The Case of Sri Lanka

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FOREWORD

Since its foundation in 1997, the Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) has consistently highlighted the relationship between humanitarian agencies and affected populations as critical to the accountability and performance of the Humanitarian Sector, and the active participation of affected populations as fundamental to their self-determination and dignity.

Although ALNAP member agencies share an understanding of the right of affected people to have a say in actions affecting their lives, given the difficulties in the midst of an emergency, many questions remain as to how, when and with whom. The debate on participation in humanitarian action, albeit well intentioned, has been characterised by assumption and expectation, with too little supporting evidence and too little participation by members of the affected populations.

The global study on the consultation with and participation by affected populations in humanitarian action is the first major effort to seek answers and increase understanding through a direct focus on current practice in the field – eg, how do agencies and affected populations interact? what are the opportunities for participation? why are such opportunities lost? – combining researcher, practitioner, national and international perspectives in each of the study teams. However, participation is not a simple matter of methodology, it requires a willingness to share power, to recognise and respond to the rights of affected populations and to support self-determination proactively.

While not expecting simple answers, the Steering Group has high expectations of the Global Study, which aims to provide humanitarian

agencies and their personnel with guidance, insights and reference points to help determine, in dialogue with affected populations, how to maximise participation in a given situation.

The Sri Lanka study is the pilot in a series of six country studies and resulting monographs that, together with an extensive literature review, will provide the basis for a Practitioner Handbook and Overview Book.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

ALNAP   Active Learning Network for Accountability and
                    Performance (in Humanitarian Action)
ACF   Action Contre la Faim
CBO   Community-based Organisation
CHA   Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies
CIDA   Canadian International Development Agency
DANIDA   Danish Agency for Development Assistance
DFID   Department for International Development
DRC   Danish Refugee Council
EHED   Eastern Human Economic Development (Local Caritas)
EPDP   Eelam People's Democratic Party
EPRLF   Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front
ESCO   Eastern Self-Reliant Community Awakening Organisation
GA   Government Agent's
GDP   Gross Domestic Product
GS   Grama Sevaka
GTZ   German Technical Cooperation
IDP   Internally Displaced People
ICRC   International Committee for the Red Cross
INTRAC   International NGO Training & Research Centre
IPKF   Indian Peacekeeping Forces
LTTE   Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
MoU   Memorandum of Understanding
MSF   Medicins Sans Frontieres
NHDA   National Housing Development Authority
NFRI   Non-food relief items
PRA   Participatory Rural Appraisal
PLOTE   People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam

QIP	Quick Impact Projects
RDF	Rural Development Foundation
SCUK	Save the Children (UK)
SEDEC	Social and Economic Development Centre (Caritas Sri Lanka)
SEED	Social, Economical, Environmental, Developers
SEWA	Self-Employed Women's Association
SLA	Sri Lankan Army
TRRO	Tamil Refugees Rehabilitation Organisation
TRO	Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation
TELO	Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation
TNA	Tamil National Army
TRRO	Tamil Refugees Rehabilitation Organisation
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association
UNP	United National Party
WFP	World Food Programme
ZOA	Zuid Oost Azië (Refugee Care)

Sri Lanka (April 2002)

Legend:
- Uncleared Areas (LTTE - controlled)
- Areas under GoSL Control with Pockets of 'Uncleared' Areas
- Newly Cleared Areas (taken by GoSL)
- District Boundaries
- National Capital

Jaffna
Kilinochchi
Mannar Island
Mullaitivu
North Vavuniya
Mannar
South Vavuniya
Anuradhapura
Trincomalee
Batticaloa
Amparai
Colombo
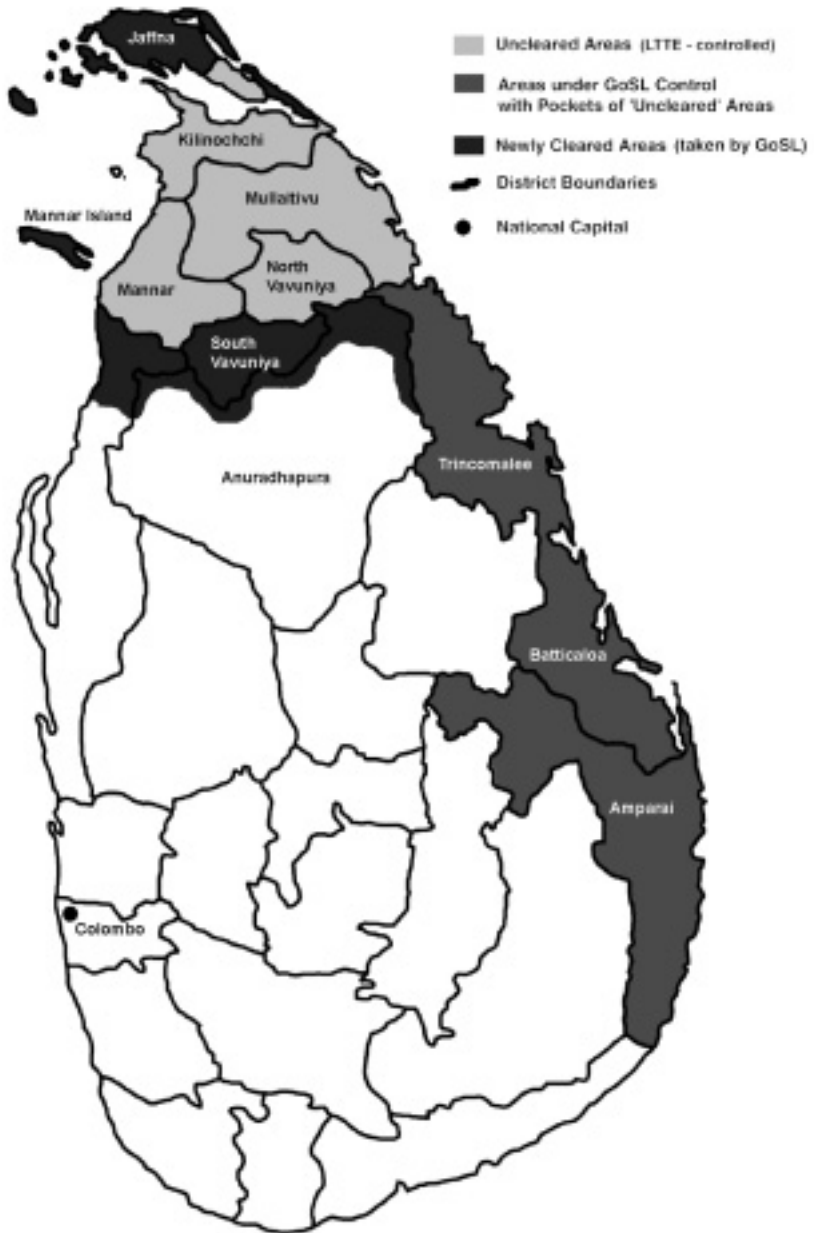
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Part 1   INTRODUCTION

The participation of populations assisted by international humanitarian action in measures supporting them is widely accepted as crucial to effective social targeting, resource utilisation, accountability, sustainability and impact. For some, participation is also a fundamental right of citizenship, essential to survival, self-protection and self-actualisation, in humanitarian emergencies.

Despite institutional commitment to consultation and participation at policy level, there remains wide variation in practice. The increasing concern over lack of consultation with and participation by disaster-affected populations in the design, management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of relief is the background against which ALNAP commissioned the Global Study. The study seeks to reveal mechanisms by which the voice of affected populations can be enhanced, while remaining alert to difficulties posed by emergencies.

The Sri Lanka case study is the pilot in a series of six country assessments providing empirical evidence for the global project. It draws on primary (aid recipient) and secondary (agency) stakeholder perceptions, testing the hypothesis that active consultation and participation of crisis-affected populations in measures to assist them is (according to the key stakeholders) both feasible and beneficial. The Sri Lanka study investigates

current policy and field practice in three conflict-affected locations in the north and east of the island.

Part 2   THE OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

The ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka between the Tamils and Sinhalese has varied in intensity and location and been marked by a number of major episodes of severe violence. The conflict has been experienced very differently by different sections of the population in the north and east, although displacement is a major feature of civilian life in all three of the study areas. Humanitarian actors, local, national and international, have provided relief to camp dwellers for many years, but a growing number are now focusing also on rehabilitation and development activities in resettlement and relocation villages.

Most humanitarian actors have a theory about why the participation of aid recipients in measures supporting them is beneficial and valid, which determines the objectives, strategies and outcomes of their actions. The majority follows what here is termed an 'instrumental' approach, in which the prime objective of involving aid recipients is to improve overall programme performance. A far smaller number of agencies adhere to more 'transformative' models, seeking to empower aid recipients to assume greater control over their lives and contribute to fundamental societal change.

Often those committed to beneficiary participation at policy level find their efforts thwarted in practice, where constraints include: security and political pressures; contrasting social and cultural values; civilians' psychological, emotional and economic difficulties; and negative perceptions of humanitarian aid.

To emphasise the constraints to participation in war-affected areas and differences in social and cultural ideas is not to dissuade agencies from consulting or developing participatory programmes. The intention is to

encourage reflection on the potential and actual limitations and risks of such approaches. Where factors mitigating against the more transformative models are so great that aspiring to such radical goals may be unrealistic, agencies should take every opportunity to consult and inform beneficiaries and others within affected populations.

Part 3   PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICE

The degrees and forms of participation vary considerably according not just to opportunities and constraints but also to the objectives and underlying theoretical perspectives of humanitarian agencies, as observed in the different stages and activities of the project cycle.

In Sri Lanka most have adopted an instrumental approach that favours consulting beneficiaries (especially during baseline assessments) on their views, problems and needs, informing them and helping them to develop the commitment and competencies necessary for active engagement in project implementation. However, because project design and approval does not involve beneficiaries directly, aid recipients have little meaningful role in planning, setting a precedent that is not conducive to sustaining high levels of participation in the later stages of the project cycle.

Greatest effort is made to foster participation in implementation, which commonly entails the contribution of ideas, knowledge, labour and other skills to construction, maintenance and administration of project resources. Project monitoring during implementation is fairly informal, although in many cases regular and in some cases quite participatory. Beneficiary enthusiasm tends to diminish towards the end of the cycle and few agencies engage in participatory impact evaluation, even while most recognise its importance.

Examples of more transformative approaches, in which aid recipients are empowered to represent themselves before the authorities, engage in autonomous collective action and assume control of project resources, are

comparatively rare. However, some projects embody transformative elements and several organisations are moving gradually in this direction as confidence in the ceasefire grows, more developmental approaches are being used and civilians return to their communities.

Although greater flexibility and openness to beneficiary involvement in the early stages of the cycle and in project appraisal appear to make a difference, political and other constraints in Sri Lanka make it impossible in many cases. A significant proportion of respondents also indicated that such innovation is not always sought by aid recipients.

Despite the limitations, there is evidence that recipients benefit from being better informed and consulted and from meaningful roles in project implementation. Overall, projects targeting women, children, or young people have been more 'successful' in fostering beneficiary participation than generic projects affecting whole population groups or projects with men. This may be because humanitarian measures normally take place in communities while men are at work, or due to the inordinately high rates of alcohol use among men in the north and east. Of all groups, children and young people in psychosocial programmes report the most radical effects.

Part 4   MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE PARTICIPATION

Traditionally, levels of beneficiary consultation and participation in humanitarian action in Sri Lanka have been low or non-existent. Such ideas and practices are not very developed in hierarchical and prescriptive cultures and humanitarian actors committed to the approach have to develop explicit means to promote participation.

Humanitarian agencies are heavily reliant on locally recruited agents to mobilise village and camp inhabitants in the north and east. The orientation and training of these change-agents is of critical importance to project outcomes. Their recruitment to mobilise beneficiaries is

regarded by many agencies as a first step in the creation of a formal institutional structure, commonly a community-based organisation (CBO), within which collective social action can be promoted and directed. However, these structures often remain dependent on implementing agencies, whose management of CBO funds limits beneficiary empowerment and self-efficacy.

The development of more flexible donor-agency relations has seen promising trends in institutional relations, supported by efforts to create less authoritarian management structures and improved aid co-ordination. Certain donors support efforts to promote beneficiary participation. Nevertheless, there remain serious problems in terms of political intervention in humanitarian action, high staff turnover, inflexible and short funding cycles, competition over beneficiary populations and conflicting aims and strategies.

Humanitarian actors are party to decisions and policies that have a crucial impact on the lives of beneficiaries. Yet many make no effort to consult or keep affected populations informed.

Part 5   RECOMMENDATIONS

Our findings suggest that consultation and timely provision of accurate information are important and valued instruments through which agencies can demonstrate their respect for beneficiaries and provide them with a greater sense of control over their lives. As such, they are a must in all circumstances. More active and meaningful participation is also feasible where environmental conditions are conducive, aid implementers are committed to the concept and have appropriate skills and capacity, donors are supportive and aid recipients receptive.

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   BACKGROUND

The participation of populations assisted by international humanitarian action in measures supporting them is now widely accepted as crucial to effective social targeting, resource utilisation, accountability, sustainability and impact. For some, participation is also a fundamental right of citizenship, essential to survival, self-protection and self-actualisation in humanitarian emergencies. As such, the participation of affected populations has become a central tenet of policy for a number of humanitarian agencies, incorporated into many mission statements and, in some cases, constitutionally enshrined[2]. The 1994 *Code of Conduct for the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief* commits signatory agencies 'to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid'.

Despite policy level commitments, there remains wide variation in practice. It is against this background that the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) commissioned the Global Study on Consultation with and Participation by Affected Populations in the Planning, Managing, Monitoring and Evaluation of Humanitarian Action with the core objectives to:

■ assess current consultation and participation practice in a range of emergency contexts;
■ identify examples of good practice;

- identify gaps or inadequacies in current practice and contributing factors; and,
- improve understanding of participation and consultation practice.

A series of six country case studies will provide empirical field data for the study, which seeks to reveal mechanisms that will enhance the voice of affected populations in humanitarian action, while remaining alert to the difficulties of implementing aid interventions in emergency contexts. The trend toward increased participation is underpinned by growing recognition that beneficiaries are not just passive recipients of humanitarian aid, but social actors with insights into their situation, and competencies, energy and ideas that can be harnessed to improve their circumstances. As the primary stakeholders in humanitarian action, affected populations are situated at the centre of the Global Study and, wherever possible, successful consultative and participatory mechanisms and initiatives are identified and promoted.

The selection of the six case studies has sought to capture a broad diversity of characteristics associated with humanitarian emergencies.

1.2 THE SRI LANKA CASE STUDY

Sri Lanka, as the pilot study, offers a protracted crisis where a long-term liberation war has split control of the country, where the affected population has been manipulated by all parties to the war, and where there has been multiple displacement and a prolonged and diverse aid-agency response.

1.2.1 Conceptual Issues

In the Sri Lanka study participation is understood in its simplest sense, as the active engagement of primary stakeholders in the planning, management, implementation and assessment of humanitarian measures affecting them.

The various facets of participation include information sharing, consultation, the contribution of manual labour and other skills, involvement in decision making and or resource control, often taken to represent increasing gradations of engagement as follows:

- minimal information sharing on actions affecting the affected population;
- consultation at some level within programme guidelines;
- contribution of labour and other skills;
- direct involvement in planning and decision making during the project cycle;
- control of project resources and major related decisions. [3]

Consultation and participation are treated as independent but inter-related dimensions of engagement, since consultation can occur in projects that do not have participatory goals or objectives. [4]

Given the divergence in agency perspectives on participation in Sri Lanka, a key challenge of the field research was to compare and contrast prevailing theories and models and establish their suitability and impacts in a long-term conflict.

