

SRI LANKA

RED CROSS POST-CONFLICT RECOVERY PROGRAMME

INDIAN HOUSING PROJECT

INTERNAL REVIEW

MARCH 2014

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Abbreviations

CM	Community mobiliser
DS	Divisional Secretary
GN	Grama Niladhari (official of a grama niladhari division, a subunit of a divisional secretariat)
GoI	Government of India
IA	Implementing agency
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHC	Indian High Commission
IHP	Indian Housing Project
LKR	Sri Lankan Rupee
PCRCP	Post-Conflict Recovery Programme
RC	Red Cross
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SLRCS	Sri Lanka Red Cross Society
TO	Technical officer

Executive Summary

Generally the Project appeared to be meeting its objectives and delivering in an effective and efficient manner. The Project came across as well accepted and appreciated by both beneficiaries and stakeholders. The review confirmed there was a need for supporting the current case load of families returning to the affected areas. In addition this case load continues to grow as more families return and there appeared to be still significant needs in the areas visited.

Lessons had been learned from the earlier parts of the Project around beneficiary selection, implementation, etc., and where possible these have been incorporated into the Project to improve delivery. There have also been several initiatives with internal and external stakeholders to review project challenges and how they can best be resolved. Where possible the Project has been flexible and progressive enough to accommodate these changes. Coordination between the Project and Divisional Secretaries, etc., was also observed to be good, based on lessons learnt and relationship building.

The review team noticed some risks to the project. For example:

- Based on the current planning and trends in actual delivery, the project may face challenges to meet its targets for 2014 or the current end of project date of September 2015. One of key reasons for this risk is delaying of fund release from the donor side.
- There is a growing risk around the availability of material resources and skilled labour to complete the houses.
- While the majority of beneficiaries will complete their houses, there is expected to be a small percentage who will find it difficult to complete them due to their lack of resources and over stretching their financial capacity.
- In addition, after four years the “old” PCRCP project still has houses to complete. This is a significant indicator of the difficulties which could occur towards the end of the current project.

The vast majority of beneficiaries saw the house as a ‘once in a life time opportunity’ and were prepared to make considerable sacrifices to complete the house to the highest standard they could afford which is above the minimum requirements accepted by the Project. However, this is often at the cost of entering into debt.

The owner driven methodology was generally well appreciated by all, especially the Divisional Secretaries who were able to compare it with previous less successful contractor/agency driven approaches. However, the owner driven approach has clearly put the burden of risk with the beneficiary, who are extremely vulnerable with very low capacity, in terms of mitigating cost inflation, or monitoring on availability and quality of materials and labour, etc. Over the past 20 months costs have increased and some materials and labour are in short supply and the Project has had limited opportunity to correct this. This occurs while many beneficiaries are struggling to meet their own daily living needs. This struggle to meet daily needs and build their own house at the same time has been exacerbated by a combination of price escalation and lack of sufficient livelihoods.

Beneficiary selection is in the final stages, but challenges remain, so it is still particularly important that the team continues to work to the letter of the IHP Operational Manual. This is especially the case around the criteria that the family has permanently resettled back in the area.

There are gaps in the Project for beneficiaries and the wider community around livelihoods and community infrastructure,. The review team remarked that the Project had made little if any impact on improving the livelihoods of the beneficiaries. It is recorded that out of 20,000 families included in the appeal, the actual funding secured would only be sufficient to cover livelihoods support for 1,359. Out of these 1,359, some were to receive vocational training in building to be a benefit to their own house and the wider programme.

The project is now entering a critical phase. As such, it is vital that detailed planning is carried out to show how the project will complete, what the exit strategy is and what the project's legacy will be. Operational and reputational risks must be clearly identified with all stakeholders and mitigation measures identified, agreed and planned.

Note: The financial efficiency of the Project was outside the terms of this review.

Background

This report records the findings of an internal technical review of the Indian Housing Project in Sri Lanka as part of the Red Cross Post Conflict Recovery Programme. Construction of new houses and repairing damaged houses are the key components of the programme.

The terms of reference of the review are held in Annex 1.

Methodology

The review team consisted of

- Patrick Elliott, Shelter Coordinator IFRC Asia Pacific Zone
- Ela Serdaroglu, Senior Officer IFRC Shelter and Settlements Department

They were supported and accompanied by Ganga Kariyawasam, Senior PMER Officer, Kukan Sinniah, Project Support Officer and Kananathapillai Thiruthanigasalam, Senior Monitoring Officer during the entire exercise.

The team undertook a visit to Sri Lanka between 23-30 March 2014. Following a briefing in Colombo by the SLRCS and IFRC, the team visited Project sites in Jaffna, Killinochchi, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Mannar between 24-27 March 2014, followed by a workshop on 28 March 2014 with engineers, monitoring officers and program managers of SLRCS and IFRC.

The Project review methods employed were direct observation, interviews with community members (beneficiary and non-beneficiary), Staff (technical officers, engineers, community mobilizers, PMER and database officers, monitoring officers, etc.), government representatives (district secretary (Jaffna), divisional secretary and divisional assistant planning directors), briefings by key Staff and reading key background and reference documents.

Discussions with most of the Staff and the authorities have predominantly taken place in English, however due to the language barrier, translation had to be provided by Tamil-speaking Staff members to engage with the community members and with some of the technical officers and community mobilizers.

Constraints and limitations

The following were some of the common constraints and limitations of the Project review.

- Time in the field was limited to about 3 days each to cover one district per day. This constraint was somewhat offset by the fact that one of the reviewers (PE) had visited the program previously in February 2013.
- Background information - there were no limitations on access to programme information, the only limitation would be based on what information could be reviewed in the time period available.
- The budget and expenditure of the programme were not considered in the review.
- Using Staff to interview community and stakeholders.

Interviews

A total of 57 formal interviews were held with the authorities, project team and beneficiaries across the project area.

Participants	Semi structured interviews		Total
	Mannar, Mullaitivu, Killinochchi	Jaffna, Vavuniya	
District Secretary		1	1
Divisional Secretaries	6	4	10
Engineer, Technical Officers, Community Mobilisers, managers	5	6	11
Households	16	19	35
Total	27	30	57

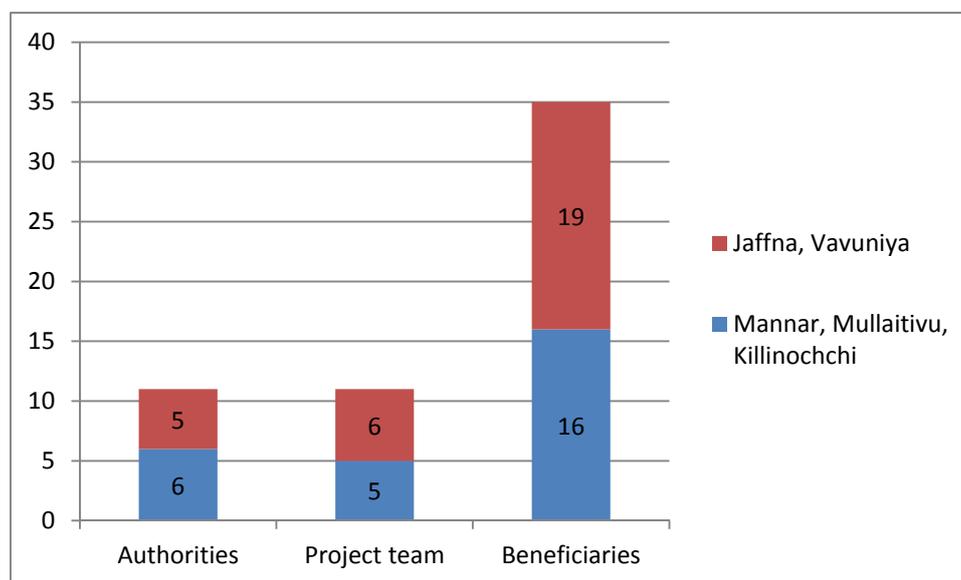


Figure 1 Distribution of interviews per stakeholder group

Key Observations and Recommendations

1. Project design, progress and management

1.1. Actual versus planned progress

- Based on the latest monitoring data up to July 2014 a graphical analysis of progress against time is attached on the following page. This accounts for the revised total of 18,000 new houses. The current plan is based on all 1st instalments for 18,000 houses being issued by January 2015 and a subsequent 8 months to complete each house.
- Based on the assumption that on average each household takes 8 months to complete the house the current actual progress, planned activities and corresponding variances are recorded below for July 2014:

