

CBMS Network Session Paper

Community-Based Poverty Monitoring of Tsunami-Affected Areas in Sri-Lanka

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Project Proposal

Community Based Poverty Monitoring of Tsunami Affected Areas in Sri Lanka

Background

Over the last two years the IMCAP program of the University of Colombo has been involved in the development of a conceptual framework as well as the testing of new methodological approaches to undertake community based poverty monitoring in Sri Lanka, with support from the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS). Within this capacity, the IMCAP program has also been part of the IDRC supported CBMS network. Research has taken place in 4 locations in Sri Lanka, covering the urban sector (Colombo District), the rural sector (Hambantota District), the Estate Sector (Nuwara Eliya District) as well as one in the conflict-affected regions (Batticaloa District).

Main efforts to institutionalise CBMS in cooperation with local government authorities have been facilitated at the Colombo location, whereas in Hambantota and Batticaloa the project supported the set-up of an independent group of community members qualified in quantitative as well as qualitative data collection techniques to further support monitoring exercises when and where the need arises. This was seen as an attempt to empower local communities by giving them the opportunity to articulate their interest and needs in a more evidence based manner.

The IPS supported CBMS project came to an end in June 2005. Main outcomes of this project were presented at the 4th Annual PEP conference held in Colombo, Sri Lanka from the 13th to 17th of June 2005. At the conference the Sri Lankan CBMS team outlined two critical areas for further research, namely incorporating conflict sensitivity into CBMS and investigating the potential of CBMS in community preparedness for disaster management in the aftermath of the Tsunami.

In order to further develop and institutionalize the CBMS approach in this direction and to share experiences within the larger CBMS network, this proposal seeks support from the network to continue with a longitudinal poverty monitoring exercise in one of the Tsunami-affected CBMS locations and to provide an analytical documentation of the emerging trends. The CBMS Sri Lanka is in the advantageous situation of having carried out a full household census on the poverty situation in two village locations in the Kalametiya division in Southern Sri Lanka. One of the village locations had been hit directly by the Asian Tsunami in December 2004, whereas the other location has just barely been spared. This provides a unique opportunity to compare different poverty dynamics evolving in these two locations in the aftermath of the Tsunami and to directly monitor the impact of the respective rehabilitation efforts by governmental, non-governmental and private initiatives.

In addition the project seeks to launch an advocacy campaign in Sri Lanka on the importance of CBMS, especially in the context of large-scale rehabilitation effort in the aftermath of natural disaster and/ or violent conflict. The CBMS approach will be promoted not only in terms of better efficiency and effectiveness in poverty monitoring at the local level, but more so as an important tool for conflict-sensitive development planning. The potential of this tool to inform policy makers and development practitioners on emerging factors and processes undermining social and economic integration of communities will be highlighted. Particular focus will be on the possibility of development planning contributing to worsening poverty as well as increasing the risk for violent conflict at the local level.

Impact of the Tsunami in Sri Lanka and the Role of CBMS

The impact of the Tsunami disaster in Sri Lanka on the 26th December 2004 has caused enormous destruction, in terms of property and livelihoods as well as in social and psychological terms for people affected. Based on preliminary damage and need assessments undertaken by various national as well as international agencies more than 30,000 people lost their lives, nearly 100,000 houses have been completely destroyed and more than 400,000 people are displaced.

Although the percentage of affected persons in comparison to the overall population remains small, and the overall macro-economic situation appears to be stable, there is a strong indication that the poor have been affected to a much larger proportion. This is due to the fact that many people living along the coastal areas in Sri Lanka were much poorer than in many other areas. In addition the especially hard-hit North East region had already suffered from the 20-year long ethnic war and although there is a relative lack of comprehensive data available for these regions, the poverty indices are supposed to be much higher in the North-Eastern parts of Sri Lanka.

The Tsunami also affected two CBMS sites in Sri Lanka, namely Kalametiya division in the Hambantota district and Periyakallaru division in the Batticaloa district. At the Batticaloa CBMS location 224 out of 394 families were affected, at the Hambantota location 136 families out of 240. The damage ranges from loss of fishing boats and gear, damaged or fully destroyed houses and loss of family members. The Colombo location has not been affected, as it is located away from the coastline.

A rapid assessment was undertaken in early 2005 on the impact of the Tsunami on the CBMS site in the Hambantota District on the Southern coast of Sri Lanka. The site, which comprises of two coastal lagoon systems – Kalametiya and Rekawa - typically represents poor rural coastal communities that were badly impacted by the tsunami. For the rapid assessment, participatory research methods were adopted and included focus group discussions and a household survey.