1.2.2 Methodological Issues

This report is based on nine weeks of fieldwork, drawing mainly on qualitative data derived from primary stakeholders (beneficiaries) and secondary stakeholders (agencies) and, to a far lesser extent, from secondary sources. The literature on Sri Lanka was consulted, and project documents reviewed. Interviews were conducted in Colombo with humanitarian agency representatives and key academics and consultants. General meetings with agency personnel were held in two of the field locations and individual interviews with agency staff conducted in all three. Meetings, interviews and focus-group discussions included representatives from the following aid-recipient categories:

- ■   those never displaced from original homes and communities;
- ■   those living in camps (including internally displaced and refugees who have returned from camps in India);
- ■   those displaced but self-settled with friends and/or relatives;
- ■   returnees to their original communities – 'resettlement villages';
- ■   those relocated from camps to new settlements – 'relocation villages'.

Group-based research methods were used and complemented by unstructured or semi-structured individual interviews for issues too sensitive or complex to be raised in a public forum and for triangulation purposes. Respondents included men, women and children from across the different social and economic groups. Where views differed, this is indicated in the body of the report.

1.2.3 Ethical Concerns

Although respondents were at times extremely frank, there were subjects that the team felt unable to explore for fear of jeopardising people's safety or causing distress. For the same reason, information on specific incidents and violations is excluded. All possible efforts were made to avoid raising expectations, but the team was worried about the extent to which this remained an issue in some of the communities visited.[5] Further, while every effort was made by all concerned to maintain as much neutrality as possible, the presence of agency personnel in some instances inevitably had an impact on the data gathered.

1.2.4 Choice of Field-Study Sites

In testing the hypothesis that active consultation and participation of crisis-affected populations is both feasible and beneficial, the Sri Lanka study investigated current policy and field practice in three sites: Batticaloa district in the east, the Jaffna peninsula and Vavuniya/Mannar districts in the north. These were selected to encompass a broad range of military, political and socio-economic contexts. All have seen major outbreaks of

violence and long been centres of humanitarian action. They include government 'cleared areas', LTTE 'uncleared' areas, 'grey areas' controlled by government by day and the LTTE by night, and border areas on the front line or the line dividing ethnic and/or religious groups. The majority population is Tamil, with significant Muslim populations in Batticaloa and to a lesser extent Vavuniya/Mannar and a small number of Sinhalese in the latter area only.

Civilians in the north and east of Sri Lanka have been most directly affected by the ethnic violence. Many have been exposed to horrific violations, ranging from sexual and gender violence, abuse, exploitation and forced recruitment, to disappearances, torture and extra-judicial killings and have been accustomed to retreating from their villages to the forests at night. Impoverishment is high, due to mobility restrictions, prohibitions on access to cultivable lands and fishing grounds and overall economic collapse.

In Batticaloa, the study focused on the work of Eastern Human Economic Development (EHED[6]), the YMCA and a range of local and national NGOs, implementing mainly rehabilitation and development programmes in resettlement and relocation villages such as micro finance, pre-school education, water and sanitation.

In Vavuniya/Mannar, the study concentrated on the work of Oxfam GB, some of its partners – Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Lanka, Rural Development Foundation (RDF) and Action for Solidarity, Equality, Environment and Development (SEED) – and, to a lesser extent, FORUT[7], UNHCR, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and Zuid Oost Azië (ZOA) Refugee Care. Projects included relief initiatives in both internally displaced people (IDP)/returnee–refugee camps and a variety of rehabilitation and development projects in resettlement and relocation villages.

In Jaffna, the focus was on the work of Save the Children (UK) and, to an extent, on CARE International and UNHCR, providing a broad mix of relief, rehabilitation and development initiatives in both IDP camps and war-affected villages.

2 THE OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

2.1 COUNTRY PROFILE

2.1.1 History of the Conflict

Numerous reports on the Sri Lanka ethnic conflict exist in both published and 'grey' literatures and hence an exhaustive account is unnecessary here.[8] The conflict has its origins in the early 1930s, which saw an over-representation of the Tamil-speaking community in the colonial administration.[9] Since independence in 1948, however, the majority Sinhalese population has dominated the state and, over the years, introduced a number of discriminatory measures limiting Tamil political representation, curbing Tamil access to education and land, and inhibiting the use of the Tamil language. Tamils have consistently sought a share in power and the failure to resolve political differences has seen Tamil demands become more fundamental, culminating in a claim for a separate state in the north and east – Tamil Eelam. The means of achieving these demands have become increasingly violent.

The 1983 communal riots against the Tamils are seen as a critical turning point, leading to full insurgent warfare, a process of continuous repression and unrest and three major periods of mass violence, known as the Eelam Wars. The Indo–Sri Lanka Agreement was instigated by India in 1987 and saw the arrival in-country of the Indian Peacekeeping Forces (IPKF). The IPKF was then engaged in a two-year war of attrition by the Liberation

Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which claimed to represent the Tamil population, leading to the IPKF withdrawal in 1990. The third Eelam War broke out in April 1995.

Although intermittent, the conflict has lasted almost twenty years, cost an estimated 60–100,000 lives,[10] and caused the multiple displacement of around 800,000 people.[11] Throughout, Tamil, Sinhalese and Muslim ethnic and religious identities have been manipulated for political ends.[12] But, contrary to popular stereotype, the conflict has produced no clear division between groups. Distinctions based on ethnicity have masked internal political divisions and important caste/class differences and ethnic differences are further blurred by a sizeable Christian minority of both Sinhalese and Tamils.

Apparently committed to bringing an end to the conflict, the United National Party (UNP) won the 2001 elections, subsequently receiving further electoral endorsement for its attempts at political settlement. Despite the major changes brought about by the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement on 23 February 2002 and pending talks between the opposing parties, at the time of the field research, Sri Lanka could by no means have been described as 'post-conflict'.[13]

2.1.2 Humanitarian Responses to the Conflict

A number of international humanitarian agencies have been in Sri Lanka since the onset of fighting and many local and national organisations engaged in development provision prior to the conflict became involved in humanitarian aid. While the north and east of Sri Lanka have long been characterised as a humanitarian emergency, 'operating conditions and activities are extremely diverse, ranging from relief and welfare assistance to displaced populations in the Vanni, to major reconstruction efforts in Jaffna.'[14] Hence, whereas some of the projects investigated can be defined as emergency relief, others focus more on reconstruction, rehabilitation or development in support of resettled populations and others exposed to protracted political conflict.

The operational context for humanitarian measures in Sri Lanka has been highly charged and delicate. Aid agencies are perceived by some as responding to humanitarian needs caused deliberately by warring parties as part of their politico-military strategies. Although a commitment to participation by recipients of aid is apparent in many quarters, such participation is often tricky to realise.

Since the onset of the gravest fighting in the mid-1980s, the humanitarian community has tried to implement its programmes in line with the principal of neutrality. Civilians in government-controlled areas have received the most consistent support, although some supplies have been conveyed to populations in LTTE-controlled areas.[15] In the early 1990s the LTTE increased its relief capacity through the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO), administered under its political wing. Despite the recognised need of populations in LTTE-controlled areas, increasing pressure and unreasonable restrictions on international and local relief organisations led many to retreat prior to the ceasefire.

Humanitarian responses have waxed and waned with the intensity and location of violence and the overall approach altered markedly over the conflict period along the following broad trends:

- a division between development aid in the south and humanitarian aid in the north and east of the island (which has curtailed consultation and participation in the latter);
- a shift from relief interventions to rehabilitation and development (termed 'development relief' by some) in war-affected areas;
- a transition from direct implementation by internationals to local and national implementing partners;
- a reduction in the deployment of expatriate staff;
- moves by some to introduce longer-term funding cycles;
- increased efforts to coordinate humanitarian aid;
- increased recognition by some of the importance of participation and international standards;

■   increased use by some of a human-rights framework and support for advocacy;

■   a shift in attention from IDP/returnee camps and to resettlement and relocation villages;

■   an increased focus on livelihood security (especially micro-finance) and physical infrastructure, in resettlement and relocation villages in particular.

Agency commitments to beneficiary participation

Among humanitarian agencies in Sri Lanka there is a fairly high level of acceptance of the concept of participation and several have, in varying forms and degrees, incorporated beneficiary participation as a significant facet of their work.[16] One respondent[17] argued that humanitarian actors are compelled by their restricted mandates and the short-term nature of their projects to introduce participatory approaches. These conditions present real challenges to sustainability that, in his and his agency's view, can only be overcome through meaningful participation.

That said, implementing participatory approaches in areas affected by protracted political conflict is not straightforward. There remains wide variation in working definitions and understanding of the concept among staff, and major differences in practice. Ideas on participation are often imprecise and, although most agencies agree that 'consultation and participation of beneficiaries are key' and 'there can always be more consultation'[18], these principles are not always evident in their work. Even in prominent agencies with clear institutional commitment there is disagreement about the value of and mechanisms for participation, and the notion is regarded by some as problematic. This disparity is not merely of hypothetical interest, since the ideas and conceptualisations of humanitarian actors exert significant influence on policy and programme objectives and project strategies and methods, with major implications for outcome in terms of beneficiary participation.

> "   Community participation is a convenient tool for forgetting about power, conflict and the like. Caste, class, ethnicity, gender – all … imply a power relation. Social

inequality is increasing throughout the island, as is conflict. Community participation is an assumption of society, which ignores caste … Talk of partners is not based on proper social analysis … Who are the partners? Participation is a useful label for political mobilisation. People here don't get together for collective action or projects so much as for social processes that have their own dynamic – for example elections … Lots of agencies will use participation, but without human rights and with power conflict who will benefit?[19] 〞

The dominant models of participation

Most agencies have a theory of why consultation with and the participation of aid recipients is beneficial and valid. Two very broad theoretical approaches can be distinguished in Sri Lanka, with the majority of agencies following what is termed an 'instrumental' model, the prime objective being to improve programme performance. The argument is that the contribution of beneficiaries to the planning, implementation and monitoring of projects reduces cost, ensures greater accountability to recipients and increases sustainability. Normally implemented through multi- or single-sector interventions where performance is measured (in some cases at least) against international norms and standards, especially the Sphere Minimum Standards, its core purpose is to meet immediate survival and livelihood needs and reduce vulnerabilities.

Different aspects of project performance are emphasised when making the case for participation. Danish Agency for Development Assistance (DANIDA)[20] sees the fulfilment of beneficiary expectations as a central indicator of programme quality and success. Oxfam's working principles stress the importance of accountability and local capacity building. For World Food Programme (WFP)[21], participation makes it possible to meet food security objectives more successfully, although it is recognised that: 'Participation in emergencies tends to concentrate on consulting beneficiaries about their needs, rather than entrusting beneficiaries with control over the programme.'[22]

Given the intrinsic limitations of instrumental approaches, a smaller number of humanitarian agencies seek to implement 'transformative' models, contributing to more fundamental societal change and empowering aid recipients to:

- exercise choice and assume greater control over their lives;
- undertake action to improve their conditions and circumstances;
- play an active role in political and civic processes;
- forge relations that support peace and security and the development and enhancement of the wider community; and
- increase their access to resources, services and the means of securing livelihood.[23]

This more radical understanding of participation, seen as an end in itself and fundamental right of citizenship, is highly synergistic with the human-rights framework that is growing in influence throughout the aid world.[24] It adheres to the following broad principles:

- client entitlement and empowerment;
- social justice and the elimination of exclusion and inequity;
- attitudinal and behavioural change in human relations;
- social trust and social capital;
- democratic participation; and
- broad civil society development.

It is to some extent inevitable that transformative models are less common in areas of armed conflict, largely because of the multitude of challenges that prevail in such settings.

2.2   OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS

Opportunities to engage with aid recipients depend on environmental constraints, organisational capacity and motivation and the timing, intensity and scale of civilian need. High levels of consultation and participation tend to lengthen project planning and implementation processes and are not seen by most in Sri Lanka as viable options in acute emergencies.[25]

2.2.1 Political Intervention in Humanitarian Action

The most prominent political factors undermining active engagement by aid recipients are poor governance, political intervention in humanitarian provision and the attitudes of officials.

Poor governance

Areas affected by conflict have complex governance arrangements in which the civil bodies trying to provide for the care and protection of the populace are subject to the will of political authorities, which are in turn controlled by the military. In all three research sites respondents complained about draconian security procedures and highly repressive methods of governance by the government and the LTTE.

> " Governance by force is the norm in the north and east of Sri Lanka. In these areas, institutionalised force and coercion are the main form of governance. This is justified by the LTTE on the basis of legitimate grievances and by the government on grounds of security.[26] "

Prior to the ceasefire most areas in the north and east were subject to curfew with access to civilians negotiated through the government, the Sri Lanka Army, and in some places the LTTE. Obtaining security clearance meant that visits by humanitarian agencies had to be planned well in advance and entailed time consuming and expensive negotiation.

This undermined their ability to respond to new events with alacrity and flexibility. Clearance processes were also subject to regular change. For a long time the lives of camp dwellers in Vavuniya were dogged by a pass system with fifteen passes, each with a different purpose.[27]

Even though civilians have experienced comparative stability and improvements in everyday circumstances since the Ceasefire Agreement, they are aware that the military on both sides is rearming and regrouping, and remain unsure about the future and whether the agreement will hold. Military discipline is poor and the war economy well established. Civilians still face extortion at checkpoints, forced recruitment of children and youth, kidnappings for ransom and 'taxation' on salaries, vehicles, businesses and other resources. Such conditions are hardly conducive to beneficiary participation.

> " Adopting a participatory approach and encouraging children to take responsibility for activities may add to the risks. As participants become more confident and develop skills of leadership they are likely to become both more attractive to those seeking to build a new generation of young commanders, and more threatening to those who fear exactly that. Furthermore, child participation in its fullest form suggests that the young be given the space to do exactly as they decide, with minimal or no involvement by adults. In a conflict situation this approach is clearly irresponsible.[28] "

Intervention by political bodies in humanitarian provision

The direct role of political actors in humanitarian provision in Sri Lanka is highly detrimental to civilian participation since official measures, couched in terms of humanitarian assistance and civilian protection, often serve political or security interests. Distributions are often made by political bodies at election time and regarded as goods that can be bestowed or withdrawn at a whim to curry favour with, reward, or penalise the electorate for its political choices[29]. The opportunistic and spasmodic nature of these provisions undermines beneficiary confidence

in humanitarian action and can 'compete' with and impair longer-term and more sustainable and meaningful initiatives by humanitarian agencies.

The government is the key player in the humanitarian system[30] in regions under its influence, as is the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) in LTTE-controlled areas. They determine most decisions, policies and actions in the field and are responsible, in their respective areas, for the transportation and distribution of rations, the provision of physical infrastructure, health and education services, the establishment and administration of camps for the displaced and the allocation of land to those relocated. They control demographic and other data, the basis for planning humanitarian action. The government provides one of the key relief items – food – in an entirely non-participatory way, making it hard for agencies to foster beneficiary participation in other projects and sectors.[31]

As one agency staff member complained: 'design and approval takes too long and the government is too involved. This is a very hierarchical country. Meetings with government are not a dialogue. In government, everyone must listen to their manager.'[32]

Major restrictions have commonly been imposed on access to civilian populations and on the movement of essential goods, notable in the case of the embargo on the LTTE-controlled areas, which at one time covered 48 essential items, including medicines.

The government alleges that living in camps ensures civilian protection and allows humanitarian actors to provide services to displaced persons in a coordinated manner. However, people living in government-run camps expressed resentment about not being informed or consulted, confusion over what forms of support they were to receive and from whom, anger about unfulfilled promises, and anxiety about the true motives behind humanitarian interventions.

Because they effectively mastermind humanitarian aid, the government and TRO fundamentally distort the relationship between agencies and aid

recipients, actively threaten participatory efforts and make spontaneous, informal and free exchanges impossible.

Adverse attitudes of local officials

These detrimental policies and actions at the institutional level are mirrored by the hostile attitude of many local government officials towards civilians in camps. Concerns about such attitudes tended to be confirmed by interviews with officials: 'We don't allow camp committees to form because they would split the camps. The camp officer is the only person suited to this job' and 'the presence of IDPs has caused problems for the hosts because the IDPs have brought robbery, the illegal sale of arrack and fighting (often because of alcohol). These problems didn't exist previously in the permanent population.' Some officials are also involved in corruption and extortion and are abusive and neglectful towards camp populations.

