

a normal bargaining process. But the evidence both from this Review supports the findings of far more detailed research on the views of IDP's conducted by SCF and Oxfam from 1996-98. The major finding was that people's priorities were for peace and freedom, followed by self reliance – and the ability to earn their own living with good access to land, water, and basic services.¹⁴ This suggests that relief aid was accepted as a necessity and as a partial compensation for the deprivations and disruptions of war, but that it did not have the effect of increasing dependency that was feared.

While the church has achieved a lot during the conflict over a long period with a high degree of personal commitment and only modest donor resources, it now faces the challenge to adapt both its organisation and its programmes to the post-war situation whilst still being prepared to respond to further conflict as it erupts. Some of the recommendations below are designed to facilitate this adjustment process.

8. Recommendations¹⁵

Recommendations Relating to the Dioceses

- 1 In order to have a high quality programme in the future the dioceses should scale up their local research and advocacy and recruit appropriate staff. For example there is a need for practical, well-disseminated, comparative research on staff shortages, the numbers of staff being trained both in health and education, why they are unwilling to come to the ex-conflict areas, and the government's budget allocations.)
- 2 Bearing in mind the need for greater financial sustainability, and increasing constraints on donor funds, the dioceses need to review their volunteer programmes. They need to consider the levels of remuneration and work out what training or career development might be provided to help volunteers be absorbed into the State systems, with the aim of gradually withdrawing from these programmes
- 3 Similarly the dioceses should review its support for the school feeding programme, with a view to a gradual withdrawal.
- 4 Since the Dioceses are likely to increase their involvement in micro-finance activities we recommend SEDEC helps them access more local expertise to assist in the design of future programmes
- 5 While in the conflict there was a good case for a wide diversity of programmes, there are now many other agencies active and the dioceses should therefore consider focussing its energies on a smaller range of programmes. This prioritisation process will require the DC's to improve

¹⁴ Oxfam/SCF: 1998: *Summary Report – Listening to the Displaced and Listening to the Returned (cited above)*

¹⁵ Recommendations that were made in the final review meeting are marked with an asterisk*.

their skills in relation to programme design, monitoring and evaluation, so that they have a better idea of the relative success of different interventions.

- 6 *Under the principle of subsidiarity, responsibility in each Diocese should be delegated to the most appropriate level, including giving more responsibility for programme implementation to the laity.
- 7 *Dioceses should establish training and personal development plans for all staff.
- 8 *Dioceses should ensure that women hold positions at all levels.

Recommendations relating to SEDEC

- 9 SEDEC and the Dioceses should with donor support commission an Organisational Review to cover the following:¹⁶
 - the key functions that need to be performed by SEDEC in Colombo
 - the staff competencies required to carry out these functions effectively
 - the current balance between administrative and programme staff;
 - recruitment procedures
 - the salaries required to fill these posts with suitably qualified staff
 - the feasibility of opening up all senior jobs in SEDEC and the Dioceses to suitably qualified lay applicants
 - how SEDEC can become more professional and attract and retain appropriately qualified staff without losing its special character as a faith-based organisation.
- 10 *While undertaking this Review process SEDEC should also consider appointing a suitably qualified lay programme manager at national level.
- 11 SEDEC should ensure that women hold positions at all levels in the organisation.
- 12 National Animation Programme: the Review planned for the NAP in 2005 needs to address both the impact of the current programme and the wider issues around animation as a development strategy.
- 13 Since in the long term SEDEC needs to aim for an increase in the amount of income it raises within Sri Lanka, SEDEC should explore different ways in which the Catholic parishes and schools in Sri Lanka can increase the financial contribution they make to SEDEC at the national level.

¹⁶ By September 2004 such a Review had already been commissioned as part of SEDEC's Strategic Planning process.

Recommendations relating to the Bishops*

- 14 The Bishops (in their capacity as SEDEC's Board) should ensure SEDEC provides induction training for new Diocesan Directors.
- 15 They should also consider offering a 6-year fixed-term contract for DD's so that they have long enough to gain experience, but are not so long in the job that they become exhausted.
- 16 Equally they should review the job content of the Diocesan Director post to ensure that DD's do not become overloaded.

Recommendations relating to the Donors

- 17 Donor agencies should co-ordinate their efforts far more closely to ensure that within an agreed time period SEDEC becomes a strong, professional agency while still retaining its distinctive character as a religious organisation. This means that, rather than donors just 'cherry picking' particular projects or programmes as they have done in the past, they should commit themselves to underwriting a programme of long-term organisational development, which will allow it to offer reasonable salaries. This will require more multi-year programme funding from donors.
- 18 Once agreement has been achieved in respect of both SEDEC's and the Dioceses' long term strategy between donors and the Bishop's Conference, donors should make a greater degree of long term financial commitment to SEDEC's organisational development.
- 19 In particular Caritas agencies and CIDSE should commit themselves to a far greater degree of co-ordination to ensure that their suggestions and demands do not conflict and pull SEDEC and the Dioceses in different directions.
- 20 If requested by the Bishop's Conference, donors need to commit themselves to support the difficult process of organisational change in SEDEC as proposed above. This might include one agency agreeing to support SEDEC with a qualified 'Accompanier' for a limited period.
- 21 The continuing volatility of the political situation in Sri Lanka means that both the Diocesan centres and SEDEC at the national level need a greater ability to respond quickly to emergencies as they arise. We therefore recommend that the donors arrange that SEDEC should always hold in its bank account a contingency fund of an agreed amount, which can be released immediately to the relevant Diocesan Centre on the basis of an exchange of e-mails when an emergency occurs.