Instalments issued # Jul 2014	Actual	Planned	Variance
1 st	13,128		
2 nd	10,002	10,351	349 3.37%
3 rd	8,355	9,391	1,036 11.03%
4 th	5,331	7,230	1,899 26.27%

- As can be seen from the attached graph the 2nd and 3rd instalments are not increasing at the same rate as the 1st instalments,
- The rate of the 4th instalment is significantly less than the 3rd instalment, as reflected in the large variance between actual and planned of 1,899.
- The 4th instalment progress is at an uneven pace. For example the monitoring shows that from May to October 2013 there were 1,000 houses completed but from October to December 2013 there was a dramatic jump to 4,000 houses completed. The same trend appears to be continuing in 2014 with relatively little progress in completed houses since January 2014.
- If the gap between houses started and incomplete continues to increase this will put extra strain on the ability of the programme to monitor beneficiaries to make sure the beneficiaries stay within their financial capacity and can complete the houses.
- It's understood that some of the variance recorded maybe be due to changes in project priorities and operation plans some of which were based on donor requests.
-  Based on the current progress the target of 12,000 completed houses by the end of 2014 will be a challenge as could be the overall completion of the project in 2015.
- Based on the completion of 4,000 houses at the end of 2013 the average duration for the house to complete was 9.5 months. However, currently that running average has increased to 13 months per house.
- The 1st instalment can be driven by the Project, i.e. as quickly as the Project team goes through the beneficiary selection and verification process the 1st instalment can be issued. However, the average rates at which the 2nd and 3rd instalments are issued could be influenced by a combination of factors such as:
 - the capacity of the Project teams to manage, monitor, support and deliver;
 - the capacity of households to complete the houses within the 8 months;
 - the capacity of the market to absorb this amount of building activity with the supply of labour and materials, logistics, etc.
 - the efficiency of donor in delivering instalments on time.

-  In August it is planned to have an active caseload of around 9,750. Based on the ratios of the number of project staff against the number of houses being supervised to meet the requirements of the IHP Operations Manual, this means there should already be at least 97 technical officers and 16 engineers working on the project (plus the community mobilisers, etc.).

Recommendations

- The Project teams should work towards having a more even profile of instalment delivery. The variance between the 1st and 4th instalments must be reduced.
- Teams should ensure that enough support is given to beneficiaries across all instalments to make sure they all stay within their financial means and can complete the house in time.
- Recommend to re-plan the final months and perhaps reduce the number of 1st instalments being issued until such time as the variance between 1st and 4th instalments is closed to what is a manageable level.
- The project team must be of sufficient size and capacity and should be robustly managed to meet the requirements set out in the IHP Operational Manual.
- The donor should be encouraged to release instalments on time, by objectively showing the bottlenecks faced by the project team and beneficiaries as direct consequences of any delays.

