district level.

  i. A District Project Director should be appointed by the government to service the committee (Similar to DSO but at a higher level), and the DPC should have similar powers as the national committee but applicable to the district.
 ii. The DPC could be chaired by the District Secretary, wherever it is possible and the District Secretary is willing to take up such a responsibility.
iii. Alternatively, the District Project Director could be appointed as chairman of the DPC or an eminent person within the DPC could be selected or elected as Chairman by the District Project Committee
 iv. A few active members from community based organizations and NGOs should be included in the committee.
  v. The majority of the membership of the DPC should be representatives of relevant community or non-governmental organizations, while the funding agency representative could participate purely in an advisory capacity.
 vi. Finances at the district level can be either handled by an IO or a Bank, as done at present. However, in this case the IO will only be responsible for transfer of funds and accounting. A payment can be made for services rendered.
vii. An alternative would be for the DPC to handle its own finances, in which case an accountant must be recruited to keep accounts for auditing purposes. The latter arrangement is suggested as there were numerous instances of delays in the transfer of funds.
viii. The modalities of financial arrangements can be decided at a later stage. However, greater financial authority should be devolved to the DPCs.
 ix. The Small Grants and Training Programmes should be the responsibility of the DPC
  x. The position of DSO can retained at the district level.

xi. Community or social mobilizers should be retained and trained to work as training coordinators as well with one of the mobilizers appointed as district training coordinator.

xii. It is proposed that training of CSOs be executed by the DPC through the establishment of a Training unit at the centre and through regional and district training coordinators, rather than through IOs, which have not delivered the goods according the information gathered for the evaluation.

xiii. The overall implementation structure and arrangements can be replicated in other post-disaster scenarios as well.

2. Changes in the Project Implementation Arrangements

Small changes in the way the project is implemented at the field level may have a substantial impact on beneficiaries. The following changes in implementation methods are recommended:

i. Ensure that all CSOs in the district/DS division are informed ahead of time, when calling for applications

ii. Work out selection criteria and communicate these to potential beneficiaries

iii. Expose community representatives to situations where CSO have played a critical role in recovery, so that they may learn from such experience.

iv. Appoint community level supporters or animators to work in close collaboration with social mobilizers.

v. Give greater emphasis to TOT programmes in place of direct training of beneficiaries by the project

vi. Establish inter and intra organizational monitoring mechanisms.

vii. Establish an effective monitoring system at the CSO, DPC and NPC levels

3. Recommendations on Improvements to CSO

i. A stock taking of every CSO which has participated in the project should be done at the outset to identify current strengths and weaknesses and using PRA and PNA methods

ii. Retraining is necessary for all office bearers of CSO through young community level workers who have undergone TOT programmes and their positions renamed from Community Mobilizers to Community Educators/Trainers

iii. CSO provided with material assets should be encouraged to have a separate office either on common property or premises temporarily rented. The office should be used to store goods as well as documents such as financial and other records. Initially, a CSO member could be present in the office at designated times of the day and later someone else could be hired for a small salary to be paid from incomes earned from use of project assets such as chairs, metal huts and telephones; preferably, a disabled person could perform this role.

iv. It is also important that each office bearer of the CSO be given a job description. People usually get appointed to gain prestige and not to do some work.

v. Planning for next year is important, thereby making the successor also responsible for implementing these plans.

vi. CSO should be encouraged to display annual accounts of the CSO instead of being read out only.

vii. Monitoring is essential, as office bearers of CSO will change; complaints have been received of office bearers using what was given for their own personal benefit and also about conflicts among them. Monitoring should at least take place over a period of time (at least 2 or 3 years) using external monitors but with the help of community level helpers or supporters (one for each GND).

viii. The scope of the project should be expanded to include CSOs that only received training and be given material assets and revolving fund loans using lessons

learned from other CSOs that operated such funds in other districts and to other poor communities in the country.

