


Cash for Livelihood Restoration Project, Sri Lanka


Internal Review





On 16.11.06, the Project staff, facilitated by Egon Rauch (Backstopping Consultant), reviewed the implementation and organisation of the project and identified some lessons learnt and good practices for future projects.

The results of this internal review are summarized below:


Step	What worked well?	What made it difficult or created problems	Lessons learnt & good practices
<p>1. Selection target area (GS Division)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phase I: priority given to affected families in the former Buffer Zone (65-200m). These families have borne the brunt of devastation. Destruction was more severe. More houses got completely destroyed, but due to uncertainties about re-location (lack of suitable land) reconstruction got delayed ● Phase II: families from the beyond 200m area, which were seriously affected (houses completely destroyed). Already done in Kalmunai Muslim. ● Phase III: families from the buffer zone (0-65 m) after they are settled (houses constructed) ● already existing beneficiary lists (completely destroyed houses) were obtained from DS office (some in electronic form) ● Potential beneficiaries claiming that they were missed out in the beneficiary list were asked to get it certified from DS Office and were included in the list. ● On-site visit to check the situation (have people already returned? are they sufficiently settled to start livelihood activities?) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In some places (Karaitivu, Kalmunai Muslim) affected families have not yet returned to their original place and still live with in temporary shelters or camps. This situation is likely not conducive for a number of livelihood activities. (wait with CfLR intervention until people are settled) ● Lists are, at times, unclear (handwritten), names are missing or are being added. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of existing beneficiary lists (housing grant) facilitates targeting, indirect information reduces possible manipulations. ● Wait with CfLR intervention until people are settled. Affected families having not yet returned to their original place and still living with in temporary shelters or camps- ● Priority areas can be adjusted (e.g. starting also with phase II areas) if the site-specific situation requires.



Step	What worked well?	What made it difficult or created problems	Lessons learnt & good practices
<p data-bbox="103 212 338 300">2. Information to potential beneficiaries</p> 	<ul data-bbox="369 225 898 616" style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters sent by post to beneficiaries inviting them to come for an orientation meeting. Simple and understandable information on the purpose of the meeting and eligibility is provided. • List of potential beneficiaries provided to GS, with the request to inform them about the meeting. • Posters (laminated) informing on the Project and its procedure displayed in DS Office. 	<ul data-bbox="925 225 1518 679" style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters sent (by hand via GS) to potential beneficiaries (Sainthamaruthu). Some GS changed the names on the letters and included new names on the list. • Address given on the list not up-to-date, in the meantime people have moved to new address • Some letters sent by post were delivered late. Reasons being: Hartal, unclear/incorrect addresses, neglect by postman, posted too late, etc. • Due to Hartal some orientation meetings had to be cancelled and postponed 	<ul data-bbox="1547 225 2040 679" style="list-style-type: none"> • To avoid manipulations by GS send letters by post. • Post letters in time (> 2-3 days in advance) in the post office of the respective Division • Invitation letter should inform on the purpose of the meeting and eligibility (e.g. focus on poorer <i>sections tsunami victims</i>, exclusion of government employees)

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<p>3. Orientation Meeting for potential beneficiaries</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Orientation meetings were held in public places easily accessible (schools) at DS level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Objectives, terms & conditions of support (eligibility criteria) ○ Formation of Livelihood Committee ● Power Point Presentation prepared. (060518 Cash for Livelihood Restoration Ampara (Orientation Meeting)) ● Due emphasis on explaining who is eligible. Project focused on poor families, who don't have sufficient resources of their own to restore their livelihood ● Illustrate with practical examples. Some participants realizing that they are not eligible left during the meeting. Some doubtful cases were clarified on the spot, thereby avoiding frustration at a later point of time. ● The Project Team applies a caring attitude towards the people (e.g. reduce waiting time, avoid bureaucratic procedures) ● Potential beneficiaries who claim that they have been missed out on the list are accepted subject to a recommendation of the DS. If somebody missed the meeting for good reasons, he/she is asked to come for another Orientation Meeting. ● After the meeting potential beneficiaries are invited to come for registration. A date and a time slot are given on the invitation letter. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Difficult to find suitable venue with sufficient capacity (meetings in schools only possible late afternoon after school hours) ● In some places participants were reluctant to propose committee members. They were afraid that the committee members would misuse their power, ask bribes and may have a bias in beneficiary selection. ● Out of habit and experience people come late to meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hold the meeting in suitable venue in a public place (school, town hall, etc.) Liaise and get the support of the DS to identify suitable venues. ● Book venues well in advance, check availability of electricity ● Livelihood Committee has only an advisory and facilitating role. ● Clear orientation on eligibility is crucial to facilitate next steps (grant approval). Illustrate eligibility with practical examples of rejected cases.