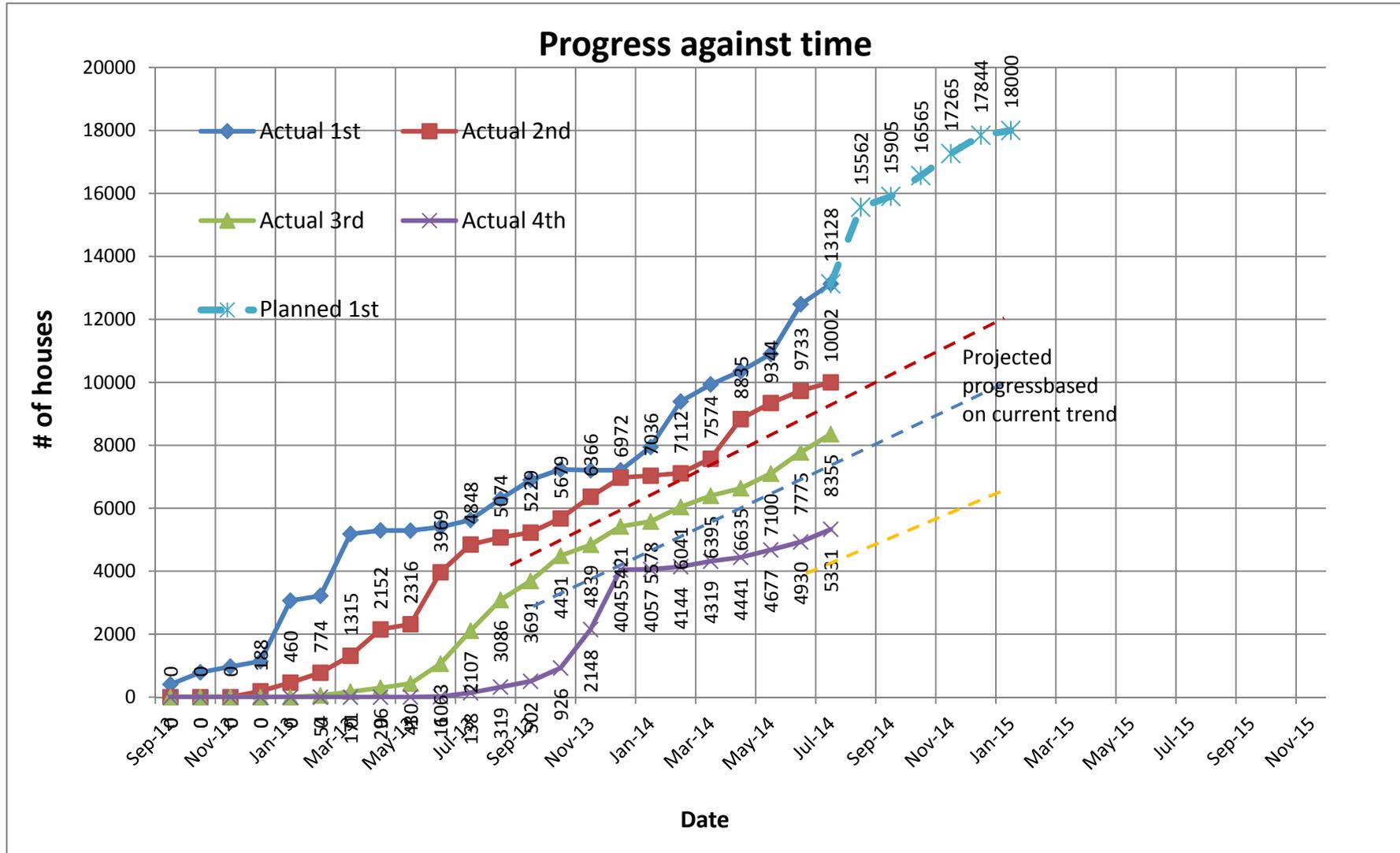


Figure 2 Project progress-actual and projected

1.2. The challenge of incomplete houses

- According to engineers and beneficiaries, in early 2013, the actual cost of the basic lockable house option was varying in a price range of LKR 700,000 to 850,000, while the value of the grant issued was of LKR 550,000.
- By late 2013 it was reported that the most vulnerable beneficiaries were finding it difficult to complete the houses as per the existing bill of quantities since they were unable to make any contributions in terms of labour force.
- During the Monitoring Committee, IHC, of September 04 to 12, 2013 it was noted that ‘not much serious effort is evident on cost reduction, though the current cost is in the region of LKR 750,000 to 850,000 -- 2 to 3 lakh [LKR 200,000 to 300,000] more than Gol contribution for a standard 550 sq. ft. ‘Unfortunately not much is visible on the site or in the houses coming up or the families thanking IAs for saving money. The usual argument is that the home owners do not accept ideas/suggestions’¹.
-  Various initiatives were undertaken to try and reduce the cost of house through changes in the design, materials, etc. One of the key initiatives was the “Workshop for Stakeholders” held on 24-25 Oct 2013. The basic objective of that workshop was to ‘find means to reduce the cost of construction, to mitigate rising costs of construction material / labour and reworking bills of quantities and assisting struggling beneficiaries to complete the houses’.
- In that workshop various cost saving initiatives were recommended which could allow all beneficiaries to build the house for the value of LKR 550,000.
- However, based on the field visits for this report it was observed that not all these cost saving initiatives were being implemented and generally the final house was still costing the beneficiary 100,000 to 200,000 more than the grant. This in itself is not necessarily a problem provided the beneficiary is well aware of the extra costs and can actually afford to complete the house.
- In most cases observed the Project staff said the community would not accept all the cost saving initiatives, such as, reducing the wall height by one foot or the use precast concrete door and window frames, even though it was cheaper. Some beneficiaries would use gable roofs other others still preferred the more expensive hipped roofs.
- Ultimately the beneficiaries have a choice to either build the minimum standard house for 550,000 or pay extra for their own improvements above the minimum, such as, using quality timber for doors and windows.
- The risk to the Project is that some households are making improvements above the minimum house design which are beyond their current means. In some cases this is resulting in delays in completion of their houses and subsequent overall Project delays.
- It is up to the Project team to support the beneficiaries in making informed decisions about what they want and what they can afford while also considering the operational limitations of the Project. According to the IHP Operations Manual *‘each beneficiary may adjust the standard design with the assistance of the technical staff to suit their individual needs, within the parameters of the budget and minimum standards’*.
- Based on experience some Staff said 30% would take 8 months to complete, 40% would take 14 months, 25% would take 18 months and 5% would struggle to complete at all.

¹ Kirtee Shah, A brief report to the Monitoring Committee, Indian High Commission, IAs and others concerned on my visit to Sri Lanka on Sept 04 to 12, 2013

- Based on experience some Staff said : *65% were Type 1-2 houses and 15 to 20% of them will struggle to complete, 25% are Type 3-4 houses and 25% - 10% of them will struggle to complete.*
- Some staff also said: 40% could complete with the normal level of technical and financial support, 40% needed extra support, 20% found it very difficult to complete and perhaps a percentage of these will not be able to complete at all – perhaps 5%.
- Based on this categorisation project should see about 20% building the minimum house unit for LKR 550,000 by using all the cost saving initiatives as required. However that is not the case for the houses visited which had all cost more than the LKR 550,000.
- The above does not exclude the risks on availability of labour, materials, etc.
-  The risk to the project is that there will be a % of households who take a long time (beyond the end of the project) and perhaps some who will never be able to complete (as is the case in the previous programme). Unless the donor agrees to an extension this possible delay will be at the expense of the project.

Recommendations

- There must be good community sensitisation and mobilisation around the project minimum requirements, budgetary management, etc. It is recommended to improve the capacity of the community mobilisers to support this process and ultimately help reduce the number of unfinished houses. Community mobilisers could be used more to support the engineers with activities such as providing financial literacy assistance on top of technical advice.
- Accurately profile the beneficiaries by capacity or locations where there are risks for incompleteness of houses, etc. For example single-headed households, multi-children households, etc., or by locations e.g. due to lack of materials, labour, water, etc. These higher risk beneficiaries can be mapped out in current and planned caseloads be given extra attention to support them so they don't go above their financial means and have access to sufficient materials and labour.
- For the future caseloads, who are the most at risk of incompleteness, it is advisable to make the cost-saving initiatives mandatory and to treat the house as a 'core house' solution which the beneficiary can then change in the future, in their own time and expense based on their capacity. In the short term they would at least get the minimum standard house (lockable house or lockable room) which is completed within the time frame of the project. This could be 5 to 10% of the total future case load.
- For those who already have started and who will not be able to complete within the time frame of the project, identify alternatives such as reverting back to the lockable room standard as a minimum.
- Another option could be to identify the most obvious hardship cases and to recruit a small team of 2 or 3 carpenters and labour to move around each house and complete to a minimum standard (which might be the lockable house or just lockable room). This would require a good level of communication with the wider community, hence, it would have to be obvious and broadly accepted by all, who the hardship cases in the community were. While this option would entail a certain expense, which will have to come out of the general budget, it might be cheaper than accepting a no cost extension of several months.
- An alternative to the above point would be to mobilise community members to carry out the work – project could provide the materials and they provide the labour. This could happen in locations where there is a strong community mobilisation/cohesion.
- The above must all be done in such a way that it does not cause any compromise on the quality, cultural sensitivity or exacerbate indebtedness.
- See also recommendations on availability of materials and labour under section 1.3.

1.3. Risks that will impact on reaching the targets

- At the debrief of this review a workshop was held with Staff who were representatives of Project management, District management, Engineers, Technical Officers and Community Mobilisers. As part of the workshop risks were identified and then each participant scored the risks. As some of the issues were cross cutting these risks were grouped into themes. Below is the table showing the risks and grouping:

	Risk	Score	%	
	Costs and availability of materials and labour			
1	Price escalations/inflation	11	12%	
	Lack of skilled labour	5	5%	
	Material shortage	4	4%	
	Water for construction-curing concrete	3	3%	
	Increasing labour rates	2	2%	
	Government policies (e.g. timber permits)	5	5%	31%
	Beneficiary capacity to complete			
2	Beneficiaries who cannot contribute/finish the house	9	9%	
3	Misuse of funds by beneficiaries and negligence (lack of motivation) 5%	7	7%	
	Beneficiaries wishes exceed program possibilities	4	4%	
	Supporting the most vulnerable (motivated but not able to finish)	3	3%	23%
	External influences			
4	Influence of Politics	7	7%	
	Occupancy issues (e.g. selling, renting, "ghost" houses)	3	3%	
	Local authorities stopping beneficiaries half way (for various reasons)	3	3%	13%
5	Poverty			
	Increasing poverty levels	4	4%	
	Lack of livelihood opportunities	4	4%	
	Debt	4	4%	12%
6	Administrative			
	Scoring system	4	4%	
	Quality of DS lists	1	1%	
	Administrative delays (e.g. changing beneficiary name)	2	2%	7%
7	Delays			
	Weather conditions	4	4%	
	Physical construction constraints (e.g. hard rock)	2	2%	6%
8	Other			
	Lack of supporting infrastructure	2	2%	
	Religious/cultural practices	1	1%	
	Finding repair houses (to reach 2,800 quota)	1	1%	
	Bad location /inappropriate government land	0	0%	
	Policies around tsunami buffer zone	0	0%	

- The highest risk that was indicated by the Staff related to costs and availability of materials and labour.
- Linked to the above point is also the beneficiaries capacity to complete.

- An external factor is the influence of politics on the Project, mainly around beneficiary selection.
- There was also a concern with the Staff around poverty, lack of livelihoods support and indebtedness of the beneficiaries.
-  All of the above are impacting on the delivery of the Project which in turn creates an often hidden extra financial cost to the beneficiary and Project.

Recommendations

- There have been several initiatives to identify the project challenges and how to address them. One is a very good synopsis entitled 'Indian Housing Project - Issues and challenges' which lists 32 issues/challenges and goes on to identify consequences and corrective measures. This can be a very useful document in planning the remaining 18 months of the Project and where required operationalizing the corrective measures.
- The group recommended:
 - Identify solutions to improve the labour/carpenter issue over the next 18 months. For example bring in carpenters from outside, but consider issues with local carpenters and the preference of communities to work with people from their community.
 - Make more use of salvaged materials.
 - Reduce the decorations in the house, e.g. tiling, advise the beneficiary to complete the house to the minimum requirement first.
 - Support the increase in number of carpentry shops (when the DS stops the timber permit, the beneficiary then has to buy from the shop).
 - Use prefabricated door/window frames and sashes.