4.   Recommendations on Training and Small Grants Programme

i.   In order to realize its potential, it is apparent that the project implementation be recast in such as way as to address the project fundamentals. This could be done by:

   a.   Creating a cadre of trainers selected from among the most motivated and out-going CSO office bearers preferably those from the relatively younger age group preferably with knowledge of IT skills and
   b.   Providing them with exposure programmes in other districts or countries that have been affected by disasters and where CSOs have played a critical role in recovery.

ii. The existing system of appointing IOs as training provider has not been entirely successful. Therefore a different approach may be adopted in the future. The IO may be replaced and training provided directly by Project Management, by appointing training coordinators and establishing a pool of training resources on a regional or district basis.

iii. If the training is provided directly by the DPC, then a pool of trainers should be established either at the district or regional levels for training of CSO members. A training coordinator should be appointed to each district to develop curricula, and organize training. A national training coordinator should be appointed to coordinate all training to be provided under the project. This would ensure quality of training and appropriateness of curriculum.

iv. If the DPC feels that training could be better provided through en existing NGO which has the necessary training and other resources, then the Committee should be given the authority to make such a decision. Nevertheless, the Training Coordinator should assist in arranging and conducting the training.

v.   Training needs should be assed properly, before training is imparted. The Community mobilizers should have an active role in this activity. The impact of past training could also be used as a guide for evaluating training needs.

vi. The training programme should be arranged closer to the residences of participants to reduce the need to travel long distances to attend training. It was observed that participation was less when a large area had to be covered. A traveling allowance to participants would help to improve participation rates.

vii. The training programmes should be rural area based, and be of uniform quality and content, no matter where and when the training is arranged.

viii. Give more emphasis to TOT training of CSO members so that training can be imparted to a larger clientele of members.

ix. A thorough needs assessment should be undertaken by the Training Coordinator and Social mobilizers, prior to formulating the training programmes.

x.   More emphasis should be given to training in finding international and local markets and micro insurance facilities for goods and services produced through livelihood development activities, to improve the viability of such activities undertaken by members of the CSOs.

xi. The training class should be of a manageable size and spaced out adequately to reduce congestion.

xii. The SGF should review the limit of the grants and provide higher amounts to CSOs that would benefit from such an investment, provided that these investments could lead to sustainability of the organization. Such review should be done by the DPC.

4.   Other General Recommendations

I. The project should be extended to non Tsunami areas as well. This was stated by many stakeholders including DAC members, CSO members and government officials as well as NGOs.

II. CSOs should be organized at the DS level into a forum so that there is more cooperation and interaction among CSOs.

III. Income generation activities should be facilitated by facilitating access to international and local markets as well as insurance for enterprises to recover from any unexpected losses or disasters.

Annex 1   List of Sampled CSOs – Hambantota and Trincomalee Districts

CSOs Selected in Hambantota District

D.S.Name	Organization			Selection stage
	Name	**Address**	**Type**	
Tissamaharama	1.Dry zone agricultural integrated Farmers organization	Yodakandiya	FO	02
	2.Navoda CSO	Nedigamvila	CSO	02
	3.Rural Development Society	Pannagamuwa	RDO	03
	4.Unaited Community Development Committee	Uddhakandara	CDC	03
Hambantota	5. Rural Development Society	Bandagiriya	RDO	02
	6. Rural Development Society	Seeppikulama	RDO	01
	7. Women Rural Development Society	Mayurapura	RDO-Women	02
	8. Death Donation Society	Seeppikulama	Death Donation	03
	9. Ekamuthu Children Society	Gonnoruwa	Children	03
	10.Rerakum Farmer Organization	Boondala	FO	03
Ambalantota	11. Rural Development Society	Ekkassa	RDO	03
	12. Rural Development Society	Pallegama	RDO	02
	13. Shakthi Youth Club	MahaAra,Beragama	Youth Org.	02
	14. Walawa Nadi CSO	Mamadala	CSO-Women	02
	15. Vikasitha Kantha Karya Org.	Punchihenayagama	Women	03
	16.Prakrama F.O.	Mulana	FO	02
	17.Suhada CSO	Deniya.Pingama	CSO	
Tangalla	18. Uwagewewa Beneficiaries Org,	WeliAra	NGO	01
	19. Ruhunu Gemi Kantha Organization	Medaketiya.Tangalla	Women	05
	20. Women RDO	Bimbaduyaya	Women	05
	21. Coir Products co-op. Society	Seenimodara	Women	05
	22. Janawega Shakthi Foundation	Mawella	NGO	04
	23. Fisheries Co-op. Society	Medagama	Fisheries	04
	24. Fisheries Co-op. Society.	Rekawa East	Fisheries	-
	25. Rural Development Society	Rekawa East	RDO	02