2.2.2 Psychological and Emotional Constraints

The emotional and psychological toll

Participation requires a major investment of resources, time, energy, trust and expertise. However, it is questionable whether those exposed to long periods of adversity are prepared or able to make such an investment. The emotional and psychological consequences of conflict are profound and households forced to secure their livelihood in the context of severely depleted resources and labour-power are unlikely to have much time for meetings, workshops and other project-related activities. Similarly, displaced people, who are separated from their homes and may have lost their belongings several times, may be reluctant to expend energy on renewing assets in an uncertain environment.

> " It appears to me that displaced people are in a desperate search for control over their lives, as many seem to feel an intense loss of trust in themselves since displacement. As many IDPs related, with the levelling of statuses and identities in the

refugee camps, there is a loss of ability to summon recognition, and thus loss of one's honour and respect within the community.[33] **"**

Individuals who are depressed or suffer other detrimental psychological and emotional effects may not be motivated to think about, or work for, their betterment or the future of their families or communities. In a country with one of the highest reported suicide rates in the world, those in the north and east are exceptionally vulnerable. Another indicator of raised levels of psychosocial distress is the over-consumption and abuse of illicit alcohol (*kassipu*), by men in particular.[34]

" At what point will people be able to participate psychologically and socially? I have a problem with herding people together. They may not want to be a community, especially if they're traumatised; they may wish to retain their private world. As far as I'm concerned, herding people together is another kind of trauma. If people have chosen to be a community, that's different. It depends on how you do it. Differences are not just down to caste but also social circumstances, personal history, whether you've been in a welfare centre for years, interned or internally displaced. All of this makes a difference.[35] **"**

It may be suggested that the seemingly greater level of participation by children in humanitarian action is partly attributable to the fact that the loss of property and status is less devastating for the young.

2.2.3 Social and Cultural Constraints

Distinctions within communities

Ideas about participation are perceived by many in Sri Lanka as counter-cultural. Relations between people in different social groups and

categories tend to be both prescriptive and hierarchical. Very few civilians are accustomed to exercising choice, or involvement in decision-making. Even the notion of being consulted is foreign. One agency member highlighted the difficulty of applying participatory approaches in Sri Lanka: 'The groups we work with are used to the idea of having decisions made for them. Consultation on programme design may be okay, but not involvement in decision-making'.[36]

In this kind of environment, participatory humanitarian measures create a dissonance with customary practice. Relief is generally delivered at the household level, whereas participatory projects normally require households to come together into various groupings. In Sri Lanka, members of camps or resettlement villages tend to be regarded as having shared interests/affinities, whereas the prime cultural precedents for social action are not residential ties but patriarchy and patronage, which in turn build on distinctions of caste and class.

We found clear evidence of caste-based conflict over access to both economic opportunity and resources. Poisonous snakes were dropped into wells in one IDP camp to prevent their contamination by low-caste families. The Care International regional coordinator in Jaffna observed that, to protect principles of non-discrimination and participation, her agency had at times felt obliged to deselect community representatives who insisted on observing caste barriers. The LTTE have an official policy of removing caste distinction and many respondents, agency staff and beneficiaries, highlighted this as an advantage for humanitarian initiatives.

When events are convened or organised by people of high status, poorer and lower caste people generally feel obliged to partake. Their perceived inability to act voluntarily may have a negative influence on their views about participation. In poor rural communities in particular, influential individuals are vital in brokering relations with government, the host community and other outsiders.[37] For many, it could be more important for survival and wellbeing to sustain such vertical social ties than to build more egalitarian, horizontal networks.

The political connotations of social affiliation

Given the highly militarised political climate, and the prolonged exposure to conflict and forced migration, the war has exacerbated the feeling of household individualism that tends to be inherent in strong caste Hindu societies. Further, all civilians are implicated in the conflict, where ethnic, religious and other identities are politicised and consequently stigmatised by opponents.

Even though Tamils form the majority, in many areas of the north and east, membership of the same ethnic group does not necessarily imply shared allegiances and interests. A major source of distrust within the Tamil community arises from varying political affiliations with the LTTE or other militant Tamil groups (eg, TELO, EPDP, PLOTE, EPRLF), although large numbers (possibly the majority) of civilians feel fearful of and oppressed by all of these groups.

2.2.4 Negative Perceptions of Participation

Responses to key questions

Like humanitarian agencies, crisis-affected populations have diverse ideas about consultation and participation, but which do not necessarily marry with those of the agencies. When asked about *HOW* aid was provided, the answers were generally framed in terms of *WHAT* was received or improved, focusing on concrete outcomes of participation in projects as opposed to the actual processes of participation.[38]

In quite a few of the projects where participation is a key objective, notably those involving children and youth, beneficiary perspectives on the subject are extremely positive, recognising many concrete benefits. However others are diffident about it. Although in most cases, group discussions at the village level were lively and interesting, probing questions about participation in the project cycle, decision making and self-representation, were largely met with bemusement or answered with accounts of what assistance had been received and/or was still needed. It

was apparent that participation is not always perceived as appropriate, relevant, or even beneficial.

The fact that some measures discussed were implemented in the 1990s may account for the vague and rather superficial responses. Since the Ceasefire Agreement, civilians in the north and east are focused on the future and possible return home and their interest in past assistance is greatly diminished.

Contrasting recipient/agency views

It was striking how in several instances agencies' perceptions of the levels and nature of participation contrasted strongly with those of recipients. Evidence from one village in Batticaloa indicates that even when an agency maintains that beneficiaries are actively involved in decision making, beneficiaries may not actually feel that they are. During a focus group the EHED project officer was horrified to hear inhabitants remark that they had not been consulted about EHED interventions in the community.[39] She reminded them that staff had carried out a series of PRA exercises and pointed out some of the participants. This indicates that even when participatory methods are applied, they may not be genuine attempts to involve people in decision making. Different groups may also view the work of the same organisation differently, depending on expectations and how the agency has engaged with them. Views about UNHCR projects tended to be far more positive when implemented through NGO partners than when they involved the government.

The local 'presence' of an agency also seemed to make a difference. Much humanitarian work in Sri Lanka involves intermittent visits to recipient communities rather than intensive engagement, a fact commented on disparagingly by beneficiaries, indicating that greater contact is seen as a sign of commitment and solidarity.

Good intentions can be misunderstood, with supposed beneficial and voluntary measures sometimes thought of by aid recipients as burdensome and obligatory. As a mechanism for promoting participation, donors commonly ascribe a monetary value to beneficiary labour and require

beneficiaries to contribute a specified percentage of total project costs. Aid recipients complain about the difficulties of making this contribution and the fact that it is imposed.

Modes of delivery and impacts

Civilians make active choices and their willingness to engage in participatory projects is likely to be influenced by perceptions of the potential impact on their wellbeing and survival. A lack of support can sometimes be attributed to insufficient confidence in the ability of aid agencies to make a difference. Representatives of camp committees[40] in Jaffna told us that any problems and conflicts in the camps are discussed with residents and then communicated to the agencies. However, while agencies are sympathetic and understand the problems, they can seldom offer effective assistance.

The degree to which an organisation institutionalises participatory approaches within beneficiary groups makes a difference. While some agencies have worked intensively with civilian populations over many years, offering a diversity of forms of assistance, others have very restricted mandates and offer little incentive for beneficiaries to participate, given the modest rewards.

After nearly two decades of conflict, centralised, top-down measures have become the norm and remain fairly entrenched in some quarters today[41]. If power and decision making remain with humanitarian actors there may be no perceived value in participating in an essentially predetermined process. Some NGOs allegedly pay beneficiaries to attend training sessions and meetings. If true, this hardly makes resistance to voluntary participation surprising.

On the other hand, people may feel obliged to participate, simply out of fear of losing material benefits. But at the same time there is a sense in Sri Lanka that most infrastructural work and many services supported by humanitarian actors are of minimal importance or taken for granted. This is partly because government takes care of food, arguably the most critical of relief components.

Negative images of humanitarian action

The harshest judgement of humanitarian aid came from a small number of highly critical civilians in Batticaloa and Vavuniya. They alleged that funds intended for war-affected populations are diverted into employment of local members of the middle classes, office accommodation, expensive vehicles, computers, etc. They also complained about the affluent lifestyles of expatriates. Although not widespread, such perceptions undermine relations with civilians in some areas.

2.2.5 Indifference of Camp Populations

A major finding is that support for participatory approaches is far higher in rehabilitation and development programmes in resettlement and relocation villages than in relief initiatives in camps. Many agencies find it hard to understand why camp residents can be so reluctant to take part in participatory initiatives since the benefits would seem self-evident, and put it down to a prevailing 'relief mentality' characterised by high levels of dependency.

> " Temporary relief doesn't help; people need strengthening and reconciliation. People in the camps are used to receiving things. They have become very dependent. We don't work like this any longer. We select the most needy and animate others not to feel hopeless. We help them to look for options, like income generation.[42] "

In some cases there is a belief that camp dwellers are 'backward'[43] and unable to see what is in their best interests, a reference to both caste and education. However, such arguments fail to take into account that camp dwellers may be unwilling to invest in facilities they would prefer to think of as temporary. Also, camp residents tend not to be from a single community so that participation tends to be greater at the household level where distinct needs can be supported.

Far from a mentality of dependence, wariness of participatory projects may in some cases be born of a careful and realistic assessment of the many constraints and risks involved.

To emphasise the constraints to participation that predominate in war-affected areas and highlight different social and cultural perceptions is not to dissuade humanitarian agencies from consulting and developing participatory programmes with aid recipients. Rather, it seeks to invite agencies to reflect on the limitations and risks, and to stress the importance of canvassing primary and secondary stakeholders on their view of the value added by such practices.

This highlights the need to engage in regular and continuous risk assessment, monitoring and appraisal.

3   PARTICIPATION IN PRACTICE

3.1   PARTICIPATION IN THE PROJECT CYCLE

The factors that mitigate against beneficiary participation in Sri Lanka may appear powerful, nevertheless, many of the projects and programmes studied incorporate significant participatory components, some of which are quite innovative, courageous and effective. The evidence is that under the right conditions, consultation and participation can entail important tangible benefits for aid recipients. Yet, it is to be expected that beneficiary enthusiasm and involvement will ebb and flow during the course of project planning, implementation and evaluation. This section examines the levels and forms of participation in the various stages of the project cycle, exploring key findings relative to the positive effects of participation.

3.1.1 Planning

Proposal development and project approval

Assessment of needs of crisis-affected populations is generally the first point of contact between potential or actual aid recipients and humanitarian actors, leading to the identification of beneficiaries. It is a fundamental initial stage in the project, during which mutual knowledge and confidence is built. However, for most of the humanitarian actors in Sri Lanka, there is a vital prior stage in the project cycle – programme

and/or project design and approval – in which beneficiaries are seldom, if ever, involved.

That design and approval frequently take place *before* baseline assessment may be due to the fact that many agencies regard present interventions as outgrowths of previous baseline studies. In many cases, however, entire programmes and their constituent projects, are devised along a 'blueprint' model in which the sector, services, operational objectives and strategies, outputs, project area, size and make-up of the target population are defined prior to beneficiary engagement. Oxfam-GB's projects in Vavuniya and Batticaloa for example adhere to a fairly standardised format with project proposals submitted by partners tending to follow the same objectives and overall framework. A staff member observed: 'We restrict ourselves with our own procedures … do our project proposals before we enter a community. We then go in and "do participation" – ie we get beneficiaries to agree to things that are in our mandate. If they want something outside the mandate, we can't help them.'

Exclusion from the design process may be less of a problem where the initial proposal and logframe are broad and flexible and the funding cycle long, since this provides scope for accommodation of aid recipients' expectations at a later stage. But it is likely to be a serious challenge for agencies operating in a specific sector with set and measurable outputs, a limited time frame and typical six-month emergency funding schedules. Such measures generally encounter major difficulties in fostering and sustaining participation throughout the project cycle.

Beneficiary identification: factors influencing selection

The means by which beneficiaries are identified and selected can play a significant role in influencing responsiveness to participatory initiatives. In a rapid-onset or large-scale emergency, the selection of beneficiaries is likely to be determined primarily by access and urgency of need. In Sri Lanka, where political actors intervene directly in humanitarian provision, the crisis is long-term and shifts in location and intensity, this decision is shaped by diverse factors over which affected populations have no

influence. Excluding civilians from the decision undermines participatory efforts.

Selection criteria are normally predetermined by agencies (often with government) as a matter of policy and mandate. Criteria most commonly follow the government model – exposure to conflict and/or displacement, monthly income of Rs1500 or below, and eligibility for government dry-food rations. Many agencies use additional criteria such as settlement type (IDP/returnee camps, or relocation or resettlement villages, which normally excludes the self-settled displaced), employment status (jobless), or poorly paid occupations, or prioritise groups they have supported in the past. However, the latter criterion is hard to uphold because ties with aid recipients are often severed by displacement or inter-agency co-ordination agreements that assign agencies to new operational areas. Frequency of displacement can also be an important criterion. Quite a few agencies work exclusively with female-headed households, widows and their families, or female survivors of sexual violence. Child-centred agencies generally support under-18s, pregnant and lactating women and/or families with children.

In an area of conflict practical difficulties may force agencies to compromise policy guidelines. The strategy of 'first come, first served' is common in Sri Lanka, where practical considerations include staff safety, agency capacity, access and government and/or LTTE partiality.

Beneficiary identification: government influence

In both LTTE and government-controlled areas, officials decide not just on project location and beneficiary communities but on the individual households or families to be supported. Most agencies are heavily reliant on the highly politicised household data compiled by the Grama Sevaka (GS), and, despite being aware that personal preference, political affiliation, or corruption prevail in local government circles, have to begin recipient identification by approaching designated officers. Some agencies use the data as a preliminary guide, drawing up a final list on the basis of their own participatory investigations and surveys. However, several admitted

that it is unwise to depart radically from official selections for fear of compromising relations.[44]

A minority of agencies – such as CARE International in Jaffna – refuse to accept this selection convention routinely. This has negative consequences, such as being deliberately left out of the information loop by local officials. Nevertheless, staff argue that it is a price worth paying, given the consequent freedom to respond effectively to beneficiaries and avoid manipulation by corrupt officials. We came across only one example of a direct flouting of the government on choice of clientele.

Beneficiary identification: the disadvantages of pre-selection

The exclusion of aid recipients from the selection process has several implications for participation in subsequent stages of a project. First, predetermined criteria limit flexibility and the capacity to respond to specific circumstances and expectations, conveying the message that agencies do not consider beneficiary priorities and concerns important. Second, agency definitions and perceptions of vulnerability may be at variance with those generated locally. Third, agencies may not be aware of subtle social and economic distinctions within a community and may inadvertently favour groups already privileged in some way – a concern of several respondents. Fourth, when selection criteria focus on specific social categories, stigmatisation can be an unintended outcome, as highlighted in a study of participatory programmes in Batticaloa:

> " The term widow in the Tamil language implies that which is inauspicious and pitiable. In this manner, any assertion of self-will or display of self-confidence by these women was squashed from the very beginning. Women in some instances resisted this classification…. One example was when a group of 35 widows, most in their twenties… were emphatic that they would participate in the literacy programme and other projects on condition that they should not be referred to as widows.[45] "

Finally, use of social criteria, to include or exclude, may have unfortunate consequences for intra-community relations, as indicated in a study for DRC in Mannar.[46] A group of widows admitted that other women in their village were jealous of their inclusion in a project and, in one village, disputes broke out when some residents were denied loans.

Excluding aid recipients from the identification process risks creating resentment, making it harder for agencies to build transparent and trusting relationships. Many beneficiaries indicated that they had little or no idea why or how they had been selected, revealing considerable disquiet about this.