1.4. The Project is responding to change

- There have been several initiatives for change and where appropriate the Project has responded positively to these.
-  One example of this adaptation was working on lowering the minimum requirements for the house and trying to reduce the costs to the beneficiary.
-  Also the issues was raised around clarifying the definition of single-headed households. This was accepted by IHC after advocacy both to IHC and Government of Sri Lanka. An agreement was reached to increase the score from 30 to 40 to single women.
- It has also been well presented and recognised with all stakeholders that there are some fundamentals which will not be changed – for example the value of the cash grant and further revision of the scoring criteria. However, all stakeholders do recognise that these two particular examples have impacted and continue to impact the programme.
-  Nevertheless, while there have been many initiatives around how to bring the value of the house down so all can complete within the value of the cash grant, it would appear that these are not always acted upon and this case load is still a risk to the project.

1.5. There is no accounting for the cost of inflation or unforeseen costs

-  The cost of the house continues to grow with annual background inflation and the increase in price of material and labour due to supply and demand pressure caused by the Project itself.

- The cost of the houses was originally set in 2011 and there has been significant inflation since then. It is understood the official national figures for inflation are about 5 to 6% (according to the press release of Central Bank of Sri Lanka http://www.cbsl.gov.lk/pics_n_docs/02_prs/docs/press/press_20140430ea.pdf, annual average inflation rate was 5.7% in March 2014 and 5.6% in April 2014), but anecdotal evidence indicates that locally it could be much higher annually, especially for some construction-related items.
- In April 2013 Architect Keerthi Shah stated that inflation would result in a LKR 550,000 house costing 750,000 in three years' time.
- As such, those who are selected later in the Project will face a significant cost increase due to inflation.
-  This issue is a disadvantage of the Owner Driven Approach. Without proper buffers and provisions to address such changes in price, the burden of risk for cost escalation is placed on the shoulders of the beneficiary and they are expected to absorb this increase.
- In addition an example of an unforeseen cost is the cost of water for construction during the recent failed monsoon/drought.

Recommendations

- Check the current cost of the minimum standard house design and keep it up to date.
- It is understood it is unrealistic to expect any increase in the grant to accommodate this change in costs and it is also understood the team has some difficulties in advising the beneficiaries to use the cost saving initiatives to keep within the value of the grant. Nevertheless, the team should continue their ongoing efforts to explore mechanisms to convince the beneficiaries to adopt these practices, wherever and whenever possible.
- However, there is need to have accurate time-bound information on costs of materials as this will help indicate if our risk of incomplete houses are growing and why and plan realistic scenarios.
- It would also be considered best practice to have an up to date actual value of what is now the minimum house design. The project team should also have an idea if the level of debt is also increasing, etc.

1.6. Possible gaps in the Project design

- According to the IHP Operational Manual, the '*IA will undertake training programmes to build the capacity of beneficiaries as well as project staff in the area of community mobilization, importance of community based organizations, house designs, knowledge of house construction, quality of building materials, procurement of materials and identification of construction labour. The aim is to provide required skills to the staff and community to achieve efficient and effective implementation of the project*'.
- However, it is not clear how much and how consistently the above requirement has been applied. General feedback from one member of staff was there was limited community empowerment in the Project.
-  While the original Project was designed as an integrated programme, due to significant lack of funds this has not been possible to achieve, hence, the general feedback from community and stakeholders was that there were gaps:
 - Particularly due to the lack of support to (existing or new) livelihoods
 - Provision of amenities – water, electricity
 - Provision of hygiene promotion with the latrines
 - Lack of social and physical infrastructure – there is a need for schools, community buildings, community projects/infrastructure

- Inclusion of housing, land and property issues around land tenure
- In some cases this was cited as a reason why some families did not all move back to the houses being built.
-  There is no awareness raising on maintenance of the houses. The Project team can consider holding maintenance workshops to address the most common problems (e.g. clearing of gutters, treatment of wooden elements, etc.) These workshops can be done at regular intervals, regardless of the completion stage or at the end of construction, as part of a completion ceremony (if applicable).
- Lack of psychosocial support for returnees. Some of the families are still in shock after the conflict and there is a need for counselling.
 - One Divisional Secretary stated there is an issue with mental illness – to seek help is social taboo as the brand you as mentally unstable. However many are still in shock from the war and could also have been shelled and be in shell shock, etc.
- The bank they use is not always convenient and the beneficiary may have to travel there several times and its costly.

Recommendations

- Identify most vulnerable communities and needs.
- Look for and advocate for solutions. Given the fact that the original project proposal included livelihood support and the reason for not being able to realize that component was lack of funding, the most the Project could do at this stage may be limited to advocacy and lobbying with other local and international NGOs offering livelihoods support to include the IHP beneficiaries in their programs. If there are suitable existing or potential branch programs, these should also be explored as part of the hand over and integrations steps.
- Consider how the Project can implement and/or advocate for greater access to community and social infrastructure for beneficiaries and the wider community in the particularly vulnerable locations. Identify most vulnerable communities and needs.
- For example, small infrastructure projects, access roads, etc.
 - Provision of services or alternative to services, such as solar lighting, solar pumps.
 - Provision of water supply.
 - Provision of education, health, community facilities.

1.7. The Project is exposed to several risks outside of its control which have and will continue to impact on progress

- In early 2014 there has been a failed monsoon and in some cases a drought which has impacted on the beneficiaries capacity work on the housing Project, either because pressure on their livelihoods and or due to the lack of readily available water for building.
- In some cases it was reported that the near shore fishing has also been disrupted due to adverse wind conditions in the past twelve months.
- There have been and will be future political elections which have directly impacted on the progress. For example in one occasion beneficiary selection was suspended for a month due to an election.

1.8. The investment in Staff welfare and development was not clear

- It was not clear what development opportunities were given to Staff.
- In one case the living conditions of the Staff did not reflect a large-scale project which was over 50% complete. The office manager sleeps on his office floor and the Engineers and Technical Officers sleep in cramped condition at the rear of the office.



- There were some good examples of team building exercises such as the planned sports day in Killinochchi. Another similar retreat had taken place the year before. In a team of this size, working at different locations and on a demanding task as such, this kind activities are very beneficial for team spirit, cohesion and communication. The upcoming activity seemed to be met with much enthusiasm and appreciation by the team members.



Figure 3 Living quarters for TOs and CMs

2. Technical aspects - construction and quality

2.1. The construction quality observed appeared to be adequate



- Generally the construction quality observed appeared reasonable for an owner driven approach methodology.
- However, there were still several cases observed of low quality materials and workmanship, e.g. poor quality block work, some wall cracking and in one case the roof structure was not tied to the wall.



- There appears to be a shortage of skilled labour which is also impacting on the quality and speed of construction. There also appear to be shortage of quality materials in some locations especially where logistics is difficult.



- The case load of active houses continues to increase and staff maybe spending progressively less time with each beneficiary which again could impact on quality of the houses - especially the finishing details.



Figure 4 Adequate quality block work

Recommendations

- According to the IHP Operational Manual, *'the role of the IA is to promote safety, raise awareness, train beneficiaries, facilitate technical support and ensure each target beneficiary achieves a minimum standard of quality'*.

- As such, the project Staff must maintain a high level of supervision. This should also be complemented with beneficiary awareness raising on the requirements of the design and quality of materials and workmanship.
- The Project set-up, where each technical officer and engineer has a portfolio of 100 houses (on average) and 600 respectively, supported by community mobilization officers where necessary, has proven to be an efficient and workable modality. Nevertheless, this set up should be closely monitored and where necessary, additional (human) resources should be allocated to secure the program delivery and quality required.