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<p>4. Registration (grant application form)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants are facilitated by volunteers in filling in the registration forms • Close supervision and coaching of volunteers in filling registration forms. • Grant Application & Business Plan form streamlined. Model Business Plans prepared. Volunteers trained in the use of forms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants of Orientation Meeting were asked to suggest venue for registration in or near to their GN Division. In some GN Divisions private places were suggested as venues. This may give the owner of the house unwanted influence and may be misused for political purposes.(see problem mentioned below)¹ • Applicants were reluctant to give information on income, subsequently during assessment of grant applications a number of inconsistencies were discovered. • At times, business ideas lack clarity and/or feasibility, and some applicants lack experience in the respective activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select neutral public places like schools as a venue for meetings and registrations. • Regular refresher training and close supervision/coaching of volunteers are required to improve quality of registration and thereby facilitate the subsequent assessment and approval of the grant. • Cross-checking and probing of information collected is important • Applicants with unfeasible or unclear business ideas are advised to re-think their plan and register later.



¹ Sainthamaruthu GN Division 12: The registration had to be stopped when some participants, apparently business men & local opinion leaders, objected aggressively to fill in the registration forms and refused to answer the “silly” questions regarding their income, assets, expenses, etc. and threatened the volunteers. (Later it was learnt that the GN Div. 12 has a reputation of being a “problem division”)
The registration was halted and continued only after the DS/GS and the committee assured that such kind of trouble will not happen anymore. After consultation with DS all potential beneficiaries of GN Div. 12 were invited again for an Orientation Meeting. The meeting was held on 02/04/06. Out of 144 potential beneficiaries, some 123 came to the Orientation Meeting. The purpose of the project & the eligibility criteria were again explained using practical examples for illustration. The meeting was peaceful, no disturbances. Subsequently on 04/04/06 the balance beneficiaries (65) got registered without any disturbances

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<p>5. On-site verification of registrations</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● During on-site visits volunteers verify the information given in the application form. The observations are used as an input for grant approval. ● After on-site verification the information given in the applications forms is cross-checked with Livelihood Committee members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At times the observations provided on the on-site visits are “routine” only and of limited use for grant approval. ● Some volunteers have not yet fully understood how to prepare a business plan. ● Volunteers at times advise changes of business proposals based on their understanding what will be likely acceptable and what not. ● At times applicants cannot be found 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On-site verification is done best by small teams of volunteers, closely supervised by Project staff ● Regular refresher training of volunteers is required to improve quality of observations ● In case of doubt, whether a business proposal has chances of being approved, volunteers should consult with Project Officer in Charge. ● Initially business plans were prepared during on-site verification. However, later it was observed that preparation of the business plan during registration is more efficient. ● If for any reason the applicant cannot be found (even with the help of the Livelihood Committee) the registration form should be filed under “not found” cases and maybe considered later if the applicant complains. ● Livelihood Committee’s role is limited. What is socially feasible, is less than originally expected.