3.1.2 Baseline Assessment

Beneficiary consultation

Levels of consultation with crisis-affected populations are higher during initial assessments of need than at any other stage in a project cycle. Such consultation enables agencies to learn about people's assets, deficits, coping strategies and aspirations and facilitates identification of vulnerable households or members of a population. When well done, it generates a very positive commitment to the project, as implied by a client of the Rural Development Foundation (RDF):

> " RDF did a six-day workshop to find out our needs. Around 45 to 60 people turned up – men and women. They had a very good class and went very deeply into what we wanted. I was very impressed – it was the first time I had experienced anything like it. We discussed the pros and cons of a project and they asked us what we'd contribute. We said that the women and men together could contribute around Rs90,000. We told them that a reservoir was our first priority.[47] "

That said, project proposals written prior to assessments, coupled with beneficiary selection mediated by government, is not conducive to positive agency-beneficiary relations.

Several agency staff and recipients noted that poorer families and men are sometimes underrepresented in attempts to involve all community members, generally because they are at work, or (in the case of men), drunk. Also, working children are less likely to be involved than school pupils.[48]

The use of PRA

In most cases the assessment is conducted using a PRA methodology. This was first introduced into Sri Lanka in the mid-1990s, and most aid workers have received some form of training in it. Specific tools and methods vary, although commonly social mapping is used to mark out communities, families and households and identify social and economic characteristics. PRA can provide an important opportunity for listening and responding to community priorities and concerns, building mutual understanding and trust.[49] However, in Sri Lanka, agency use of PRA is often rather mechanical, without evidence of real participatory application, and the methodology is sometimes employed merely as a means of accessing a community or obtaining a specific set of data.

There is also an inevitable tension between the use of participatory tools and methods and the fact that officials (or influential others) mediate beneficiary selection. Even where PRA strategies are carried out in a non-extractive way, there is little evidence to suggest their use as a means of sharing power and decision making.

> " PRA is being pushed on people as the thing to do rather than as an actual participatory tool. PRA is applied on people rather as a tool to work with people. Mapping is treated as an output rather than a tool for participation. There's no real follow up – we should evaluate its longer-term impact.[50] "

It could be argued that because baseline assessments tend to follow, rather than precede project design, the use of participatory methods is almost irrelevant, a 'rubber stamping' of decisions already taken.[51]

It would, however, be unwise to presume that participatory assessments conducted in public in an environment plagued by armed violence and displacement will result in more than very approximate reflections of the reality.[52]

The risks of beneficiary consultation

Two important principles have been argued: that consultation with crisis-affected populations during baseline assessments should recognise aid recipients as stakeholders with a crucial interest in outcomes; and, that aid recipients' knowledge and expertise should be brought to bear in decisions and interventions that affect them.

Nevertheless, for a number of reasons, beneficiaries are not always able to make good use of participatory opportunities. Given the conflict and displacement, civilians in Sri Lanka do not necessarily have the requisite expertise or insight to carry projects forward successfully in situations where locations, soils, flora, fauna, climate and market conditions are unfamiliar and where there have been major changes in commodity and labour demands. An elderly man in Kalkulam explained that the RDF consultation process was effective, but that village inhabitants had made a poor decision: asking for goats that died due to adverse local weather conditions, and pumps that they did not know how to use. Similarly, in a SCUK income-generation programme some sought productive implements for occupations in which they had no prior experience or skills, while others fell in with what was known and familiar and found that over-production of certain crops led to a collapse in local market prices.

3.1.3 Project Implementation

Beneficiary inputs: labour contribution

Project implementation often heralds a change in agency-beneficiary relations. Whereas during planning, engagement tends to focus on consultation and two-way flows of information, during project execution aid recipients can play a major active role in both instrumental and transformative models. Roles can take the form of provision of unskilled

manual labour; management and administration of CBOs; contribution of funds; and/or engagement as change agents in social mobilisation. Instrumental models tend to emphasise manual labour and administrative or maintenance contributions, whereas transformative models are open to management input and resource controls.

However, in Sri Lanka, many participation opportunities are missed through lack of agency will, capacity, or expertise. Hence, overall, participation in the implementation of humanitarian initiatives is low – with manual labour the most common contribution. As noted, many donors specify that the value of this labour should be a fixed proportion of total project cost and, in some cases, the input is essential to remaining within budget. Beneficiaries generally assume a less significant, or no, role in decision making and, with the exception of some micro-finance projects, are seldom given full control of funds.

Agency reluctance to hand over project funds may be due to concern that attempts to foster beneficiary self-reliance may be thwarted by the volatile environment. For example, some time ago, SCUK established a micro-credit programme in Trincomalee, in which funds were used to buy goats. But, soldiers from a nearby military camp shot and stole the animals, leaving recipients unable to repay loans. Similarly, at around 40 per cent, micro credit has seen low returns, often because people are too impoverished to initiate developmental activities that imply a longer-term investment.[53]

Beneficiary inputs: expectations of participation

Involvement of aid beneficiaries in implementation raises two crucial issues. First, it is not evident what level of labour participation can or should be expected from those exposed to long-term conflict, displacement and economic deprivation. A ZOA initiative in Madhukarai is possibly the most labour-intensive project in Sri Lanka and illustrates many of the dilemmas.[54] An initial participatory needs-assessment established a desire for toilets, houses, wells, livelihood security and roads. The foremost priority for all the village inhabitants was the construction of an access road that had to pass through a large area of uncleared forest

and a reservoir. Aside from the unskilled community labour provided, the village RDA had to hire a tractor and labourers from neighbouring settlements to complete the work. ZOA staff indicated that beneficiary contribution to this component of the project was extremely consistent and effective.

However, the housing project revealed the danger of expecting too much in too short a time.[55] Some beneficiaries were very enthusiastic about building permanent homes but found the project burdensome because it also involved brick making. With families grouped into teams, the work involved high levels of inter-dependency and co-operation, which several found hard to sustain. In addition, different sections of the population had different priorities. 'Up-country' Tamils from highland tea estates, where housing and sanitation are provided by the owners, showed little interest in permanent houses and latrines, whereas those relocated from nearby IDP/returnee camps were more enthusiastic, despite finding the construction work difficult. Staff also noted this distinction between recent arrivals and families that had been in the community for some time, the former showing less interest than the latter.

By the time it came to wells and latrines enthusiasm was relatively low, mainly because beneficiaries had by then largely met their most pressing needs, but also because UNHCR's fund allocation only allowed for shared rather than the desired individual wells.

The ZOA example shows that even with a strong institutional commitment to participation, pragmatism and realism is required. Out of respect for the entitlements and integrity of affected populations, and in recognition of the very real constraints, it is important to acknowledge that participation can be burdensome, especially where initiatives are not a top priority for the affected. It is vital therefore to agree at the outset whether there really is value added in introducing participatory approaches.

Furthermore, it could be argued that the most meaningful form of participation entails listening to, and capacity building of, civilian

populations, helping them to assume social justice and control of their lives – insofar as this is possible. This requires a commitment to more transformative approaches. As one respondent noted: 'We need to go beyond involving displaced people in meeting collective needs, for example … get refugees into jobs; help them meet with the authorities. Participation needs to be long-term.' [56]

Similarly, ZOA staff members have come to think that providing unskilled labour is not necessarily the most effective basis for beneficiary participation in humanitarian action, nor the best way of ensuring accountability to aid recipients. They emphasise that, since project funds effectively belong to recipients, staff members should be accountable to them rather than to donors. This has led to a recent proposal (initially resisted by beneficiaries) that beneficiaries should monitor the performance of the ZOA agricultural officer and be responsible for developing his work plan.

3.1.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Most agencies are committed to the development of monitoring and evaluation systems as a means of reviewing project progress, assessing outcomes and impact and ensuring accountability to aid recipients and donors.

Multiple stakeholder perspectives

Monitoring components tend to be informal in Sri Lanka, often involving animators or field officers meeting fairly regularly with beneficiaries, listening to reports of events and activities, checking accounts and other documents. Reporting is frequently verbal.

Mid-term reviews and end-of-project evaluations tend to be more elaborate, entailing a day or so of meetings with beneficiaries at which they respond to a range of questions on project outcomes and impact. In projects with multiple stakeholder groups, contrasting perspectives may be obtained. When SCUK and its partner organisation, TRRO, evaluated the

impact of an income-generation project with the Narhana Vinayagar Farmer's organisation in Kondavil, Jaffna, reviews were conducted with men, women and children. The children were very happy that specific provision had been made for them and felt that their needs had been satisfied. Wives were pleased that their husbands had tools to work with, but were not as satisfied as the children because they had expected greater impact on their lives. The men argued that the loans were inadequate, especially given the difficult economic environment, price fluctuations and marketing difficulties.

Constraints

Despite a few positive examples, the tradition of participatory monitoring and evaluation is not well established within humanitarian practice in Sri Lanka.[57] Several international agencies attributed this to the fact that until recently their local partners were focused on the distribution of relief items and actively resisted monitoring and evaluation. On the other hand, some local NGOs complained that international agencies failed to share evaluation outcomes. Monitoring can also be extremely labour intensive, leading agencies to cut back on it, even while recognising its importance.[58]

Overall failure to undertake participatory evaluation reflects a more generalised loss of momentum in projects as they come towards the end of their cycle, and, quite apart from institutional obstacles, such activities have been seriously hampered by civilian and agency displacement and the loss of contact with beneficiaries.

3.2   THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Agencies need to foster actively positive outcomes from participation. Beneficiaries in Sri Lanka identified a number of positive effects, as follows.

3.2.1 Self-respect and Self-efficacy

One of the most devastating consequences of exposure to armed violence and forced migration is the loss of control over one's life.[59] Humanitarian measures that do not consult or keep beneficiaries fully informed merely increase this sense of helplessness and despair. This was particularly evident in Vavuniya in government-run camps and programmes. Those in more participatory projects (in both camps and resettlement villages) clearly appreciate agency efforts to consult and keep them informed of operational objectives and strategies, expected outcomes and changes during implementation. DRC runs a very successful project in Vanuniya that aims to put government officials in touch with crisis-affected populations as a means of increasing aid recipients' access to information and hence their sense of self-efficacy.

Beneficiaries of SCUK's development/relief project valued involvement in decisions about which relief items they would receive,[60] noting that selection had been a highly inclusive process. The children thought it a good idea for SCUK to ask what they wanted, this being the first agency they had known to do this. Even though the process took quite a long time, respondents argued it was worthwhile.

While efforts to ensure consultation and choice were regarded very favourably, beneficiaries also expressed satisfaction with other agencies' standard relief packages, which they felt had adequately met needs. This suggests that for beneficiaries the value of the consultation and choice was mostly derived from being treated with respect and given a sense of control over their lives. Even where projects run into difficulties, beneficiary satisfaction tends to remain high where the agency is transparent and keeps everyone informed. This highlights the importance of viewing aid recipients as active survivors of adversity rather than passive victims, and of responding to individual problems and circumstances, rather than treating beneficiaries as an anonymous mass.

3.2.2 Social Skills and Decision-making

Involvement in participatory projects can have a radical and very constructive effect on self-perception, as well as building social competencies, positively influencing relationships and abilities to take part in broader processes of planning and decision making. These effects were clearly articulated by a mixed-caste group of teenage girls who work as animators in a SCUK club in Siruppiddy, Jaffna:

> " The training has given us lots of skills … Before, when visitors came to our homes we couldn't talk to them, but now we can. Before, we didn't know about children's rights but now we can explain these things to other children; we can influence future generations. Now we have leadership in our villages … The club has helped reduce discrimination, especially caste discrimination … normally higher caste people don't mix with the lower castes but in the club we all eat and drink together. The club gives disabled children an opportunity to become involved. We visit disabled children at home and bring them here. We make no distinctions between boys and girls – boys and girls mix in the drama productions and other events. This is a new way of being together. We have got some knowledge now about gender and caste and we'll pass this on to our own children. Before we were dismissed … Now we are more mature. Our parents are more likely to allow us some freedom to get involved in things. They listen to us when they make family decisions. They're likely to consult us on marriage and other things. When we talk to children who are outside the club they tell us that their parents give them no freedom. We find that we talk very differently from these children.[61] "

It is very striking to observe the extent to which these young women appear to challenge traditional cultural precepts on inter-generational and caste hierarchies. Although it is not clear how these young women

managed to confound the restrictive nature of social hierarchy and interaction in Sri Lanka, their experience is consistent with our overall observation that children respond more effectively to participatory measures than adults – matching the findings reported in a recent CIDA-sponsored study of children's participation.[62]

Another striking observation is the ease with which the young women articulated important personal and social structural changes in their lives and the fact that they were able to attribute these so clearly to the project.

3.2.3 Self-representation, Self-protection and Leadership

Civilian protection is a key priority in periods of political conflict and armed violence, especially in areas subject to repressive governance. In such areas, the relationship between civilian empowerment and protection is complex and can be fraught. As members of an international-agency focus group noted, in Sri Lanka the government, military and LTTE all oppose beneficiary participation. In certain circumstances therefore, the delivery of standardised relief packages without beneficiary consultation may enhance civilian security precisely because they are regarded as more neutral than participatory measures.

On the other hand, at their most basic level, participatory projects enable humanitarian actors to engage closely with civilians, providing an external presence that may help prevent violations. Further, the research uncovered several important examples of ways in which civilians have been able to enhance their own protection through participation in humanitarian measures.[63]

The ability to negotiate with and challenge the authorities is regarded by many respondents as an important outcome of participatory projects, with major implications for protection and security. This approach commonly relies on collective action based on a strong sense of shared grievance and solidarity, as female beneficiaries of an Oxfam-GB/SEED project in Sithamparapuram camp, Vavuniya revealed:

> " Women's rights training has been good because women are the most affected by displacement and have been given practical ways for resolving their problems and improving their situation. The training is very important for … learning about what's unfair and how to report on it. Now if we're not treated well at least we know what to do. We've had lots of military round-ups. The men have been taken and tortured. One time 11 men were held. The women's group reported this to the Human Rights Commission in Colombo and the men were released. An officer from the Human Rights Commission had been to the camp to tell us what procedures to follow in this kind of situation. Before the Human Rights Commission got involved we were kicked and tortured for asking about detainees, but all this has stopped now.[64] "

Quite apart from improving protection, self-representation before the authorities can also make it possible for war-affected populations to obtain access to information, resources and services:

> " Before SEED came to the camp there was no one to listen to us. Now there is someone to listen. With their encouragement we went to town by bus to visit the Kachcheri [local government office]. We discussed our problems with the government agent and presented 11 specific concerns: he was really shocked. We told him we had no transport for emergencies and he gave us a trishaw, which we still use. Another thing: the rations are issued out in the open, exposing us to the sun and heat. We asked the (Government Agent's) GA for a hut for shade and he gave it to us. We also asked for a post box in the camp … rather than us having to go to town … The shopkeepers always give us less dry rations than they're supposed to. We asked the GA for a set of scales so we can check the weights.[65] "

Some civilian populations prefer to be represented by individuals rather than to organise themselves collectively, fitting more closely with traditional values and practice. However, it is important to emphasise that although taking the initiative can build a sense of personal mastery, an important survival and coping competency in situations of conflict, leaders often face grave risk. As one camp resident noted: 'We aren't allowed to set up a camp committee, but we did elect our own spokesman informally. The man we had elected spoke out about the state of the place … The next day the army arrested him and imprisoned him.' Agencies that encourage self-representation need to take such risks into account.

3.2.4 Solidarity and Empowerment of Vulnerable Groups

As a means of ensuring the most vulnerable are included in and benefit from humanitarian aid, many agencies in Sri Lanka have introduced a targeted approach, directing support at the most marginalised socially, economically and politically. For some agencies the choice of social category is a matter of mandate, but for others (eg, Oxfam-GB, WFP and DRC) it tends to be based on experience of civilian impoverishment and suffering in emergencies and of how civilians respond to humanitarian measures.