2.2. House minimum requirements

-  There appeared to be good awareness amongst Staff about the value of the house and how they could achieve the minimum requirements to complete the house. While the beneficiaries appeared to know about the minimum standards, they see this as a once in a life time opportunity and as an inheritance for their future/family so they prefer to build and use materials to as high a quality as they can.
- To help beneficiaries complete their houses in time and within their financial capacity cost reduction measures have been recommended. However, few of these were evident during this visit. For example:
 - No houses visited had adopted precast window and door frames – they prefer timber and they want the best timber quality they can get.
 - No beneficiaries had reduced the wall height from 10 to 9 ft.
 - Some beneficiaries had reduced plastering, however, they prefer not to use the bands and would rather wait to plaster the whole front face and not plaster the side and back walls.
 - Some beneficiaries did use the gable roof instead of the hip roof. However, generally they prefer the hip roof, even though it is more expensive due to the increased amount of materials, especially timber, used in its construction.



Figure 5 A good example of beneficiaries saving building materials



Figure 6 Gable roof and provision for future extensions

- So while it is possible to build the house for the value of the cash grant this was not observed during the visit for the this report and all beneficiaries had or were planning to spend more.

-  The staff say some of these will find it difficult to complete within the time period or at all. Nevertheless still the beneficiaries decide not to adopt the minimum requirements and build within the value of the cash grant.

Recommendations

- The Project team should work with each beneficiary to ensure they build the house which is most appropriate for their means and capacity to meet the objectives of the project and within the time scale of the project.
- Also see previous recommendations on *section 1.2 "There will be incomplete houses"*.

3. Coordination and stakeholders

3.1. The Project was well accepted by beneficiaries and stakeholders

-  The Project appeared to be very well accepted and appreciated by all beneficiaries interviewed.
-  Equally the Project was well received by all external stakeholders interviewed.
- One Divisional Secretary stated this Project was much better than the previous attempt by the Indian Government where they used contractors to build houses which cost more and had much less quality.
- Generally the Divisional Secretary also appreciated working with the owner driven methodology of implementation.
- Some Staff pointed out that there was limited promotion of community empowerment in selection of beneficiaries and implementation of the Project.

3.2. There is good coordination between Divisional Secretary and Staff

-  Local government and Staff learnt a lot from the first phases and now work much closer together. Both sides reported that lessons had been learnt from the early parts of the Project and now coordination between Divisional Secretary /GNs and Staff was improved and good. There are less problems with the Divisional Secretary lists/scoring/grievances and political interference.
- One Divisional Secretary stated that when there are issues they go to the field together and work them out, they usually also attend grievance meetings together.
- The Divisional Secretaries also appear to monitor the Project closely and are tracking progress. The Divisional Secretaries also help to push the beneficiaries to finish, setting deadlines, issuing letters to encourage completion, etc.
- In some cases the Divisional Secretaries are also active in trying to reduce costs for the beneficiaries, for example in releasing sand and timer permits, etc. However, these practices did not appear to be consistent and varied by location.

3.3. There does not appear to be consistent engagement with the local branches

- There does not appear to be a consistent approach to how the Project team engage with the local SLRCS branch. Formally the branches are not engaged in the IHP and teams involve them at their own discretion and to varying degrees in different locations. Given their position and access to local communities, the Project could have benefited from a closer relationship with the branches.
-  There is a need for better integration with branch programs which should be part of an exit and handover strategy.

Recommendations

- Develop an exit plan which includes taking the branches into consideration. Consider the long-term impact of the programme on the development and future activities of the SLRCS branches in question. It should be considered how the programme could be managed to reduce their risk and maximise the benefit and capacity building opportunities for the branches. Some issues that need to be taken into account are:
 - What will the branch do if there are unfinished houses?
 - What will the branch do if there are finished but unoccupied houses?
- Consider with management what their plans are and what opportunities there are to build the capacity of the branches for the future in the housing/settlement/habitat sector.
- Consider the link with SLRCS development programmes that could offer support to the beneficiaries in terms of psycho-social wellbeing, community resilience, disaster risk reduction small scale business and overall socio-economic redevelopment.

4. Beneficiaries – eligibility, selection and feedback

4.1. Main advantages cited by beneficiaries

-  The house was seen as a very important asset for their future and the future of their children.
- The house improved the families level of security.
- The house generally gave them a better quality of habitat, e.g. ventilation, etc.

4.2. Main challenges cited by beneficiaries

- Not having enough money to complete the house.
-  Having difficulty accessing sufficient and quality building materials. For example sand and timber are both controlled by suppliers and Government permits. Hence, the market is relatively closed and not competitive. For example there has been a price escalation in Jaffna where the cost of one palmyrah tree was LKR 2,000, at the time of the review it has risen to LKR 10,000.
- Availability of suitable water for building (specific to some locations). There is a lack of availability of suitable water in many areas. In some areas beneficiaries are having to buy water and have it delivered in bowsers. At 1 rupee/litre and there is a need for 5,000 litres in the house which was not included in the original cost estimates.
-  Availability and quality of labour for building – its reported in some areas beneficiaries have to wait weeks until a mason or carpenter become available. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that sometimes beneficiaries do not want to work with skilled labour from outside their area due to reasons of trust, familiarity, etc. In some other instances the skilled labour in a certain area block the ingress of outside skilled labour to control the demand and prices.
Due to the conflict there is a huge gap in skilled labour. This has been reflected in the price increase of labour. Carpenters are the most difficult to find and most critical to the completion of the house.



Figure 7 Paying for water to build the houses

4.3. Influence of scoring and eligibility criteria

- Community, beneficiaries, government and Staff all stated selection and scoring criteria have been and remain a significant challenge. Even though the scoring as a system was welcomed by the stakeholders as it provided an objective and non-arbitrary method of selection, during the interviews with the government officials, Staff and beneficiaries it was also consistently stated as being imperfect. The main examples being:
 - During the interviews, the review team was given the impression by some that old couples with no dependents could be eligible but young couples with no children are not, even if the wife is pregnant. For example one DS stated that *'young couples and families with older children are excluded – this is contrary to Tamil culture'*. Another DS said *'Elderly are eligible whereas young couples are not and have a life in front of them.'*
 - Clarification from project management stated that these two groups are eligible but not prioritised by the program (even though for expectant mothers in their last months, an understanding was reached to hold the file until after the delivery of the child and then resubmit it). Given the perception of non-eligibility at the field level, it is recommended to deliver a clear message to all stakeholders on “eligibility” vs. “prioritisation” by the Project.
 - In Tamil tradition there is a dowry system and often children do not move out of the family home until they are married. Potentially this makes a family who have girls over the age of 18 years more vulnerable, as they are still living at home, usually without a sustainable income. Even though the selection criteria should in this case regard them as dependent family members, the review team has consistently received the feedback during the interviews that these adult children are considered income-earners during the selection.
 - Consistent with the point above, the information at the field level indicated that in large families where all family members are between 18 and 65, everyone is considered an income-earner, thus non-dependent, but that is not the case especially in case of female children. The selection criteria stipulates that the number of dependent family members excluding family head and regular income-earners should be counted but practice seems



Figure 10 Old couple with no children - eligible?



Figure 10 Mother with 3 children all over 18 - eligible?



Figure 10 GN was allocated 54 houses but their village only got six, after complaints they were allocated another ten, but still there are needs.

- to diverge from this. Reasons for this interpretation should be looked into, clarified and rectified as necessary and appropriate.
- Income level or savings is not considered in the scoring – some selected families are better off and do not need support, others are poor but do not get support due to other scoring criteria.
 - Families who have lost children or family members as a direct result of the conflict are excluded; some couples lost their children so as they are deemed childless and they score low.
 - Definitions of single female-headed families, single women and disability – there were still some questions around these definitions and were open to interpretations. This is despite the agreement reached on increasing the score from 30.0 to 40.0 for single women.
- In some cases from Mannar families who had resettled from India received LKR 25,000 from the Government or an NGO to build a temporary house, but these houses were only supposed to be temporary for a short term period of time. But by having this temporary house it means they were not considered eligible.
 - Whether factually correct or not there was a common perception amongst some Staff and some community that that there were more vulnerable families who are not getting a house while others less vulnerable are. Scoring was seen to exclude too many vulnerable families and was considered not fair.
 - There are also cases where some beneficiaries have not permanently resettled to the area. This is particularly the case in Mannar district which will be reported on in a later section.