Data collection was undertaken with the assistance of local field researchers from the community who had been previously engaged in the CBMS study. These community members played a vital role in data collection and methodology development. In addition, the communities in both sites extended their utmost corporation and support during data collection, although these were very difficult times for them. This can be at least partly attributed to the involvement of local field researchers in the process, giving the communities a sense of ownership and empowerment.

The household survey comprised of visits to 210 households, which have been the subject of ongoing research on factors affecting rural livelihoods since 2002. The fact that baseline data were available allowed a much better assessment on the impact of the tsunami both on household and productive assets. The community's views on the new coastal zone management policy issues that have emerged as a result of the tsunami (e.g., 100 meter no-build zone on the south coast) were also solicited. In addition the survey included questions on what coping strategies were adopted by the household immediately after the tsunami and how their sense of personal well-being and security was affected.

The exercise made it very clear, that the process of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction involves a large number of issues that should not be addressed in an ad-hoc manner. Although it is urgent to address the immediate requirements of the population affected, there is also a need for careful planning and implementation of mid- and long-term rehabilitation efforts. This would require an intense policy debate with regard to various options available to ensure that affected people are treated fairly and equitably, but also to avoid adverse consequences such as increasing

social tensions and violent conflicts. Building capacities of local communities to play a role in planning and implementation of rehabilitation efforts is one crucial task in this context.

The CBMS methodology – as demonstrated in the Kalametiya case – has the potential to support a participatory and human rights based approach towards socio-economic development in the aftermath of the Tsunami, including empowerment of local government institutions and civil society at the local level, with a view to institutionalise a participatory approach. Respective efforts by members of the Sri Lankan CBMS team could be further developed to improve livelihood assessments for and impact monitoring of Tsunami related development interventions at the local level.

Project Objectives

The Sri Lankan CBMS team would like to continue specific Tsunami related poverty monitoring activities in the Kalamatiya location within the Hambantota district as the team has developed the closest linkages to communities in this area over the last years. The experiences drawn from these activities will be utilized to

- (a) improve Tsunami related poverty monitoring efforts elsewhere through active dissemination strategies,
- (b) introduce principles and strategies of community based development planning of Tsunami related rehabilitation efforts and
- (c) initiate – together with the Sri Lankan Institute for Local Governance (SLILG) - an advocacy campaign at the national level on the relevance of the CBMS approach in the context of the Tsunami rehabilitation efforts in Sri Lanka and to further institutionalize the Sri Lankan CBMS approach (its applicability as well as more formal training structures for CBMS in Sri Lanka)

At least three communities located within the Tsunami affected Kalametiya division (each consisting of approximately 250 households) would be selected for further action research. All communities have been involved earlier in CBMS activities, thus allowing the comparison of data before and after the Tsunami. The selection of communities within the Kalametiya division would take the following criteria into consideration in terms of their level of being affected by the Tsunami:

- One directly affected location, which experienced to a large extent the complete destruction of houses and livelihood assets
- Another directly affected location, which escaped from larger physical infrastructure damages, but is also affected in terms of livelihood asset losses
- One indirectly affected location, which was not hit by the Tsunami as such (as it was located just outside the reach of the Tsunami wave), but experiences other more indirect impacts of the disaster.

A comparative analysis of these three communities is expected to provide important information that would be of relevance for other locations in Sri Lanka as well. Especially the differentiation between directly and indirectly affected communities appears to be critical in view of the fact that the bulk of Tsunami aid is currently going only to the directly affected victims of the Tsunami. This may not only overlook other serious problems that communities are being exposed to in the vicinity of the Tsunami impact, but may also lead to increasing social tension between neighboring communities with different exposures to the disaster.

Against this background the action research at the Kalametiya location aims to achieve the following objectives:

In general terms:

- To identify most relevant factors of livelihood vulnerability as well as most vulnerable social groups in the context of the Tsunami disaster (by referring to indicators developed during the previous CBMS exercises in Kalametiya, with main emphasis on socio-economic security, food security and personal security)
- To incorporate conflict impact assessment approaches into the CBMS methodology, with a special focus on rehabilitation and development efforts in the aftermath of the Tsunami disaster
- To identify suitable mechanisms to strengthen public preparedness and disaster management capacities of local communities through CBMS

In specific terms:

- To develop a better understanding of the impact of the Tsunami on the livelihood and coping strategies of differently affected communities over a longer period of time
- To make an assessment of the emerging situation in selected areas with respect to the satisfaction of needs and aspirations of people and to empower local communities to formulate sustainable and conflict sensitive rehabilitation strategies
- To launch a dissemination strategy on CMBS approach on the national as well as local level to inform government officials, NGO practitioners and selected community members on the importance of CBMS exercises in order to ensure greater conflict sensitivity