Women

In Sri Lanka, many agencies focus their attention on women and female-headed households. Projects that centre on specific social groups or categories appear more likely to embody objectives of empowerment and produce longer term personal effects and group solidarity, than those working with a broader constituency:

> " We expect to be strong and to help our community in these difficult times because women are stronger than men. We learnt in our last equality training with Oxfam that often husbands are unemployed while their wives work but are still kept down. We shouldn't let this happen because we're equals.

> We can talk this way because we're in the society. We couldn't talk like this before – as individuals we couldn't achieve nearly so much … Now we have the confidence to talk to the military about our detained husbands. Now we … have an idea about what to do to support ourselves. We feel more confident.[66] ”

These women appear to have defied apparently entrenched cultural norms on gender, human rights and other issues, also challenging views that camp inhabitants are rendered inactive by a prevailing relief mentality. Given the right kind of inputs, it would appear that more radical efforts at empowerment really can pay off in terms of confidence and solidarity, even in highly restrictive environments. However, since the research team did not have the opportunity to assess how the wider camp population perceives and treats this group of women, or whether their circumstances within the family and community have been tangibly improved by the project, a certain amount of caution needs to be retained. It is not clear whether a sense of solidarity and self-efficacy is automatically associated with longer-term social structural transformation.

Children

An increasing number of humanitarian agencies in Sri Lanka are choosing to work with children and young people, who are especially vulnerable during emergencies and have specific needs that must be met as a matter of urgency if their longer term growth and development is not to be impaired. As noted, children seem to engage more effectively with participatory projects and reported greater beneficial effects than adults, as seen during the CIDA study:

> “ The enhanced confidence and sense of personal and group efficacy enjoyed by children might be seen as potentially threatening to the institution of the family based upon a strong sense of hierarchy between parents and children. However, both parents and children expressed the clear conviction that family life had improved since the inception of programmes.

Parents interviewed claimed that their children had become more polite and disciplined, that they had learned 'good behaviour' and were devoting themselves more to their studies. The participants themselves confirmed this view, adding that it was because parents saw these positive changes that they had supported their activities and that parents of children who were not involved were now encouraging them to join in.[67] 🙶

Aside from the benefits accruing directly to children, there appear to be tangible benefits to their communities as well. Children, in all of the programmes visited by the CIDA team, were eager to develop activities that would enhance the life of their communities:

🙶 This validates the belief of the agencies here concerned that children have an innate desire to engage in meaningful social action. In conditions of conflict and displacement the re-establishment of meaning within daily life must surely benefit children in psycho-emotional terms.[68] 🙶

In a GTZ (German Technical Cooperation) project in Jaffna children offered their labour for the construction of schools. When GTZ responded by explaining that the work was unsuitable for children, suggesting they bring their parents instead, this resulted in parents providing voluntary labour for the successful completion of a large project. Similarly, the involvement of youth in community work funded by DRC led to a commitment among adults to undertake community development projects and a noticeable reduction in alcohol consumption.

3.2.5 A Sense of Ownership and the Material Rewards

One of the most tangible advantages of participation is an increased sense of ownership of project outcomes. This is due to beneficiary sacrifice and

investment in planning, management, maintenance, appraisal and other activities. Such commitment is understood by many agencies to be an important prerequisite for programme and project sustainability and efficiency, assumptions generally born out by the research.

In Madhukarai, ZOA self-construct housing beneficiaries live alongside government-relocated families in houses built by the National Housing Development Authority (NHDA). The village contains 75 self-constructed and 100 NHDA houses and inhabitants unanimously agree that those built with beneficiary participation are of much better quality. The majority of NHDA beneficiaries would have liked to be involved in building their own houses. While material satisfaction is high among ZOA beneficiaries, who take great pride in their accomplishments and in the upkeep of their houses, many NHDA beneficiaries feel neglected by their benefactor. However, ZOA beneficiaries who had to be persuaded to contribute in the first instance, show little interest in upkeep.

Our general observation was that participation in the maintenance of communal camp facilities tends to be low. Animators have a far tougher time encouraging active engagement in camps than in resettlement or relocation villages. Yet, in Sithamparapuram camp in Vavuniya, latrines built by Oxfam-GB and its local partner, and cared for by beneficiary committees, are in excellent condition compared to those constructed by government and maintained by paid labour. The latter are no longer in use due to poor standards of hygiene and safety. This may be due to government neglect of duties, but more important is the high level of voluntarism shown by Oxfam beneficiaries in a context where such commitment is generally low.

4 MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE PARTICIPATION

It is apparent that to be consequential and become institutionalised throughout a programme in all projects and at all stages of the project cycle, beneficiary participation must be actively and sensitively nurtured. Key activities, structures and mechanisms used to facilitate and promote participation in Sri Lanka are outlined below.[69]

4.1 PARTICIPATION STRATEGIES

4.1.1 Deciding on the Operational Model

Humanitarian actors need to make explicit choices about their approach to participation, since these choices determine the objectives, modes of operation and outcomes of humanitarian measures. Choosing involves a clear assessment not simply of the merits of each approach, but also the weaknesses.

Instrumental models

As noted, most agencies in Sri Lanka employ instrumental approaches and strategies[70], possibly in recognition of the very volatile context in which they operate. Given the emphasis on sector-based measures, this fits closely with the traditional framework and delivery structure of humanitarian action. However, it embodies limitations.

First, while agencies may be familiar with thinking in terms of sectors, and staff are commonly trained and recruited on this basis, beneficiaries are not and do not organise their lives in this way. Second, some sectors appear to be inherently more important for beneficiaries than others. Respondents were generally much more enthusiastic about micro-finance and livelihood security initiatives than water and sanitation measures, especially in camps where such facilities are shared. There are also important gender and generation dimensions, since the priorities of women and men in different age groups diverge.

When the sector that an agency is mandated to cover is not one prioritised by crisis-affected civilians it undermines cooperation. While in many parts of the world food distribution, a central priority for most crisis-affected populations, can be used to engage intensively with aid recipients on a collaborative basis, in Sri Lanka, as already noted, a major challenge is that government largely monopolises the distribution of food rations. Most agencies are restricted to one-off measures (shelter, non-food items), which is not conducive to the development of close and collaborative relations.

Third, instrumental approaches focus on immediate practical needs, and while it is important to address pressing practical problems, the neglect of crucial strategic interests may undermine humanitarian efforts to relieve deprivation and suffering in the longer term. For example, schooling for children may be a major priority, but many education programmes flounder in political emergencies because agencies fail to work with military and law enforcement bodies to ensure the safety of students travelling to school and in the classroom.

Transformative models

Many argue that only programmes aimed at transforming the social structural position of crisis-affected populations, that give them complete control of the resources disbursed, are truly participatory. Yet these also have risks and shortcomings.

First, while some argue that transformative models have the greatest potential for enabling beneficiaries to confront and overcome the adversities of humanitarian crises, it is precisely in volatile contexts that the implementation of radical models is most difficult. Agency staff in Sri Lanka frequently stressed that such approaches would be extremely unwise during and in the aftermath of military action, not least for reasons of security and feasibility.

Second, notions of empowerment and rights, tied to a worldview specific to Judeo-Christian cultures in which the individual exists as an autonomous entity, do not fit well with hierarchical and prescriptive cultures. In socio-centric cultures such as that in Sri Lanka the individual is not thought to exist in isolation from his/her social group. It is through fulfilment of duties associated with the group that the individual is integrated into and acknowledged by society. The idea of individual rights that may conflict with those of the group, or with other individual group members, is very foreign. 'The way people participate is very variable culturally. Obligation is more important here in Sri Lanka than rights. But the aid world likes to globalise standards – for example the Sphere Standards'.[71]

The more radical efforts of humanitarian agencies to foster participation through empowerment and self-actualisation could bring about profound cultural change. Agencies must acknowledge that this is what they are doing and identify the risks. Detailed knowledge of the local setting is required to enhance participation without undermining the social fabric, as well as sensitivity and respect for local perspectives and intensive interaction and exchange with beneficiaries.

Third, in Sri Lanka there is an inherent tension between civilian empowerment and the high turnover of expatriate staff, and characteristically low levels of engagement with beneficiaries in most humanitarian interventions. This tension is not easily resolved in practice. Intensive and ongoing exchange generally only occurs in work with children (and their carers), particularly within the framework of psychosocial interventions – possibly another reason why participatory

activities with the young are more numerous and, apparently, more successful.

4.1.2 Breaking down the Barriers

Peace and reconciliation

Recognising that beneficiary participation in humanitarian action is dependent on high levels of mutual understanding, tolerance and solidarity, and that conflict destroys these essential features of society, mounting participatory projects in the context of conflict implies an inevitable link with peace and reconciliation. Although the link is seldom acknowledged explicitly by agencies in Sri Lanka, there have been a number of peace and reconciliation initiatives that demonstrate potential for creating an enabling environment for beneficiary participation in humanitarian action.

In many parts of the north and east, populations of different ethnic and religious status, and political affiliation, live in close proximity to each other, creating tension and hostility, even during periods of comparative stability and peace. Sarvodaya and the Social and Economic Development Centre – Caritas Sri Lanka (SEDEC)[72] are two agencies in Sri Lanka with a particularly strong commitment to peace and reconciliation activities, deploying trained animators to promote this work in areas embroiled in conflict.

> " We [SEDEC] have a long-term programme to bridge the gap between communities. We went to villages with the help of our regional centres and selected young men and women to train as animators. We meet monthly to learn about the situation. We run cultural programmes to show communities what young people's experiences are – to create an understanding in the community of the day-to-day security problems they face. We have brought widows together from each of the different communities so that they can see that

their suffering is similar and there is greater understanding between them.[73] **"**

In a volatile context like Sri Lanka, the training and deployment of animators whose mission is to promote peace and reconciliation may be seen as an important first step in the development of participatory projects and approaches. This work can, however, be extremely tough, rendering animators vulnerable to political pressures and hostility, so needs continuous accompaniment and monitoring.

Provision of information

Populations in the north and east of Sri Lanka have experienced perpetual fear, harassment and repression, and been kept in ignorance of government intentions. Civilians revealed considerable anxiety about the future and lack of awareness of their entitlements and government plans. While the situation has improved since the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement, the government, the SLA and the LTTE use this greater stability to manipulate and control civilians, especially those in camps.

While there are real limits on what agencies can do in armed conflict to influence the political and military climate, the onus is on them to consult and inform civilians as far as possible about administrative and judicial procedures, official policy and the like. Providing this kind of information is an important step in building confidence and trust, prerequisites for meaningful participation, and was one of the most impressive aspects of the Oxfam-GB/SEED project in Sithamparapuram camp (discussed below).

In an attempt to do something about poor information flows to, and the lack of empowerment of, war-affected civilians, DRC together with RDF, introduced a capacity-building programme in Vavuniya. It sought to give civilians the confidence and necessary information to demand access to existing services and remedy from the relevant authorities, through a five-

day programme in which local officials explain to camp and village inhabitants who they are and discuss their role and responsibilities within government. They also talk about the broader mandate and structure of government and how to access public services. This project has had a major beneficial impact and other organisations are seeking to replicate it.

4.1.3 Social Mobilisation

Generating a commitment to projects

There is a strong tradition of grassroots civil society development in Sri Lanka and, prior to the conflict, an abundance of societies and co-operatives. Nevertheless, due to caste, gender, generational and ethnic discrimination, the social and cultural tradition of Sri Lanka is not inherently inclusive. Also, long years of conflict have attacked social confidence and trust, and fragmented or destroyed most of these once strong grassroots organisations. Most agencies start from scratch and engage in a range of social mobilisation measures in the early stages of implementation, to foster collective civic action.

> " They [RDF] motivate us to get things done. Someone from the RDF field office lives in our village. He looks into the loans we take out and checks the repayments. People pay their money to him and he helps us decide what to spend it on. He goes from house to house and calls people to meetings. He's done a good job.[74] "

Staff of SEWA Lanka maintained that mobilisation is essential to 'avoid the development of a relief mentality'. A typical SEWA mobilisation programme starts with meetings and discussions, moving on to group activities aimed at highlighting differences between individual and team effort. Staff sometimes work alongside beneficiaries to demonstrate the merits of collective action and argue that beneficiaries now refer to CBO members as 'shareholders' and contribute their labour from a sense of ownership, not obligation.

A danger is that agencies use mobilisation to steer communities towards initiatives that they have already decided to implement. In Savukkady, villagers had appealed to Eastern Human Economic Development (EHED) to establish a savings and credit scheme shortly after an EHED workshop on loans and related topics[75], a trend evident in the majority of projects studied.

In general, beneficiaries of psychosocial interventions tend to be more enthusiastic about participation than those assisted in material measures, possibly attributable to the fact that psychosocial programmes, with their human and societal focus, are more prone to participatory approaches. Further, the relatively recent introduction of such measures in the humanitarian field may lead to a more ready embrace of the newer notions of empowerment, human rights, and participation.

Content of mobilisation activities

DRC has outlined nine key areas of social concern in Vavuniya and Mannar and argues that addressing these is the core purpose of its social mobilisation programmes:

- organisational development;
- resource tenure improvement;
- local governance;
- basic social service delivery;
- overcoming gender and other biases;
- critical collective consciousness-raising;
- coalition effort; and
- advocacy.

These are important substantive goals for more transformative projects. However, accomplishing them in a region dogged by political conflict where so many aspects of civilian life are beyond the control of affected populations is no mean feat.

Awareness raising, advocacy and orientation

There is a lot more to mobilising communities than their mere organisation, since the intention is to galvanise people to take action on specific problems and issues. The skills required to play an active role in projects – such as financial administration, CBO management, community leadership – are not generally found among the populations of the north and east. Extensive awareness raising and skills training are vital to cultivate beneficiary interest, understanding, skills and commitment to project-related issues. In addition, advocacy with key organisations and institutions on matters of policy and practice helps create a more positive environment in which mobilised communities can operate.

4.1.4 Change Agents

Most of the humanitarian agencies in Sri Lanka that are committed to participation make extensive use of animators or change agents in community mobilisation.

Recruitment

Many recruit local volunteers and pay them a small stipend to motivate, inform, mobilise and organise members of their own community around a particular issue or project. The premise is that peers who have lived similar experiences or share the same interests are likely to have the greatest influence on attitudes and behaviour. Children[76] in Jaffna emphasised that they learn far more from child and youth animators, from within their own community, than from adults '…they are better teachers, nicer and they don't punish us. Learning from them is fun.' The children had vivid recollections of what they had learned from the project in terms of hygiene, health, and safety.

Animators may be responsible for a variety of tasks, including the production and distribution of handouts and resource materials, convening and chairing meetings for the administration and maintenance of facilities and resources, and undertaking awareness- raising and

advocacy sessions within their community. Some assume responsibility for organising and strengthening the capacities of CBOs, or even for running them.

Training

Training programmes can be one of the most critical inputs in participatory projects. To promote beneficiary participation in projects and in the formation of CBOs, a successful animator must have strong inter-personal and communication skills and a full understanding of project aims, objectives and strategies. For this, they need to learn about the sector or topic of intervention and acquire a range of appropriate mobilisation and organisational skills.

DRC's programme for animators covers

■ the environment of the country and its impact on communities;

■ the development concept (including the distinction between relief and development);

■ the meaning of community, community structure and changes due to conflict;

■ the concept and principles of social mobilisation and participation;

■ community development and the role of different stakeholders in that process;

■ the role and task of a social mobiliser – eg, social mobilisation; social investigation/community study data collection; situation analysis/problem identification; tentative planning and strategising; strengthening CBOs and group formation; groundwork/community mobilisation; facilitating communities to obtain assistance from outside; implementation of projects/programmes; monitoring and evaluation; and phasing out strategy for social mobilisers.

The training of animators is variable, in terms of pedagogic methods, length and content, but often includes components such as legal literacy, gender awareness, community development and mobilisation, leadership, peace and conflict resolution, which are taught alongside sector-specific components such as micro-finance or micro-enterprise development.