4.4. Divisional Secretary lists

- It is generally understood that the first Divisional Secretary lists varied in quality. For example they were old and not current. Hence, in some cases people on the list had died or others had returned since the list was prepared.
- There is a perception amongst Staff that some community still do not know or do not have access to information or means be put on the lists.
- Some Staff and Divisional Secretary suggested there should have been better assessment and it would have been better to make use of the CBO/RDS, other NGO's religious leaders, etc., to cross check. One Divisional Secretary also suggested to use the voters list as a cross check.
- There is still a need for housing as families continue to return from India and camps.



Figure 11 Young couple with baby, moved back 12mths ago from detention camps, but the assessment and grievance period had been completed

4.5. There have been external influences on beneficiary selection at different scales

- It is generally recognised that there have been some external influences on the selection of beneficiaries. This can happen locally or regionally.
- Where possible measures have been taken to curb these influences, for example, where there have been elections they have suspended beneficiary selection.
- There was an example of a priest who intervened on behalf of a community who were excluded from the list and after some advocacy they were included on the lists.

4.6. There are empty houses in Mannar

-  There appear to be a significant number of houses which have been built in Mannar and are not occupied yet. These empty houses appear to primarily belong to beneficiaries who had been internally displaced by the conflict to a town called Puttalam. This is considered to be a primarily Muslim population.
- These families appear not to be permanently resettled to the area and are living in permanent housing elsewhere and therefore not in compliance with the essential criteria for the selection of beneficiaries.
- The project team have made efforts to try and stop this activity such as random spot checks.
- Reasons for the beneficiaries of these houses not moving back were stated as:
 - They are well settled in Puttalam with jobs and children in schools and houses and find it difficult to return.
 - There is limited infrastructure, schools, health and livelihood available to support their return.
 - In some cases there is a generation gap and their children do not want to live here. Parents want to come back and children want to stay where they are.
 - In some cases there was also a perception that larger extended families were returning, for example families displaced 20 or 30 years ago are now returning as multiple families.



Figure 12 Empty houses in Mannar, out of 161 houses 45 are occupied permanently

- In one case the Divisional Secretary said they were considering taking action against those who received the housing support but had not permanently relocated. For example if the land has been provided by the Government they could take and house and land back if they don't resettle permanently. However, where the house is on private land there is nothing they can do.

- The same Divisional Secretary has a family card scheme where the families have to say when they will return. He believes they need time to return. He used to get lots of grievances and allegations about why genuine resettled families cannot get a house while outsiders can.

Recommendations

- The Project must adhere to the latest version of the Operational Manual, including eligibility and scoring systems. Even though there seem to be some room for improvement in the scoring system (and cognizant of the fact that no system will be perfect and that there will always be cases that will require flexibility), having clear criteria and a consistent framework to base the decisions on make the selection process credible and objective. In fact the existence of the eligibility criteria and a scoring system has been expressed by more than one Staff member as being one of the positive and strong aspects of the IHP.
- This is particularly for the requirements on being permanently resettled in the village and not have another permanent house.
- The Project should work with the relevant Divisional Secretaries to take positive action to reduce the number of empty houses, especially if the low occupancy rates are linked to lack of services in the resettlement location or any other factor that can be worked on by the authorities.

5. Sustainability –social and environmental aspects

5.1. There is a lack of understanding of the impact of indebtedness

-  There is not a full understanding of the impact of indebtedness the Project has caused to many and possibly the majority of the beneficiaries. The issue and impact of debt remains a question mark over the Project.
- Debt can be seen as a burden but it can also give opportunity. The following are some examples of the debit burden and some general beneficiary perspectives recorded during the visit:

Debt burden	Some beneficiary perspectives
Many beneficiaries borrowed from friends and family and are not sure when or how they will repay.	Many beneficiaries see the house as a once in a life time opportunity so they are prepared to sacrifice.
Many beneficiaries borrow from banks and institutions and are uncertain about repayment. The banks/institutions will take legal action.	Many beneficiaries are investing for their children. They see the house as the most significant asset for their family, children and future.
Women often pawned jewellery as collateral with the banks and for some interviewed during this review were uncertain about how they would get them back.	One beneficiary said she would rather have the house than jewellery.
The main problem is at the roof and door/window stage - 3 to 4. Beneficiaries would prefer to buy the most durable and best quality doors and windows.	Beneficiaries strive for the best for cultural and durability reasons.
Building material and labour costs are increasing.	
There is no livelihoods support to help.	

- There has been a recent study entitled “Life and Debt”² : an assessment of Indebtedness and social-economic Conditions of Housing Beneficiaries in Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu, which highlights some of the issues and impacts around the housing projects and indebtedness. Some of the main findings are worth repeating here:
 - The majority of households have a ‘debt problem’, owing largely to the construction of their houses:
 - 95% of households that have begun construction (or completed) have debt averaging LKR 184,754, roughly one lakh more than the borrowings of those that have not begun construction; people mainly borrow from banks by pawning their gold.



Figure 13 Receipts of cash loan on jewellery deposited as collateral - pawning

² <http://www.cepa.lk/uploads/0d6e1cc768f1d5f53cdc8ee970a71672-2014-Romeshun-Life-and-Debt.pdf>

- *Half of all indebted have not paid back any amount of the principal of the loan, 40% of households that had begun construction reported not paying back their loans.*
- *Increased construction expenses mainly due to beneficiaries housing preferences is driving debt:*
 - *Over half of the beneficiary households show deviation from the prescribed proportions of the house. Even among the group that conformed to the prescribed sizes, very few households (11%) have kept to the standard features.*
 - *Households within the confines of the standard measurements and completed construction incurred an additional LKR 200,000 (average) in cost, households larger than 23 feet length incurred an additional LKR 350,000 in costs.*

Recommendations

- Better inform the beneficiaries around the use of the grant and the impacts of debt so they can make informed and responsible decisions and also help the project meet its commitment to complete the target number of houses within the time period. Community mobilisers should be more active in this regard .
- The Project should have a better understanding of the level and impact of indebtedness.
- A representative survey should be carried out. The survey should be quantitative and qualitative. Such an effort would also provide the management with more objective and evidence-based arguments when dealing with reputational risks (e.g. claims in the newspapers that the gold of Tamil families now belong to the banks, as a result of the IHP).
- If necessary advocate with lending institutions for more favourable interest rates or extension on loan periods, etc.
- The SDC survey on the indebtedness and socio-economic conditions of housing beneficiaries in Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu point out a “noticeable lack of financial literacy among housing beneficiaries”. Their recommendations include implementing financial literacy initiatives alongside debt management steps throughout the construction process to prevent beneficiaries from falling into a cycle of debt. In line with this recommendation, the management should consider augmenting the software side of the Project by providing trainings and support to the beneficiaries to improve their financial literacy. This is also in line with the general requirements of the IHP Operations Manual.

5.2. There is limited understanding of the impact the Project has on the environment, especially for the use of timber

-  While the environmental impact is a concern by the Project, there is not a clear understanding of what the impact is. This is particularly the case for the number of trees used in the construction. If three trees on average are used for each house in the entire IHP program, potentially 150,000 trees would have been cut down. This is clearly a figure that warrants a closer look at the Project’s effects on the environment, which has already been damaged and depleted of its scarce natural resources during the conflict period.
- In some cases individual action have been taken for example the DS in Killinochchi stopped issuing timber permits altogether.
- There was an effort to change from a hip roof design to a gable roof design which would save on the use of timber. This was originally instigated as a cost saving solution, although such a measure would also help alleviate the environmental concerns as a secondary benefit. However, the take up of this option with beneficiaries has been limited as there is still a strong preference for hip roofs.
- Similarly, the use of precast doors and windows has also been promoted by the Staff. It was mainly considered as a cost-saving mechanism but could also be instrumental in reducing

the stress on the timber sources. These measures would be examples where more awareness raising and advocacy could be applied.