Project Activities

First empirical activities have already commenced with funding from UNU-EHS to assess the vulnerability situation of Tsunami affected communities¹. Additionally a private trust fund has been set-up to directly support Tsunami relief and rehabilitation efforts in the Kalametiya area. This trust fund is coordinated by one of the academic resource persons of the CBMS Sri Lanka research team together with resource person from the community involved in earlier CBMS exercises and can be utilized to further assist the community once suitable areas of interventions are being identified. The trust fund will also be utilized to support the set-up of a small

¹ The Environment and Human Security program of the United Nation University (UNU-EHS) supported a 6-months (Jul. – Dec. 2005) vulnerability assessment in the townships of Galle and Batticaloa. The following indicators were tested in this research to measure “Tsunami” vulnerability:

- Amount of young and elderly people in the total population (demographic susceptibility)
- Income and employment (economic susceptibility)
- Land ownership (socio-economic susceptibility and recover potential)
- Social networks and membership of organizations (coping capacity pattern)
- Loans and savings (coping capacity)

This research has informed the CBMS on particular vulnerabilities that a natural disaster of the scale of the Tsunami has imposed on the certain groups within the Sri Lankan coastal society and can serve as a guideline to modify the proposed CBMS questionnaire and/or to add new areas to include in the monitoring exercise. However, the research did not focus in detail on the recovery processes, which would be much more a focus of the proposed CBMS monitoring exercises in Sri Lanka.

community-owned unit to coordinate the monitoring exercise. This unit can then remain to be the focal point within the community for regular continuation of poverty monitoring in the future and will closely liaise for this purpose with SPARC at the University of Colombo (who will continue to provide backstopping and continuity in methodology and indicators used).

However, as these activities will rely on the use of the CBMS methodologies, this proposal seeks support from the CBMS network primarily for those activities aimed at further exploring and analysing the methodological approach for CBMS, the data collection process and the activities required for improving community involvement in monitoring and planning exercises. This will take place through the following activities:

- Continuation of CBMS activities in the Kalametiya/ Hambantota location as the prime field location to further develop the CBMS approach, including:
 - Continuation of training exercise in data collection for community members
 - Conduct of data collection by trained community members
 - Continuation of academic guidance to the community members by resource personnel from SPARC
 - Assistance of community members in directing and coordinating ongoing and planned Tsunami rehabilitation efforts by resource personnel from SPARC
 - Close liaison with local government authorities as well as NGO's operating in the area (such as Action Aid International) in order to further promote and institutionalize the utilization of the CBMS approach at the Kalametiya location
- Documentation and in-depth analysis of CBMS exercises in Kalametiya as well as other locations covered by Tsunami related research projects of IMCAP/ SPARC
- Facilitation of meetings and workshops with regional as well as national stakeholders to promote the utilization of CBMS for improving Tsunami rehabilitation efforts in Sri Lanka
- Development of a self-financing diploma course at SPARC in close collaboration with the Sri Lankan Institute for Local Governance (SLILG) on CBMS methodology and applicability for sustainable and conflict-sensitive development planning

Additionally, these activities will help the CBMS team in Sri Lanka to continue to introduce and consolidate new courses on poverty and conflict impact monitoring at the Colombo University for undergraduate students from the social sciences (as part as their general curricula). This will also support ongoing reform efforts of the Sri Lanka government to improve relevance and quality of undergraduate education and to improve specifically the employability of social science students in Sri Lanka.

Implementation Strategy

SPARC will implement the CBMS project in close collaboration with a consortium of local CBOs based in Kalametiya, including the Kalametiya Trust Fund that has been set up on initiative by CBMS team members in the aftermath of the Tsunami. SPARC will work towards an understanding with this consortium to assist the CBMS process in Kalametiya and to support the mandate to continue the CBMS monitoring process in this division in a regular and permanent manner. The CBMS exercise as such will be coordinated by community members who have been involved in the CBMS exercise previously.

During the CBMS supported project phase, SPARC will assist this consortium to lobby for further financial resources to continue with regular CBMS monitoring exercises in the Kalametiya division and to engage local authorities as well as NGO's active in the region in a dialogue regarding goals and strategies for local development. Further partners for such exercises

could be other regional partner NGOs (such as Action Aid International) as well as national level government institutions (such as the Sri Lankan Institute for Local Governance (SLILG), the Department for Census and Statistics or the Ministry for Social Welfare), all of with whom SPARC has excellent working relations.

SPARC will coordinate the dissemination of the approach as well as the findings of the monitoring exercise at the national and regional level amongst relevant government agencies and local and international NGOs. SPARC will also utilize its contacts and reputation as an established centre within Sri Lanka's most significant state University and will lobby for a continuing support to this consortium. As mentioned earlier, SPARC - by using its own resources - will also work towards offering courses for government as well as NGO personnel on impact monitoring, using the CBMS as well as related research experiences of the centre.