CSO's Selected in Trincomalee District

D.S.Name	Organization			Selection stage
	Name	**Address**	**Type**	
Town & Gravets	1.Murugapuri Women RDO	Murugapuri,Trincomalee	Women Org.	01
	2.Pumpugar FCS	Pumpugar,Paliyoothu.	Fisheries Coop	01
Muthur	3.Munnapodiwattai WRDS	Munnapodiwattai,Muthur	Women org.	03
Kinniya	4.Arafath ladies society	Mancholai chenai,Kinniya	Women Org.	02
	5.Peace Economics Social Org.	Alenkery,Kinniya	LNGO	01
	6.Solaiwettuwan FCS	Solaiwettuwan,Kinniya	Fisheries Coop	01
Kuchchaweli	7.Social Rehabilitation Development Org.	Kuchchawely,Trincomalee	LNGO	01
	8.Kumpurupitty WRDS	Kumpurapitty.Kuchchawely	Women org.	01

Annex 2   Impact of Training of CSOs

Impact of Training (Hambantota)

Impact of Training	Level of Improvement			
	50%>	50%	25%	No impact
Improved planning skills	15	06	03	01
Improved decision making	18	04	03	00
Improved office management	16	08	01	00
Improved team work	18	07	00	00
Improved financial management	20	03	02	00
Improved transparency	12	04	05	04
Improved governance	21	02	02	00
Improved revenue	05	16	04	00
Greater participation of members	08	10	04	03
Greater participation of women	10	10	05	00
Greater ability to cope with disasters	05	08	10	02
Greater public and Private partnership	08	07	04	06
Better physical and social well-being of staff	06	08	07	04

Impact of Training (Trincomalee)

Impact of Training	Level of Improvement			
	50%>	50%	25%	No Impact
Improved planning skills	5	3	-	-
Improved Decision making	4	4	-	-
Improved office management	6	2	-	-
Improved team work	4	4	-	-
Improved financial management	6	2	-	-
Improved transparency	4	4	-	-
Improved governors	3	5	-	-
Improved revenue	5	3	-	-
Greater participation of members	-	5	3	-
Greater participation of women	-	5	3	-
Greater ability to cope with disasters	-	-	4	-
Greater public and Private partnership	-	3	4	-
Better physical and social well-being of staff	-	3	3	-

Note: The above findings reflect the opinions of CSO office bearers who participated in training and not of the general membership.

Annex 3   Constraints faced by CSOs

Constraints faced by the CSO's –Hambantota District

Constraints	Scale			
	Very important	**Important**	**Moderately important**	**Not important**
1.Adequacy of assistance received	1	8	14	2
2.The Conflict situation	0	0	0	25
3.Loss of staff trained by the project	0	3	2	20
4.Dependecy on higher levels of project management	17	4	4	0
5.Dependency on aid	22	3	0	0
6.Poor relationship with higher levels of project	18	6	1	0
7.Physical distance	16	5	4	0
8.Poor communication	23	2	0	0

Constraints faced by the CSO's –Trincomalee District

Constraints	Scale			
	Very important	**Important**	**Moderately important**	**Not important**
1.Adequacy of assistance received	5	3	0	0
2.The Conflict situation	0	0	2	6
3.Loss of staff trained by the project	4	4	0	0
4.Dependecy on higher levels of project management	5	3	0	0
5.Dependency on aid	8	0	0	0
6.Poor relationship with higher levels of project	7	1	0	0
7.Physical distance	6	2	0	0
8.Poor communication	8	0	0	0

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Annex 4   Management problems faced by CSOs

Major management problems –Hambantota District

Problems	Rank			
	Very important	**Important**	**Moderately important**	**Not important**
1.Lack of adequate Finance	25	0	0	0
2.Lack of cooperation and participation of members	0	12	13	0
3. Lack of adequate building and space for operation	0	13	0	0
4. Lack of adequate equipment and furniture and accessories	0	0	12	13

Major management problems –Trincomalee District

Problems	Rank			
	Very important	**Important**	**Moderately important**	**Not important**
1.Lack of adequate Finance	8	0	0	0
2.Lack of cooperation and participation of members	0	7	1	0
3. Lack of adequate building and space for operation	0	3	3	0
4. Lack of adequate equipment and furniture and accessories	0	0	4	4