- During the field visits, anecdotal stories were relayed to the review team that some public figures were linking the lack of rains this year in the Project area to the cutting down of the trees by the beneficiaries. Even though drawing direct links as such would require empirical evidence, such messages can have adverse effects on the Staff or the Project's reputation. Communications from the Project team could highlight the Red Cross national tree planting campaign that has been ongoing since 2013 in all districts of the island and as such efforts to this effect could be considered to be intensified in the Project areas.

Recommendations

- It is unrealistic to expect an environmental impact assessment at this stage in the project and any recommendations would be too late.
- It is advisable to set some budget aside for more tree planting either during the project or as a branch activity. Community and appropriate agricultural national agencies should be consulted on shade and fruit bearing or other appropriate trees.
- The management should check with other IHP implementing agencies on any actions they are promoting, and sustain these together to broaden their impact.

6. "Old" Red Cross Post-Conflict Recovery Programme

6.1. The "old" PCRP and lessons for IHP

-  The original Project is still not complete. This should be a key concern and also an indication of the risks IHP is exposed to with regards completion.
- According to the 31 March 2014 update of the "old" PCRP project, the number of ongoing houses in the 4th year of the project is 324. This figure represents 10.4% of the total number of 3,121 houses in the project. The ratio for the IFRC-built houses is 147 ongoing to 1,359 total (10.8%).



Figure 14 An unfinished house under "old" RC PCRP

Recommendations

- The main difference between the "old" PCRP project and the current IHP is the financial management structure and the relationship with the donor.
- It is understood the IHC has a different approach and will expect all the houses to be completed to an agreed time line and budget.
- Perhaps it is possible to use the experience from the "old" PCRP to profile the most at risk beneficiaries and help identify how best they can be supported to complete.

6.2. Observations on old RC PCRP

(The remarks and recommendations should be regarded as suggestions based on observations and not as a proper and comprehensive review of the previous RC PCRP. The review team has visited some locations of old RC PCRP in Killinochchi, Vavuniya North (Sinnadampan) and Jaffna (Karainagar and Vadamarachchi)).

-  The most commendable aspect of the old PCRP is the fact that it was implemented as an integrated approach, including livelihoods components and community infrastructure. This point has been emphasized by all involved parties, including beneficiaries, authorities and project staff at all levels. As such, this is also the most significant advantage of this program to the current IHP, where it has not been possible so far to secure funds for other project components than house construction.
- The beneficiaries in the old RC PCRP have received a livelihood contribution of 35,000 LKR. This figure is approximately 11% of the original house grant amount of 325,000 LKR (9.7% if one also adds the latrine/well grant of 35,000 LKR to the house grant) but has not been revised upwards when the house grant has been raised to a maximum of 550,000 LKR later on in the project.
- Whereas the livelihoods component has been lauded by all parties as a strong point of the old RC PCRP, in order to gauge its true impact, it could be a good idea to review it more closely once the program is fully completed. Some of the aspects that should be looked at in such a review would be whether the grant amount is sufficient to realistically start a new livelihoods option or whether it more serves the purpose of a cash injection to existing livelihoods (e.g. re-stocking of shop or buying seeds); how the amount performs in rural settings vs peri-urban or urban environment and whether the beneficiary are able to sustain their chose livelihoods beyond the program. Results and recommendation from such a review would serve to improve and fine-tune this aspect of integrated programming in future interventions.
-  Similarly, the community infrastructure aspect of the old RC PCRP is a strong component of the program and it reflects a more consistent 'settlements approach'. In addition, the fact that the communities in question could participate, through community workshops, in the decision of what kind of community facility would be built in their settlements is definitely a factor in increasing ownership of the project and as such, it should be replicated in any similar programs in the future. IHP has currently no provision for community infrastructure. A review at the end of the program (or possibly after 1 year) would be beneficial to see if the community infrastructure is being used sufficiently and for the purpose it had been built and is being maintained properly. Results and recommendation from such a review would serve to improve and fine-tune this aspect of integrated programming in future interventions.
- Having said this, the review team has visited one community centre in Killinochchi (Krishnapuram), that was recently completed but not yet handed over and opened. The opening was initially scheduled for the day after the visit (March 28th) but it did not look like it was going to take place with no concrete plans for rescheduling. The centre consisted of a one multi-purpose



Figure 15 Community centre at Krishnapuram, Killinochchi

hall, one room for the GN and one room for midwives. However, it was not possible during the visit to get information on who would be responsible for the centre (maintenance, etc.), to whom it would be handed over and whether the health department was committed to providing the staff for the centre (afterwards project team gave the information that the centre would be handed over to the village rural development society and the would also be responsible for its maintenance). In order for community infrastructure projects to be successful such aspects need to be agreed well in advance and be understood by all parties.

- The initial grant amount for old RC PCRP was 325,000 LKR plus 35,000 for a latrine or well. The grant amount was increased during the project to a maximum of 550,000 (people received different amounts in total, depending on the stage they were at, when the decision to increase took place). In principle, it was a good move to increase the grant amount as this enabled the program to transfer some of the burden of increasing prices, inflation, etc. from the shoulders of the beneficiaries to the organization. It was also welcomed very much by the beneficiaries.
-  Having said this, this change in the grant amount in the old RC PCRP made project administration very difficult as everyone ended up getting different amounts. In addition, this situation led some beneficiaries to think that people who have worked hard, contributed a lot themselves and finished their houses before the increase were penalized (as one beneficiary put it, “lazy people got rewarded for not working as hard”) and as a result might have brought some reputational damage to the program, that cannot be based on factual grounds. In future projects, it is still advisable to build in safe margins in the program for price hikes but care should be taken that this practice does not get interpreted as an incentive for not progressing at a realistic pace. It is also worth mentioning here that the ultimate decision to increase the grant amount was taken by the government and all organizations were required to comply. SLRCS has lobbied against the increase with the argument of reaching more people with the available limited funds.
- In case the option of raising the grant while the project is underway is considered (by choice or as a result of government policy) , it can also be contemplated (funds permitting) to provide a modest "bonus" to people who had finished on time (and thus could not profit from the remedial measures) in order to offset the impression of unfairness. Transparency towards the concerned parties at all stages of such a major change would also be key.
- The old RC PCRP differed in its requirements to consider a house "complete" (e.g. a lockable room, instead of lockable house as in IHP). These criteria usually allowed the houses to be considered “complete” at a cheaper price and as such lowered the burden on the beneficiaries. It was observed that most of the beneficiaries continued to work on their houses after they had completed the program and improved the conditions beyond the requirements of the program. Although it is still not very easy for some beneficiaries to progress from lockable room to lockable house after the program, having such cost-saving criteria helps from a caseload management point of view.
- The old RC PCRP beneficiaries enjoyed a much flexible period to finish their houses as the project is still ongoing in its fourth year. Despite enjoying this flexibility to finish (compared to IHP beneficiaries), at the time of the review there were still 324 incomplete houses (10% of the total 3,221). In addition, with the IHP program in full swing, priorities and resources are also shifting away from the old program. The program management should in the

immediate future take a decision on how to address these unfinished houses and finalize the program, giving special consideration to the human resources requirements and monitoring/quality control aspects.