Given the heavy reliance on animators for successful implementation, agencies invest quite a bit of time and resources in their training, providing regular refresher courses. This entails serious effort on the part of humanitarian actors since identifying appropriate people is not always straightforward, given a serious 'brain drain' in the north and east due to the years of conflict. It is one of the contributions most valued by aid recipients in Sri Lanka, with volunteer animators consistently the most enthusiastic beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance. Their new skills not merely enhance community development, but support personal development and consolidate the animator's role within his or her community.

Problems

Even when careful effort is made to identify and train animators, it can be hard for them to uphold the momentum of a project. Many agencies deploy only one animator per project village, although it was apparent from the field research that this is often insufficient to ensure full and sustained project coverage. Awareness and knowledge of aid projects was remarkably low among residents in IDP/returnee camps and resettlement/relocation villages, even when animators were in place, in both short-term and longer-term projects. Several animators complained of a lack of adequate support and assistance.

There is also a continuous attrition of animators, sometimes due to their joining other agencies/projects. SEED recruited and trained four animators for their water systems-development project in Sithampurupuram camp, but three moved on, leaving one woman in charge of a massive area. She holds monthly meetings with camp residents

to discuss hygiene, water and sanitation, and, with the help of the camp officer, organises voluntary labour for the maintenance of facilities. She finds it very hard to manage the project on her own, but, with the government pursuing a policy of resettlement and relocation and opposing support to camp populations, Oxfam-GB and SEED have felt unable to replace the volunteers despite concerns that this will severely debilitate the project. Many organisations develop a second tier of animators, normally field officers or staff employed by international agencies or local or national partners.

Finally, the risk that new skills will elevate animators' status above that of other community members, adversely affecting relationships, needs careful management.

4.1.5 Use of Culturally Approved Idioms

Pedagogic methods

It is recognised that if social mobilisation, training, awareness raising and other such activities are to be effective in fostering beneficiary participation, communication and education strategies need to be consistent with and build on culturally approved idioms. These may include role-play, storytelling, metaphor, drama, narrative, song, and/or the visual arts. In Sri Lanka organisations such as the Theatre Action Group and the Centre for Performing Arts have provided training to humanitarian agencies in many of these skills and in particular have supported them in use of the Tamil tradition of historical drama for awareness raising, advocacy and mobilisation. Use is also made of modern media (video, radio, posters, etc).

Voluntary labour

Of all cultural idioms, *Shramadana*, a tradition of voluntary action in community initiatives, is possibly the most effective in Sri Lanka in fostering beneficiary participation. It builds on notions of self-reliance and community participation where people organise to satisfy as many of their needs as possible, often without the support or intervention of outsiders.

It has been promoted most actively by the Sarvodaya Movement to create Sarvodaya Village Societies with elected executive committees engaged in the creation of a culture of peace. *Shramadana* is commonly invoked in efforts to mobilise unskilled labour for humanitarian projects, although camp residents complain that it is sometimes enforced by government officials.

Informal savings groups

Another powerful idiom in Sri Lanka is the *Seettu* system, an informal mechanism whereby relatives and/or neighbours unite to form small savings groups. Precise arrangements vary, but in general members gain regular access, on a rotating basis, to funds held jointly. In one village a group was formed by the local shopkeeper, who also received the first *Seettu.* He explained that in his group members who need emergency funds out of turn pay more and get less, while those who stick to the schedule pay less and get more, the aim being to encourage a regular savings habit. It has been a powerful source of support to families in the north and east for a long time, and the principle has been well harnessed by some agencies that have incorporated it into their micro-credit and micro-finance schemes. However, we also came across cases where functioning *Seettu* groups collapsed following the introduction by an agency of a credit programme, indicating that humanitarian action does not always reinforce local coping strategies.

4.1.6 Social Targeting

The underlying rationale

Many agencies feel that only by directing their projects at the most vulnerable and powerless social groups will they achieve full community participation and outreach, while also meeting the humanitarian imperatives of social equity and justice. In Sri Lanka, the majority of agencies have come to regard gender as the single most important factor in vulnerability and social exclusion. To promote both gender equity and secure a broader impact for humanitarian measures on the family as

a whole, many agencies focus their projects on women, particularly female heads of household and/or widows. A rationale for this is provided by WFP: 'Women in particular are key to change; providing food to women puts it straight in the hands of those who use it for the benefit of the entire household, especially children.' [77]

Distinctions in gender and generation also influence responses to participatory initiatives. DRC[78] and GTZ find that participatory projects with women are more likely to be successful than projects with men. They argue that women generally work together more effectively, especially when organised into groups of different caste and socio-economic status, which men find difficult to deal with. Interestingly, quite a few female beneficiaries endorsed these positive views of women's participation. Several agencies also noted that men and women tend to find different kinds of interventions effective, with men interested in 'hardware' projects and women in 'software'.

Targeted projects are undoubtedly among the most empowering and transformative of the humanitarian measures in Sri Lanka.

The challenges and obstacles

Because they are isolated from decision making, seldom have control over resources and may lack the sense of self-efficacy needed to take control of their lives, the more marginalised members of the population tend not to present themselves before projects. It was notable how women in communities that had been touched only lightly by humanitarian measures were reticent to talk in public, while women who were organised CBO members were highly articulate and quite assertive. Focusing on the least powerful sections of the population entails a major commitment on the part of agencies in terms of accessing and learning about potential beneficiaries, forging relationships and building capacities.

Despite clear advantages, social targeting raises problems and concerns as an approach. The dynamics of power at the level of family, household and community are often highly entrenched and complex and it may be

somewhat naïve to assume that assistance given to the most vulnerable will be enjoyed by them. Social targeting may also lead to resistance from more powerful members of society and cause difficulties for aid recipients when they try to take on roles that depart from the tradition. The empowerment of vulnerable and marginalised groups implies major changes in attitudes and behaviour in the wider population. Projects that work with their target population in isolation of other more powerful members of society fail to acknowledge this fact and risk creating social division and conflict. The child-focused CIDA study notes:

> " The agencies studied all recognise that, in order to create the opportunity for children to participate, it is vital to build interventions that take account of the group-based nature of society, where children are an inseparable part of the family unit in conceptual and practical terms, and often an important resource for the household.[79] Thus, in many of the programmes examined, agency staff were found to be working at the community level making painstaking efforts to talk on a regular basis with parents, teachers, religious and community leaders, explaining to them the nature of activities and addressing their concerns and fears.[80] In this way they have gradually been able to open up and safeguard the space for children to come together and participate in designing and undertaking activities that are generally unprecedented in the life of their communities.[81] "

4.2   PROMOTING PARTICIPATION BY INSTITUTIONAL MEANS

Participatory projects are highly dependent on extensive consultation and contact among beneficiaries, and mutual agency–beneficiary learning and information flows. Many agencies find participatory approaches require a mechanism to bring people together for exchange and interaction and to foster sustainability.

4.2.1 Informal Interaction and Exchange

Creating the foundations for trust and engagement

Due largely to security restrictions, limited access to civilians and the longevity and sporadic nature of the conflict, most agency–beneficiary interaction in Sri Lanka has been episodic, tending to consist of rather formal community meetings, PRA exercises and workshops. Generally these are organised and convened by agency personnel, CBO committees, or animators. This rather stilted exchange creates major constraints among project beneficiaries and between beneficiaries and agencies. As one staff member put it: 'We have meetings, we do PRA activities and the like, but we don't make relationships with beneficiary communities.'[82] Informal interaction may be far more productive and effective. ZOA staff at Madhukarai, refer to this as 'hanging out'. Yet one of the disadvantages is that when agency personnel or community animators make themselves available on a more continuous and informal basis they can become subject to a multitude of pressures and demands falling outside agency mandates.

Engagement of women

A major advantage of promoting more informal exchanges is a likely increase in the participation of women. Traditionally men have tended to assume leadership roles within the community, seeking to create formal organisational structures and preferring to meet in public places. Women

are also involved in CBOs but usually in minor roles, and more likely to be engaged in domestic tasks that can be integrated with less formal social mobilisation activities, whether in the home, at the public well, in someone's backyard, or elsewhere.

4.2.2 Formal Organisations

Despite some inclination to develop more informal mechanisms, most agencies recognise the need for some kind of institutional structure to consolidate participation in projects.

Traditional organisational structures

In a few areas it has been possible to build on traditional structures such as the temple society, the fishermen's society, the rural development society or the credit society. These are generally legally constituted and registered with the government, and have administrative/ managerial committees. There are, however, practical limitations to their use in humanitarian action, not least because most have collapsed following displacement or a conscious process of attrition:

> 66 All parties to the conflict have resorted to destroying or undermining local civil society institutions. This has been carried out by threats, abductions and assassinations. Other methods such as blocking funds or other means for functioning have also been used. Over the years civil society organisations have been completely destroyed in many areas and in others have become thoroughly weakened.[83] 99

While building on traditional institutional mechanisms has advantages, it is important not to take for granted that such mechanisms are appropriate for participatory humanitarian measures. As one senior member of the humanitarian community emphasised, many are highly authoritarian and patriarchal: 'most civil society organisations are relief-orientated, male-dominated, run by ex-government officials using a charity approach.'

Some beliefs, values and practices may even perpetuate the inequalities and injustices that lead to political strife or armed conflict.

Another concern, highlighted by the regional coordinator for CARE International in Jaffna, was how after just a few months in office leaders tend to become complacent and start expressing their leadership in more authoritarian ways, many becoming corrupt over time. In many humanitarian crises, religious bodies play a significant role. Indeed, in some parts of the world participatory approaches have received strong endorsement from religious communities. Both the Catholic and Protestant churches run large social programmes throughout the north and east of Sri Lanka and have a long tradition of humanitarian action. Some aspects of their work have proved to be very participatory, and, in certain regions, Christian churches have far better access to civilians in LTTE-controlled areas than other bodies. However, outside the Christian community, there is no strong tradition of socially-engaged religion. Hinduism and Islam promote spiritual enlightenment and personal acts of charity but are much less committed to organised and collective action in the field of social development. Though some Muslim and Hindu organisations run orphanages, preschools or homes for the elderly and disabled, many are centre, rather than community based, and Hindu Temple priests do not normally undertake community services.[84]

Community-based organisations

The CBO is the preferred institutional mechanism for agencies and beneficiaries (especially men) for the administration and implementation of project activities at the local level. In Sri Lanka, most societies or CBOs involved in humanitarian action were formed by aid agencies with the explicit purpose of facilitating projects in line with fairly instrumental goals, with implications for their sustainability, outreach and acceptance within the community. CBOs are prevalent in relocation and resettlement villages but quite limited in camps, since they are more suited to a developmental approach to humanitarian assistance than the traditional mode of delivery in camps. SEWA Lanka has formed 88 village-level CBOs in communities throughout the district of Vavuniya and provides

them with training in group formation, team building/strengthening and financial management. In most cases they are set up for a specific task, such as the provision of loans or credit to support agricultural development. SEWA Lanka's longer-term goal is to have CBOs gradually assume responsibility for the development of whole villages.

The CBO appears to be the most explicitly participatory institutional mechanism in Sri Lanka, and CBO members tend to be far more positive about the impact of humanitarian interventions than others. What distinguishes CBO membership from other kinds of beneficiary investment in projects is that it provides the opportunity to assume administrative and managerial responsibility. However, the extent to which these organisations become autonomous bodies responsible for funds is variable. Some agencies transfer funds to CBOs following investment in capacity-building, while others prefer to hold accounts on behalf of the CBOs. In some cases the CBO management committee is elected by the membership, while in others it is selected by animators. High levels of intervention in CBO management may appear necessary to agencies wary of project failure, but raise serious questions about sustainability and the degree to which participation has been institutionalised at the community level.

CBOs are often divided by gender, reflecting observed differences in the priorities of men and women. Men focus more on micro finance and physical infrastructure and women on nutrition, and educational and social services. That said, we encountered plenty of women's CBOs with credit and loans geared to self-employment and production, possibly due to the prevalence of female-headed households in the north and east.[85] There are also CBO formations among children, which are highly effective in local mobilisation.[86]

Camp committees

Residents of IDP/returnee camps in Jaffna enjoy greater freedoms than those in the Vavuniya camps and have been able to form camp committees that are now (despite some opposition from government) organised into

a federation at both divisional and district level. Committees are presided over by elected officials who act as camp representatives before the authorities and at the NGO council. The committee president is a comparatively powerful person.

Both the Jaffna peninsula NGO council and the camp committees have adopted a political rather than service role. They coordinate in lobbying and advocacy for displaced populations, with the key objective of applying pressure on government and the humanitarian community to facilitate returns to original homes. Improvement of facilities in the camps is a lesser goal.

Camp committees are rather anomalous. While at one level they epitomise participation, playing an active role in obtaining their fundamental entitlements, their political stance, possible LTTE links, and persistent and at times almost hostile lobbying of the humanitarian community, make aid agencies wary of them. International agency staff in Jaffna felt the structure was not effective because, although the cause and claims are just, the means they use are seldom constructive. This reveals just how uncomfortable agencies can feel when crisis-affected populations state the terms for mutual engagement.

4.2.3 Local and National Partners

Many international organisations in Sri Lanka have ceased to be operational and now work in partnership with government or local or national NGOs, with several important implications for participation.

The rationale for partnerships

This transition from direct to partner implementation is seen by many as the best way to increase efficiency, accountability and sustainability, building local capacities and reinforcing democratic governance and beneficiary participation. It also reflects recognition that international agencies do not have the capacity to increase participation.

There are a number of large, established local and national Sri Lankan NGOs, although due to environmental difficulties quite a few work in rehabilitation and development rather than relief, and in conflict-affected areas rather than camps. Of those involved in humanitarian action, not all have sustained their capacity and outreach.

No obvious difference or trend could be discerned in beneficiary perception of the participatory approaches of national or international organisations, where gauging performance relates more to the nature of the intervention, degree of support, perceived benefits, the qualities of field officers and so on. However, agencies with a strong, supportive local presence, that encourages CBO development, are viewed more positively, and, in the main, local/national organisations are better suited to this intensive engagement.

International agencies working with government are regarded by beneficiaries as less sympathetic than those working with NGOs.

The limitations of partnerships

As well as the difficulties presented by working with government, there are constraints in partnerships with NGOs. In political crises local and national NGOs may find themselves severely debilitated by the loss of skilled personnel through displacement and their neutrality heavily compromised by pressures from political or military groups. In Sri Lanka such pressures have led international agencies to withdraw from regional coordinating consortia with, in certain areas, rifts emerging between international and national organisations. Other international agencies take the view that if you want to support war-affected populations you have to work with national bodies, however politicised. One limitation of this approach is the very strong resentment of local NGOs in the north and east because of the resources they are seen to use for their own purposes.[87]

In Jaffna in particular, prohibitions on foreign funding of local NGOs, the brain drain due to the conflict, economic and service decline and isolation

from learning opportunities in the field of humanitarian action, has had a marked negative impact on local NGOs.[88]

Several international staff expressed a very legitimate concern that they now feel more distanced from and less accountable to aid recipients, in their view, a problem emphasised in advocacy projects. They also query whether you can sustain beneficiary participation when project partners are so weak.

Working with partners in highly participatory programmes is extremely time consuming. It requires careful appraisal of partners, as well as close monitoring, accompaniment and capacity building.

4.3   FUNDING AND PARTICIPATION

The major role of funding in facilitating or undermining participation in projects is examined below.

4.3.1 The Potential of Donors to Promote Participation

The key players

Traditionally the donor community in Sri Lanka has not been particularly engaged with the issue of conflict, although there are some notable exceptions and signs that things are changing. The World Bank is major funder of humanitarian interventions in the north and east. Other donors include the UN, the European Community, bilateral donors – especially Japan[89], Germany, Canada, Sweden, UK, Norway, the Netherlands, Italy, the US – and a range of INGOs.[90]

Policies and strategies

Donor policy has major implications for participation in humanitarian action. Participatory approaches require flexibility in funding cycles,

approach and methods of implementation, as much as in the outcomes sought. Participation is a slow process – especially when involving war-affected populations with little reason to trust outsiders.