The above approach would serve SPARC's interest to facilitate a longitudinal approach to poverty monitoring and to stay engaged in a policy debate on poverty alleviation and social policy in Sri Lanka. Equally, it would support the empowerment of a local community in terms of their advocacy efforts for appropriate and sustainable development in their region. Finally, this will also strengthen the Sri Lankan knowledge base on community based recovery strategies in the aftermath of large-scale natural disasters and the impact of relief and rehabilitation efforts.

Main Project Partners

The CBMS team will foremost collaborate with the Sri Lankan Institute for Local Governance (**SLILG**) to support reform efforts of the local governance system, which at present is not in a position to take up greater responsibilities for development planning or implementation.² Being the prime capacity building institutions for local government and instrumental to support a political reform process to strengthen the role of local government in Sri Lanka, the SLILG is an important partner to further institutionalize CBMS in Sri Lanka.

Furthermore the team will work in partnership with Action Aid International (**AAI**) in Sri Lanka, which is supporting the impact monitoring of their Tsunami rehabilitation efforts in Southern and Eastern Sri Lanka. AAI is also to support a country-wide "People's Campaign" for better local development and community empowerment, to which the CBMS work in Kalametiya can be linked up.

Finally, the Sri Lankan CBMS project will be implemented in close consultation with the Sri Lanka office of International Alert (**IA**) to incorporate latest approaches in conflict impact assessment into CBMS and to jointly lobby for greater conflict sensitivity in planning and implementation of Tsunami related development interventions in Sri Lanka.

² Any approach to strengthen local government authorities has to take into account Sri Lanka's highly centralized government structure that exists literally parallel to the elected local government structures. This makes it extremely difficult to expect any financial powers to be allocated to these regional bodies. Unfortunately this is not only the case with government controlled funds, but very much also with donor and NGO funds, as the legal framework imposed by the central government makes it extremely difficult for local authorities to receive any such funds. However, the political debate in Sri Lanka increasingly recognizes the need for more decentralized government structures to improve local development, but also as a means to find solutions to the various violent conflicts the country is facing. The CBMS project hopes to contribute to the debate on decentralization by highlighting the CBMS approach as a tool for local authorities to play a greater role in designing and monitoring development interventions.

Time period:

1 year (with possible extension for another year to repeat all above activities)

Institutional Background:

The Social Policy Analysis and Research Centre (**SPARC**) of the Faculty of Arts, University of Colombo, provides a focal point within the Sri Lankan University system to integrate research, teaching, training, policy analysis and advocacy on critical areas of social and economic development. The centre facilitates close collaboration between the academics and institutions outside the University system, including governmental as well as non-governmental agencies that are dealing with issues related to social policy. As one of the core objectives SPARC will facilitate and institutionalise independent research within Sri Lankan Universities on social development related issues and identify opportunities for social policy reform in Sri Lanka by focusing on important target groups such as youth, women, or the elderly and by analysing experiences in other Asian countries. The research findings will also feed into new short-term diploma courses on social policy relevant topics set-up by the centre.

The new centre is an integral part of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Colombo. A Board of Management holds the executive authority to carry out the objectives of the centre, under the overall supervision of the Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo. The Board of Management consists of 9 members, out of which 4 are appointed from outside the University. The Dean, Faculty of Arts, is the Chairperson of the centre, whereas a director (hony.) is selected by the Board of Management among the senior staff from within the University. Prof. S.T. Hettige, Senior Professor of Sociology, has been appointed as the first director of the centre. A senior program coordinator organizes the day-to-day activities of the centre.

SPARC hosts a core staff to coordinate the regular functions of the centre, but may recruit additional research and other staff on the basis of fixed term contracts as and when necessary. Overseas scholars who wish to pursue teaching or research in Sri Lanka may be accommodated as Junior or Senior Visiting Fellows of the Centre.

The establishment and official inauguration of SPARC in June 2005 culminates a process that was set in motion at the Colombo University several years back with the launching of the “*Improving Capacities for Poverty And Social Policy Research*” (**IMCAP**) program in late 2000, a staff and student development program to strengthen skills of younger academics from different social science backgrounds on poverty and social policy analysis and research. IMCAP has also implemented a number of significant research studies on poverty, youth alienation, education, social and economic security, and conflict impact assessment. Main funding agencies for the above research studies have been ILO, DFID, and GTZ. The new centre will continue to host IMCAP as a capacity building unit to facilitate training programs on research methodology and to coordinate study streams for undergraduates on poverty and conflict impact assessment.