-  Another strong component of the old RC PCRP was the significant presence of the community mobilizers in the project teams. These officers performed a crucial task in motivating the beneficiaries, mediating among conflicting family members or with the authorities, monitoring the progress and alerting the technical or management team to potential problems. In comparison, there are few community mobilizers in IHP. As such, in the current program, some of these tasks fall on the already busy technical teams or cannot be addressed as proactively and intensively as in the old program. Any future programs should strive to strike a balance more similar to that of the old RC PCRP in terms of engaging the community mobilizers, who understand how the communities work and enter into regular dialogue with the beneficiaries.
- The beneficiary lists in the old program have come directly from the DS however its understood the project also did their own screening following the vulnerability criteria. . The introduction of the clear selection criteria in the IHP has been mentioned by project staff and the DS offices as a positive development as it provided a more transparent and objective basis for the selection. However, it has also been indicated by authorities, project staff and communities that the methodology used in the old program gave some flexibility to include vulnerable people in the program who have somehow been left out. Based on these two experiences, it is advised to continue using clear selection criteria in any future interventions. However, recognizing the fact that there will always be shortcomings to any standardized system , it is also suggested to continue allowing for some measure of "safety valve" in the selection procedures (to be used exceptionally) to cover the left-out but deserving households.

Annexes

Annex 1 Terms of Reference

Red Cross Post Conflict Recovery Program



Terms of Reference (ToR) for Mid Term Review

1. BACKGROUND

RC-PCR

Red Cross Post Conflict Recovery Programme (RC PCR) in Sri Lanka is being implemented by Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS) since April 2010, having a partnership with International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The RC PCR is implemented as an integrated programme to support resettling communities within a comprehensive package of shelter, water and sanitation, livelihood, health and care, disaster management, community infrastructure and organizational development. It primarily supports people who have been displaced due to the conflict and resettled at present. The entire programme follows the owner-driven approach and direct-beneficiary cash transfer mechanism, in order to empower beneficiaries and improve the sense of community ownership. Shelter component (construction of new houses and repairing damaged houses) is the key constituent of the programme, while other components complement the sustainability and the resilience of the community.

IHP

The Indian Housing Project (IHP) is key component of RC-PCR. The IHP is an owner driven - housing reconstruction project funded by the Government of India and implemented through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Sri Lanka. Four implementing agencies (IAs) are executing this project in the northern province of Sri Lanka. IFRC is one of the four Implementing Agency (IA) in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka in partnership with Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRCS), covering the districts of Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar and Jaffna. IFRC/SLRC will support 16,800 families to reconstruct and repair their damaged houses.

2. OBJECTIVE AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF THE MID-TERM REVIEW

Mid-term reviews take place during the course of a programme and leads to strategic and operational improvements to what is already taking place. The RCPCR started in 2010 to be reviewed now in order to make sure that the proposed activities are being implemented according to plan and making some differences for the conflict affected resettled families in

northern Sri Lanka. This is good time to review if RCPCR is moving on it's right track as per agreed programme objectives to allow necessary refinement for better performance.

The core objective of this mid-term review is to review and evaluate the implementation of planned project activities and outputs against actual results to date, and where possible, capture and record the initial project effectiveness, sustainability, performance and lessons.

The expected outcomes from this Mid-term review are to:

- To assess whether the activities implemented to date under the RC-PCR are directed towards meeting the objectives as laid down in the project proposal and evaluate the direction, delivery mechanism, effectiveness, relevance and approach of the RCPCR in terms of priorities in policy objectives and plans of the implementing agency/partners (IFRC/SLRCS) are in order
- Evaluate the implementation of planned project activities and outputs against actual results to date,
- Draw lessons learned and good practices and provide recommendations to better design and implement the project for the rest of the project period.
- Assess the feasibility in terms of design, scope, implementation, management, quality & quantity and steering with conclusions on the likelihood that the programme will have the expected effects at the end of the planned project duration given the current project design and implementation experience.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The mid-term review will collect qualitative and quantitative information with a variety of primary and secondary data. The information sources could include, individual and group discussion, interviews, review meetings and workshops to cover all dimensions of the RCPCR. The quality of review with respect to accuracy, reliability and validity is crucial to the study. The design and execution of the review should be participatory.

The scope of work shall be a systematic and objective assessment of the design, implementation and result of the project, and more specifically focus on:

- programme's direction, delivery mechanism, effectiveness and relevancy as set in the guidelines/proposals.
- quantitative and qualitative achievements of the programme so far
- consequences of external and internal issues and challenges faced by programme and corrective measures applied
- quality of technical support and guidance provided to beneficiaries by the programme and level of beneficiaries satisfaction.

- monitoring and tracking system (including on site physical monitoring) applied/used and if this was adequate and effective to ensure programme quality.
- assessing/analyzing the inclusion of women/widow and the most vulnerable groups in various activities and study the effectiveness of these interventions on the lives of most vulnerable.
- utilization and appropriate use of human and financial resources and its contribution towards meeting the specific objective of the RCPCR.
- relevance and appropriateness of project activities in relation to the needs and priorities as perceived by the beneficiaries.
- added value of the integrated approach applied for the old RC PCR (RC funded), if any and how this can be replicate to IHP sites.
- feedback/suggestions from the field staff of IFRC/SLRCS and other stakeholders including the beneficiaries and local government authorities for any improvement in programme.

4. METHODOLOGY:

This Mid-term review will be carried out applying participatory approach such as individual and group interviews and discussion with key staff from IFRC and SLRCS, review meetings with field teams of IFRC/SLRCS, interviews with key persons of stakeholders and other implementing agencies (IAs) of IHP, lesson learnt workshops with all RCPCR staff and relevant stakeholders. The discussions, interviews, workshop and review meetings will be conducted focusing the scope of works and using relevant checklist and questionnaires as required.

The mid-term review would be based on primary information, however the relevant secondary information may also be used where relevant. Basically the discussion with stakeholders and staff of RCPCR will be used to collect quantitative and qualitative information using a participatory approach, whereby the IFRC/SLRCS task manager/delegate, staff of the field offices (SLRCS), the National Coordination Units (PTF, Government Agents, Divisional secretaries and Grama Niladharies) and other relevant implementing agencies (IAs) are consulted throughout the review process.

Meetings, Interview (Interviews of representatives of other project stakeholders, focus groups and key informant interviews of the beneficiary population, physical site inspections, if required) and discussions with beneficiaries and international and national organizations working in the northern provincial level could be performed in a participatory manner.

5. TEAM COMPOSITION AND REPORTING

IFRC shelter and programme experts from Geneva and KL will carry out this mid-term review in close coordination and support from the SLRCS and IFRC Sri Lanka delegation. Key staff of RC PCR coordination office in Jaffna will facilitate and provide necessary support to the review team. The reviewer will analyse and compile both quantitative and qualitative

information and write the final mid-term review report with their major findings and recommendations.

The review (evaluation) report would consist of three levels of information:

- Firstly, the executive summary written separately and providing the bare essentials for decision-makers regarding the background, major conclusions in relation to the review criteria, recommendations, refinements and lessons learned.
- The second level is the main report of which a substantial part will be the main findings and recommendations. These should be substantiated with more detailed information only to the extent necessary. Detailed findings should be referred to the annexes. Conclusions and recommendations in the main report should have references to the relevant findings in the annexes.
- The third level in the report should contain the annexes. Those should provide all information necessary to substantiate major conclusions and recommendations in the main report. The Terms of Reference, the team's itinerary, list of persons met, and list of documents used should also be annexed.

6. TIMEFRAME

- 17-23 March 2014 (excluding travel time) during which field visits, meetings, discussion and interviews with programme team and stakeholders and one-day lesson learnt workshop involving all key management and programme team from SLRCS and IFRC to be organized.

7. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

The relevant documents to be consulted and largely dwelt upon for compatibility with RCPCRP policies and guidelines:

- a) The revised emergency appeal –MDRLK002
- b) The RCPCRP guideline (RC funded –old programme)
- c) The IHP proposal and MOUs
- d) IHP work plan and budgets
- e) Operational manual and guideline of IHP
- f) Monthly, quarterly and annually reports of RC-PCR
- g) Case studies and newsletters of RCPCRP