Donors such as the Department for International Development (DFID) recognise that participatory approaches require open, flexible funding arrangements based on the concept of partnership rather than the more traditional hierarchical donor/implementing partner relationship.[91] There is a need for greater transparency, which means that donors may seek to take part in project reviews and evaluations and provide advice and support, as well as to understand obstacles to implementation rather than to penalise failures. The World Bank is encouraging all projects in Sri Lanka to adopt a community-driven development approach, which could provide a major incentive for increased participation by aid recipients, although it is not clear how the government or LTTE will react. Donors may have to agree to procedural changes, such as accepting self-monitoring and evaluation by implementing partners rather than by donor-hired outsiders. Finally, logframes and other planning and monitoring tools must incorporate not just quantitative but also qualitative components and be fully adaptable to changing needs and circumstances.

The advocacy role adopted by some donors in relation to government and the more conservative donors is much valued as facilitating beneficiary participation, as are efforts to improve donor coordination.

4.3.2 Detrimental Aspects of Funding Policy

The limitations of emergency funding

Some humanitarian actors in Sri Lanka are highly critical of donors. They see them frustrating attempts to improve participation and only supporting high-profile agencies with high absorptive capacity, agencies they maintain are bureaucratic and not very participatory. One observed '[donors] like the terminology of participation to be in proposals but their commitment … is not very high.'

There is an inherent contradiction between participatory models and traditional emergency funding arrangements in the humanitarian field. For many donors, funding for emergency operations is by definition immediate and short-term, even when the humanitarian crisis is long-term. Moreover, the kind of flexibility that is a prerequisite for participatory projects does not always rest well with a focus on the tangible, measurable outputs that characterises much relief and rehabilitation work. In the words of one critic:

> " By virtue of the long period of instability, funds are given for quick delivery and measurable, quantifiable impacts, and this works against community mobilisation. The environment is not conducive, so funds and programmes talk a different language. And beneficiaries who've become very dependent over time are impatient for handouts.[92] "

That said, while most assistance provided to the north and east is covered by emergency budget lines, funding is not necessarily disbursed on short-term emergency cycles. AusAid allows two-year funding, DFID supports four-year cycles and in some cases, in Batticaloa, World Vision works to a fifteen-year cycle. A recent funding regime agreed between DFID and Oxfam-GB in Vavunia, allows for a more organic growth of projects. The agency has set aside a period of six to nine months for negotiation and discussion with potential and actual beneficiaries prior to delivery of any goods or services.

Unrealistic expectations

One of the main agency staff and aid recipient complaints was that donors have preconceived ideas about the levels of participation that can be expected. Many stipulate a specified labour contribution, which in general civilians find difficult to make and perceive as a means of cutting project costs.

The point is well illustrated by an UNHCR support RDF project to build three wells. Interest was high among camp residents who wanted to

build them themselves. A CBO was formed to supervise and manage the resource but, with implementation delayed and donor pressure to complete, the agency felt obliged to hire in contractors. This proved a highly unsatisfactory outcome for all, with camp residents complaining about poor execution (the well was empty when seen). RDF felt it had compromised efforts to foster beneficiary participation and staff at the regional UNHCR office admitted that their funding policy was destroying participatory efforts.

To overcome these difficulties and extend project cycles, some agencies resort to linking successive micro projects 'thereby beginning a sustainable and durable process' and forcing agency personnel to subvert the institutional structures within which they work in order to achieve more participatory goals.

5   RECOMMENDATIONS

The field research in Sri Lanka set out to test the hypothesis that active consultation with and participation by crisis-affected populations in measures to assist them is, according to aid recipients and other key stakeholders, both feasible and beneficial. It was established that, assuming that environmental conditions are sufficiently conducive, aid implementers have appropriate skills and capacity, donors are supportive and aid recipients favourable, more active and meaningful participation is feasible within the field of humanitarian action. However, recognising that the use of more participatory approaches presents many challenges, the following recommendations are made:

5.1   ORGANISATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

i.   Humanitarian actors must develop strong organisational consensus on the underlying approach, expectations, and intentions of participation, fully discussed and negotiated with not just staff, donors and partners, but also with aid recipients. Viewing beneficiaries as dependent, passive victims is unlikely to promote participation and agencies need to reflect on their conceptualisations of and attitudes to aid recipients, both of which have a profound influence on individual staff conduct and organisational objectives and strategies.

ii.   To promote greater openness, responsiveness and flexibility, humanitarian actors need to ensure that their adherence to participatory values is reflected in organisational culture, systems, structures, procedures and training.

iii. Humanitarian actors need to decide the extent to which they are rigidly committed to humanitarian principles since participatory work cannot be undertaken without some engagement with political actors, if only to secure access to, and the safety of, civilians.

iv. The attitude and skills of agency personnel are central to the way crisis-affected populations respond to participatory measures. Particular attention needs to be paid to management style, staff selection and training. Some agencies have prioritised technical and managerial competencies over skills that are more useful for encouraging participation. These include inter-personal skills; social and cultural sensitivity and awareness; a commitment to egalitarian and democratic principles; an openness to listen, learn and change; and an under-standing of participatory methodology and methods.

5.2   DONOR CONSIDERATIONS

i. A partnership approach to donor–implementing-agency relations will be more fruitful in promoting participation than traditional hierarchical relationships.

ii. Donors seeking evidence of beneficiary participation need to avoid the use or imposition of undermining procedures such as short funding cycles; rigid external evaluations and inflexible logframes.

5.3   CONTEXTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

i. A thorough understanding of local society is fundamental to participation, where socio-economic and power differences between beneficiaries (especially in camps) may be subtle and complex. Agencies need to avoid generic and stereotypic notions of household,

community, ethnicity, religion, class, gender and generation. Rigorous application of participatory social analysis will increase the likelihood of equitable, participatory programmes by revealing:

- social units and categories operative at the local level;
- decision making, power and conflict;
- dynamics of gender and age/generation;
- patterns of vulnerability;
- assets, resource access and control;
- social networks and systems of support;
- coping and survival strategies.

ii. In Sri Lanka participation tends to be stronger at the household level. Agencies need to be creative about bringing households together around common interests, assessing the modes of organisation and action preferred by different population sections rather than introducing standardised CBO structures.

iii. Where appropriate, humanitarian agencies need to explore why men are not well integrated into participatory programmes and develop more imaginative and effective strategies to incorporate them – eg, the introduction of more work-based interventions and more active efforts to counteract high levels of alcohol use.

iv. Humanitarian agencies need to understand local mechanisms of coping and disaster management to ensure beneficiary participation supports rather than undermines them. It should not be assumed that participatory processes, that are supposed to build on local insight, knowledge, expertise and skills, are inherently responsive to local coping strategies. By definition, humanitarian action occurs in contexts in which civilian livelihoods are under severe pressure and this must be factored into programme planning.

5.4   TRANSPARENCY OF APPROACH

i.   Humanitarian actors need to acknowledge the inherent tension between prescriptive policies and mandates, and the expectations of affected populations that agencies will respond to their perceived needs. The inability to respond to beneficiary priorities prevents moves towards more transformative approaches.

ii. Humanitarian actors must decide the extent to which they are able or willing to respond to beneficiary-articulated priorities and be transparent when these fall outside their mandate or strategic/ country plan.

iii. The use of PRA is far from synonymous with participation. Humanitarian actors should use PRA tools and methods in an open and collaborative way and not prescriptively to obtain information, forge consensus, or comply with donor requirements.

iv. Participation should never be imposed. Humanitarian actors need to be transparent at every stage about the requirements and potential consequences (adverse as well as beneficial) of participatory programming. It is vital to agree with beneficiaries at the outset whether there really is value added in introducing participatory approaches.

v.   Humanitarian actors must coordinate and collaborate to avoid confusion and cynicism among aid recipients who, in some areas of Sri Lanka, are involved in a host of interventions.

vi. In an acute and large-scale emergency, where participatory approaches may not always be useful or feasible, agencies must be systematic about consultation and timely provision of accurate information to beneficiaries on issues that affect them. These are important instruments through which humanitarian actors demonstrate their respect, and through which beneficiaries can gain a greater sense of control over their lives.

vii. Participatory approaches must be accompanied by a continuous process of risk assessment, examining the situation of both beneficiaries and staff. 'Almost anything an agency does when it intervenes in a conflict area has a potential impact on protection, positive and negative, that can render people more or less vulnerable.'[93] The costs must be calculated and decisions made through informed debate.

5.5   CREATING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

i.   Humanitarian actors need to create, insofar as possible, an enabling environment in which empowerment of crisis-affected civilians does not lead to resistance and hostility by other sections of the population, the government, non-state actors, or the military and security forces.

ii. Close and developed relationships between aid providers and aid recipients are a prerequisite for participatory work. More time and attention needs to be given to building relationships, informal and formal, between individual agency staff and beneficiaries, requiring continuous engagement. High turnover of (expatriate) staff undermines participatory work.

iii. Agencies need to support the process of participation through a strong commitment to careful appraisal of potential partners, capacity-building and monitoring. Although working with local and national partners is an important step towards strengthening civil society, international agencies should not assume this will automatically facilitate participation, given political, economic and other pressures in a context of civil conflict in particular.

iv. Where engagement with the government makes it impossible to programme in a participatory way, agencies should accept this, or challenge the status quo.

5.6   BENEFICIARY PRIORITIES AND OWNERSHIP

i.   Effective participatory assessments of priorities and needs at the outset will mitigate against a lack of beneficiary ownership and a decline in beneficiary participation due to the low priority that affected populations might give to certain outputs.

ii. The lack of aid-recipient interest in increasing participation in humanitarian projects in Sri Lanka might diminish if programming were more explicitly directed towards protection, security and related issues.

iii. Positive evidence regarding participatory programmes with children and youth in Sri Lanka suggests that collective mobilisation of the young may be easier and provide a useful starting-point for the mobilisation of the wider community[94], so crucial to sustainability and outreach.

iv. Humanitarian actors should establish effective baseline information and ensure systematic participatory monitoring and evaluation to test the validity of what for many is an article of faith based on the intuitive belief that participatory projects are more efficient and effective and respond more directly to beneficiary concerns.

v.   Humanitarian agencies need to move away from 'blueprint' programming, which undermines participatory work.

vi. In Sri Lanka, initiatives framed as psychosocial have the highest level of beneficiary participation. This may be due to their focus on human and societal development, a tendency to embrace notions of empowerment as a means of overcoming adversity and their holistic view of civilian need that allows measures to be built around beneficiary rather than agency priorities.

vii. In general, projects that provide beneficiaries with a more meaningful role than the provision of manual labour are more highly rated. Beneficiaries trained as volunteer animators or who assume roles in CBO management value the competencies they develop which they can apply to improve both their own and their community's condition and circumstances.

5.7   ADVOCACY

i.   Advocacy efforts need to be grounded in the perspectives and concerns of crisis-affected populations. Agencies who engage in advocacy without also providing direct support risk a loss of credibility with those populations.

ii. Where empowerment poses a threat to personal safety, advocacy and protection should come to the fore.

Notes

1   Humanitarian Action is defined broadly by ALNAP as 'Assistance, protection, and advocacy actions undertaken on an impartial basis in response to human needs resulting from complex political emergencies and natural hazards' (ALNAP 2002).

2   'To study problems of displaced persons and to propose solutions conforming to justice and to the dignity of the human person' Constitution of the Eastern Rehabilitation Organization (ERO) based in Batticaloa District, 1985 and as amended in 1989 and 1996. See also, WFP's Mission Statement (p6), which commits the agency to a participatory approach.

3   INTRAC (2001) 'Research Priorities for ALNAP's Global Study on Consultation with and Participation by Beneficiary and Affected Populations in Planning, Managing, Monitoring and Evaluating Humanitarian Aid'.

4   We note that the study is intended as a review and synthesis of perspectives and practice in relation to participation and not as an evaluation of the effectiveness or impact of individual projects or agencies.

5   Obstacles to participatory work experienced by humanitarian agencies (relating to access, gatekeepers, time and logistical constraints) were encountered in some degree by the research team also. At no point was it possible for aid recipients and crisis-affected populations to take control of the research process. On the contrary, it was felt that to a large extent, the nature and scope of the research was not well understood by communities visited, despite careful and repeated explanation. It should be noted that, in Sri Lanka, refusing to attend a meeting on any topic when 'called' by a high-status individual or group is not considered acceptable. Therefore, many of the people who attended meetings with the research team at the village level probably did so initially out of a sense of duty, even when they subsequently became

interested in and committed to the process. This is also likely to be true of most agency meetings in villages and camps in the areas studied.

6   The local branch of Caritas.

7   FORUT Norway runs a Campaign for Development and Solidarity

8   See for example Bastian, S. (1999) 'The Failure of State Formation, Identity Conflict and Civil Society Responses – The Case of Sri Lanka', University of Bradford Centre for Conflict Resolution, Working Paper 2, Department of Peace Studies; and Goodhand, J. (2001) *Conflict Assessments: Aid, conflict and peace building in Sri Lanka.* Conflict, Security and Development Group, Centre for Defence Studies, Kings College, London.

9   On the grounds that the study focused on humanitarian assistance provided to war-affected populations in the north and east of Sri Lanka, the historical discussion in this section of the report is limited to the ethnic conflict between the Tamils and Sinhalese, which has concentrated mainly in these areas. However, in practice, conflict in Sri Lanka is an island-wide phenomenon and arises from a profound crisis in state formation. We note in particular that there has been a major conflict in the south between different factions of the Sinhalese population, resulting from an uprising led by the JVP.

10   In 2000 a US Department of State report claimed that the conflict had caused the death of approximately 60,000 people. In 1997 the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies estimated that the total deaths from the conflict since 1983 were in the region of 78,000 to 100,000. Both figures are cited in *Armed Conflicts Report 2000*, <www.ploughshares.ca>.

11   <www.idpproject.org>

12   Sriskandarajah, D. (2002) 'The Migration-Development Nexus: Sri Lanka case study'. CDR, Denmark.

13   The Refugee Council, Sri Lankan Project (2002) 'Sri Lanka: Return to Uncertainty'. London, UK, p4.

14   Goodhand, J. (2001) *Conflict Assessments: Aid, conflict and peace building in Sri Lanka.* Conflict, Security and Development Group, Centre for Defence Studies, Kings College, London, p62.

[15] Haug, M. (2001) 'Combining Service Delivery and Advocacy within Humanitarian Agencies: experiences from the conflict in Sri Lanka'. International Working Paper 10.

[16] 'Listening to the Displaced/Listening to the Returned' research in the Vanni and Jaffna, Oxfam-GB and Save the Children UK

[17] Raga Alphonsus, Programme Manager, ZOA Refugee Care, Netherlands. Mannar (25 April 2002).

[18] Michael Lindenbauer, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR. Colombo (7 March 2002).

[19] Sunil Bastian, research fellow and consultant on social development, International Centre for Ethnic Studies. Colombo (6 March 2002).

[20] DANIDA 'Guide to the Preparation and Management of humanitarian assistance implemented by private organisations' pp 4–5. (August 2001).

[21] WFP Policy issues paper 'Participatory Approaches' presented to WFP Executive Board, p6. (October 2000).

[22] Donors often require an explicit commitment to participation in project proposals – as for example with UNHCR's Micro Project Proposal Form.

[23] See also INTRAC 'Participatory Tools for Food Security'. Draft report prepared for WFP.

[24] Donors such as DFID have played a leading role in promoting human rights and empowerment approaches within humanitarian action in Sri Lanka.

[25] Save The Children UK is one of the few agencies in Sri Lanka to have attempted to foster participation during this phase of humanitarian intervention by consulting its clients on their preferences in relation to relief items. Perceived needs included productive equipment and school supplies, items that are not normally included in relief packages. Project beneficiaries were very positive about having been consulted and in the main felt that their choice of relief items was effective. Local staff in Jaffna generally approved of the participatory model used. However, the consultation process took three to four months, and was very labour intensive and hence limited project coverage. The

approach had to be abandoned during the 2000 emergency when there was no time or opportunity for such levels of consultation.

26 Steve Hollingworth, Country Director, Care International. Colombo (5 March 2002).

27 'The pass system has always been our biggest problem. Just to go to Kandy you had to give three photos (that's Rs100) and three forms (another Rs30) to the camp officer for certification. He'd pass these papers to the GS for approval. Then they'd go to the camp police station. Another police station outside the camp would do an enquiry into your birth, life and everything. This could take days. Enquiries were done in order of application (using a token system) and the queues were very long. We'd often have to miss meals. When the enquiry was over, they'd inform the camp police station. They wouldn't tell us the results, but posted our names on a board outside their office. It sometimes took weeks for our names to appear. We got permission to leave for a set number of days and set dates, but they'd decided which days to give us and often the timing wasn't convenient. Whatever we asked for, they'd always give us less. Often the pass was for an emergency – we'd end up missing really important events like weddings and funerals. The police enforce the pass system in the name of protection. But even now we're not allowed to go to Anurhadapura with a temporary pass. In emergencies, like accompanying someone to hospital, we have to find someone with a permanent pass to go on our behalf. This means paying Rs3–4,000 a day, as well as their expenses …' Quote taken from Focus Group Discussion with women's empowerment group (SEED/Oxfam-GB) Sithamparapuram camp, Vavuniya.

28 Hart, J. 'Participation of Conflict-affected Children in Humanitarian Assistance Programming: learning from eastern Sri Lanka'. Unpublished draft report for CIDA, Colombo. (2002).

29 For example, local Tamil militia groups allied to the government have gained control over the distribution of rations delivered from Colombo. In many areas they are able to use the power this gives them to elicit support from the local populace, for many of whom this food is a lifeline. It is unclear to what extent such practices are known about or endorsed by the government.

30 In general, there is far less humanitarian activity in areas under LTTE control than in areas administered by the government. This is partly because the government makes it difficult for agencies to operate in these areas and partly

because the political wing of the LTTE negotiates the terms and conditions by which humanitarian organisations operate in its territory and many agencies find these unacceptable. Importantly, the evidence suggests that the LTTE is also making a concerted effort to assume control of local aid agencies in government-held areas.

[31] Because government provides rations as an automatic benefit for all Sri Lankan families below the poverty line and all those affected by displacement, relief is perceived by civilians to be a legitimate claim of all vulnerable citizens. As expressed by one agency staff member, 'aid is viewed as an entitlement and culturally this goes against the idea of participation,' Michael Lindenbauer, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR. Colombo (7 March 2002). Indeed, many civilians make a clear distinction between aid given by the government (an entitlement) and aid given by the international community (a matter of luck, or fortune).

[32] Kazuhiro Kaneko, Programme Officer. Vavuniya (27 April 2002).

[33] Newman, J. (2002) 'IDP Experiences from Resettlement and Relocation in Mannar and Vavuniya Districts – a qualitative study report', 2nd draft. DRC Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme, Sri Lanka, March. p5.

[34] The production and sale of kassipu has become a vital survival strategy in areas subject to conflict-induced destitution, but its consumption is believed to be linked with domestic violence, perceived by many as a causal factor in the inordinately high levels of suicide and attempted suicide among women.

[35] Jeevan Thiagarajah, director, the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies.

[36] Raga Alphonsus, Programme Manager, ZOA Refugee Care. Mannar (25 April 2002).

[37] Reticence about participation among poorer sections of the population even extends to representation, since respondents in several communities in Batticaloa stated that they did not see a particular need for self-representation in negotiations with government or humanitarian agencies. They argued that they generally benefit more when represented by educated and articulate members of their community because these people can normally elicit greater respect and hence have a greater chance of ensuring that community demands and expectations are met. Some felt that when a priest or other local leader acts

on their behalf, this prevents rivalry and disputes between community members.

38 In other words, beneficiaries are confident about citing examples of concrete effects of participatory processes, but are less concerned about the nature of the participatory process itself and have no interest whatsoever in participation as an abstract, analytical concept.

39 Thanamunai Colony (22 March 2002).

40 Meeting with 10 women representatives of IDP camps. Jaffna peninsula (7 April 2002).

41 As one senior member of the humanitarian community remarked, the very enthusiastic agency reaction to the Oxfam-GB and Save the Children UK 'Listening to the Displaced/Listening to the Returned' initiative was notable not least because it revealed just how unaccustomed agencies really are to listening to clients.

42 M.L.S. Dias, Relief and Rehabilitation Officer, SEDEC (Caritas Sri Lanka). Colombo (5 March 2002).

43 This term was used quite frequently by agency personnel. Discussions with the Tamil-speaking members of the research team revealed that the connotations of this term in English are possibly more negative and condescending than is intended in Tamil.

44 The GS at Sathiyakkadu Junction, Chulipram, (interviewed 6 April 2002) insisted that it is problematic when agencies attempt to use a different set of criteria.

45 Shanthi Sachithanandam (1996) 'Participatory Approaches to Development under Civil War Conditions. The Experience in Batticaloa, Sri Lanka 1991–95' in Bastian, S & N Bastian (eds) *Assessing Participation, a debate from South Asia.* Delhi, India : Konark Publishers, p191.

46 Newman, J (2002) 'IDP Experiences from Resettlement and Relocation in Mannar and Vavuniya Districts – a qualitative study report' 2nd draft. DRC Rehabilitation and Capacity Building Programme, Sri Lanka (March).

47 Interview with male shopkeeper, married, mid-thirties, in Kanthapuram resettlement village (26 April 2002).

48 Jason Hart (2002) 'Participation of Conflict-affected Children in Humanitarian Assistance Programming, learning from eastern Sri Lanka'. Unpublished draft report for CIDA, Colombo.

49 To cite an example of the use of PRA: in the Save the Children UK income generation project, a PRA ranking system was applied with 126 pre-selected families who were chosen because they all had children under the age of 18. The organisation collected baseline information on the families by doing a livelihood analysis, which allowed for screening, identification of vulnerable groups and establishing a rapport with the people. Daily routine diagrams and income and expenditure flow diagrams were used to analyse work and income obstacles. The families were also asked questions about their loan and debt history and what they had used any previous loans for. Although not traditionally a component of the relief package, income generation was an important perceived need of clients. Women and men were asked to identify what they considered to be suitable income-generating activities and a range of appropriate productive tools was included in the resultant relief catalogue.

50 Patrick Vandenbruaene, Humanitarian Advisor in the UN Office of the Resident Coordinator. Interview, Colombo (7 March 2002).

51 Jim Worrall, Head of UNHCR Field Office. Trincomalee (3 April 2002).

52 Take for example the process of vulnerability analysis, which can be extremely fraught. In the north and east, moveable resources and assets (for example, jewellery, remitted income, bicycles, animals or savings) are exchanged, gifted, or sold for food, transport, or protection against forced recruitment and other violations. In addition to these assets, individuals in self-settled and resettled populations in particular revealed to us that they have access to substantial funds through remittances sent by relatives living in Diaspora communities in wealthy countries such as France, the US or the UK. Some of these people had also received assistance from humanitarian agencies. Undoubtedly some camp inhabitants also have access to remitted income, although the source tends to be unskilled labour in the Middle East, which yields far lower rates.

In the main these resources are generally hidden, not least out of fear of theft, extortion, kidnapping, blackmail, or murder. In areas under LTTE

influence there is the additional risk that individuals and families with assets will be subject to informal taxation. Thus, because of the need for secrecy, it can be extremely difficult for agencies to establish who really is vulnerable economically and in need of humanitarian support. Some staff admitted to resorting to 'proxy' indicators such as the state of the dwelling, but people may have many reasons for allowing these structures to fall into disrepair and not all of these reasons are connected with poverty.

53 Jeevan Thiagarajah, Director, Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (4 March 2002).

54 UNHCR funded the whole programme, with the exception of the housing component, stipulating that grant recipients must give 10 per cent of the total value in labour. WFP provided additional support in the form of food-for-work.

55 The ZOA houses were built according to designs done by the agency, each family choosing its preferred model. The bricks were manufactured on the spot by beneficiary teams with six people in each team. A team would produce 1,000 bricks a day. In addition to making cement moulds for wells, digging pits and constructing foundations and moulds for latrines, beneficiaries also built the foundations for the houses, and helped skilled carpenters and masons construct the walls. The government has provided Rs 52,000 per household in various grants to help cover the cost of settlement and WFP has allocated dry food rations in a food-for-work scheme. The groups were formed largely through self-selection, although ZOA insisted that at least two vulnerable families (for example, widow-headed, or single parent) be included in each cluster.

56 Patrick Vandenbruaene, Humanitarian Advisor in the UN Office of the Resident Coordinator. Interview, Colombo (7 March 2002).

57 An INTRAC-SAP workshop (held in Colombo, March 2002) on monitoring and evaluating empowerment, attended by 25 national and international NGO staff members, revealed rather weak knowledge of the basic M&E concepts. One of the main problems seemed to be a poor understanding of the original programme design and objectives, possibly indicating low levels of involvement of field staff in planning.

58 Jim Worrall, Head of UNHCR Field Office. Trincomalee (3 April 2002).

59 This phenomenon manifested itself in many ways during interviews and focus group discussions with respondents. Among other things, people mentioned: the inability to earn income, feed or protect one's family; the lack of privacy in overcrowded camps; the disappearance and failure to learn the fate of loved ones; and not knowing what the future holds, or how to plan for it.

60 Focus group discussion with six women in Araly Amman Kovilady, Araly East (6 April 2002).

61 Focus group with seven female mines-awareness animators aged 16–18 years. Siruppiddy (11 April 2002).

62 Jason Hart (2002) 'Participation of Conflict-affected Children in Humanitarian Assistance Programming, learning from eastern Sri Lanka'. Unpublished draft report for CIDA, Colombo.

63 Young members of the Siruppiddy children's club, for example, were clear that the use of imaginative pedagogic methods such as drama, role- play and visual arts had made a tangible difference to their understanding and awareness of the risks associated with UXOs and land mines. They described the ways in which they had utilised the knowledge acquired through this programme to improve personal and community safety. Focus group discussion, Siruppiddy (11 April 2002).

64 Focus group discussion, women's group. Sithamparapuram camp (24 April 2002).

65 Focus group discussion, women's group. Sithamparapuram camp (24 April 2002).

66 Focus Group discussion, women's group. Sithamparapuram camp (24 April 2002).

67 Jason Hart (2002) 'Participation of Conflict-affected Children in Humanitarian Assistance Programming, learning from eastern Sri Lanka'. Unpublished draft report for CIDA, Colombo.

68 Jason Hart (2002) 'Participation of Conflict-affected Children in Humanitarian Assistance Programming, learning from eastern Sri Lanka'. Unpublished draft report for CIDA, Colombo.

69   That said, Patrick Vandenbruaene, Humanitarian Advisor in the UN Office of the Resident Coordinator in Colombo, commented: 'Participation is in the jargon, in the meetings, and in the literature – but when you are in the field it is hard to say exactly what you are doing to get actual participation.' Interview, Colombo (7 March 2002).

70   For example, much of the work of those agencies that are committed to more participatory approaches (thereby excluding UNDP, MSF and ICRC) follows this model. This includes the majority of the programmes that are operated or supported by international agencies such as WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, Oxfam-GB, Terre des Hommes, World University Services Canada, the Save the Children Alliance, ACF, GTZ, Care International, SEDEC (Caritas Sri Lanka), and the YMCA movement, among others.

71   Patrick Vandenbruaene, Humanitarian Adviser, UN Office of the Resident Coordinator, Sri Lanka. Colombo (7 March 2002).

72   SEDEC is Caritas Sri Lanka.

73   M L S Dias, Relief and Rehabilitation Officer, SEDEC. Colombo (5 March 2002).

74   Interview with male shopkeeper, married, mid-thirties. Kanthapuram (28 April 2002).

75   Group discussion Savukkady village, near Batticaloa (19 March 2002).

76   Focus Group Save the Children club members (29 children, boys and girls, aged 6 to 14). Siruppidy (16 April 2002).

77   WFP 1994.

78   K K Ranjan, Senior Training and Programme Advisor, Danish Refugee Council. Anuradhapura (26 March 2002).

79   To be accurate, agency personnel were not uniform in their beliefs about the potential for children's participation in the given cultural context. One senior staff member, for example, expressed the view that local people are not yet ready to work in such a way that children become agents for solving their own problems.

Others acknowledge the difficulties due to culture but maintain that it is possible for the young to take up such a role.

80 'Since children have hardly any means to enforce their right to participation, they will always be dependent on the approval or allowance by the adult. We know that children cannot participate when adults refuse their participation. We therefore have to play an active and facilitating role in ensuring children's participation with very little support …' Taken from 'Children's Participation in Conflict Situations: A Pre-Study Project of Save the Children (Norway)-Sri Lanka'. (January 2000).

81 Jason Hart (2002) 'Participation of Conflict-affected Children in Humanitarian Assistance Programming, Learning from Eastern Sri Lanka. Unpublished draft report for CIDA, Colombo.

82 K Mahendran, Relief/Logistics Officer, Save the Children UK. Jaffna (15 April, 2002)

83 The Refugee Council, Sri Lankan Project (2002) 'Sri Lanka: Return to Uncertainty'. London, UK, p16.

84 It is worth noting that religious figures have status and authority within their community and, therefore, are often poorly placed to facilitate participation since people would wish to defer constantly to their ideas and dictates.

85 In one women's credit society, in Ambikaipalamkottam a relocation village in Vavuniya, income-generating activities include poultry-rearing, farming, cigar-making, mat-weaving, oil manufacture, rope making and shops. The women are well organised and have regular society meetings. They consider themselves to be activists and scoffed at the ineffectual efforts of men in the village to organise their own CBO.

86 See Jason Hart (2002) 'Participation of Conflict-affected Children in Humanitarian Assistance Programming, Learning from Eastern Sri Lanka'. Unpublished draft report for CIDA, Colombo.

87 Further, the top positions in local NGOs are commonly occupied by Tamils from Jaffna, who are often high-caste. This causes bitterness in Batticaloa and Vavuniya among the local Tamil population and 'up-country' estate Tamils. In

these areas Tamils from Jaffna (whatever their caste) tend to be regarded as an elitist, self-serving, group.

88 Out-migration has been facilitated by strong family ties with and support from the Tamil Diaspora in Europe, the US, Canada, Australia and a range of other countries and regions. Most of those people with resources and a tertiary education have left the peninsula.

89 The Japanese government, for example, has included 1.9 million US dollars for UNHCR, and 355,000 US dollars for ICRC in 2000, as well as vehicles for MSF in 1995, the rehabilitation of an operating theatre in Batticaloa, funds for Sewa Lanka for the construction of wells in 1999 and funds for low-income people in the north and east to improve their housing.

90 'In 1998 bilateral donor commitments for emergency aid amounted to $17.8 million,' in Goodhand, J. *Conflict Assessments: Aid, conflict and peace building in Sri Lanka.* Conflict, Security and Development Group, Centre for Defence Studies, Kings College, London (2001:62).

91 Although not one of the major donors, DFID plays a proactive and influential role in the humanitarian sector in Sri Lanka, giving implementing partners the freedom to be experimental in their work and maintaining a 'hands-off' approach. Penny Thorpe, Second Secretary (Development) DFID. Sri Lanka, Colombo (6 March 2002).

92 Jeevan Thiagarajah, director, the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (6 March, 2002).

93 James Darcy, Oxfam-GB internal working paper on protection. Oxford (3 July 2001).

94 Jason Hart (2002) 'Participation of Conflict-affected Children in Humanitarian Assistance Programming, Learning from Eastern Sri Lanka. Unpublished draft report for CIDA, Colombo.

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