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<p data-bbox="103 244 342 395">6. Assessment & approval of grants and Agreement</p>  	<ul data-bbox="369 256 896 678" style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grant applications are assessed and budgets are reviewed based on the information given in the application forms and the information collected during on-site verification of the registration. ● A formal agreement is signed between Helvetas and beneficiary including budget, amounts of the 2 instalments and conditions ● The grant amount & purpose is entered in the beneficiary's refugee card ("tsunami card") 	<ul data-bbox="927 256 1516 1225" style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not sufficient time available for proper assessment of each case (under time pressure applications are dealt with too quickly "production line assessment") ● Applicants may have to wait the whole day until their case is dealt with ● Difficulties to deal with "exception cases" in a consistent way (foreign remittances, family members with permanent source of income, major support from other organisations). ● Some applicants, whose application was rejected later in the process, got angry ("we have been losing our time") ● Eligibility: Some criteria are open to interpretation: "evidence of lost livelihood", e.g. somebody having a shop in an area not affected by tsunami, but lost all house with all assets, capital, etc. ● Family's residence outside DS (e.g. Sammanthurai, Batticaloa). Can be approved on an exceptional basis if progress monitoring is possible and other criteria provide additional support for the application. (family situation, business with high potential, etc.) ● Legal issues: Is illegal CD Writing/Copying supportable? 	<ul data-bbox="1547 256 2040 1465" style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sufficient time to be allocated for assessment (not more than 40 -50 cases per day, average 15-20 minutes per case) ● To improve "channeling" time slots are given to applicants. ● If an application is not approved, the challenge is to get the applicant's understanding and acceptance. To this end, the reasons must be explained to the applicant and recorded in sufficient detail on the assessment forms. ● Not approved cases to be filed separately (but not entered in database). ● In case of doubt applications are kept "pending" and another on-site visit is done by one of the Project Staff ● Grant Amount has to be sufficient to run the business, avoid under-funding. Preferably 2nd instalment should be bigger than 1st instalment to provide sufficient leverage to ensure proper use of the grant. ● Stamp in refugee cards – given amount and activity – is a good practise to avoid duplication & multiple funding. ● Criteria are not "written in stone". While a certain flexibility is required the challenge is to maintain consistency in dealing with "exception cases" (regular coordination and harmonisation within the team)

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7. Enter grant applications into database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time budget: 25 applications/data entry operator/day ● Database improved with pull-down menus to reduce errors and save time ● Key information (NIC no's, bank account no's) are double checked against photocopies to reduce errors. ● Description of database prepared (061113 Database Helvetas Cash for Livelihood Restoration Project, SL Ampara) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some business proposals are changed during the Assessment & Approval discussion. To avoid confusion the business proposal given in the agreement is entered. ● Abundance of livelihood activities (e.g. different descriptions/terms used for more or less the same activity) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Good database design is important for later analysis and reports. Making use of a specialised database backstopper can be an effective means to this end ● List of livelihood activities was streamlined. Use standard list for registration and data entry. ● Good registration work facilitates data entry.
8. Publication & sharing of beneficiary list	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To ensure accountability to affected communities and coordination (avoid duplication & multiple funding) beneficiary lists are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ shared with DS Office and other actors (details of beneficiaries & grant amount) ○ displayed in DS Office (details of beneficiaries without grant amount) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All Kalmunai Actors (INGO, NGO) informed by e-mail that beneficiary list is available for their information. No response. ● No mechanism in place to share beneficiary lists. Only few NGOs prepare beneficiary lists and make them available to DS office. ● The CAPS database developed by RADA, with support of ILO, is of limited use, as it does not record individual beneficiary details. ● Tamil speaking people have, at times, difficulties to read the beneficiary lists published in English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A proactive approach is required to share beneficiary lists with other NGOs ● Formal coordination is of limited use; informal coordination is often more fruitful ● Practice of handing over information (hard copies) to Divisional Secretaries is questionable, as accessibility of this information is not ensured (lack of expertise and commitment) ● Social control, i.e. pointing out ineligible cases to the project hardly ever happens.
9. Payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Payment is made in two instalments ● Letter to beneficiaries informing them when the payment will be made ● Payment order to Bank together with 2 copies of the beneficiary list (1 copy returned to Project with confirmation that payment has been made) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Send a copy of the agreement and a letter informing the beneficiary, when the payment will be made. ● Only one staff member responsible for all Bank contacts

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<p>10. Progress Monitoring</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● About 2 weeks after payment, the Project (Volunteers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ check the use of funds for stipulated purpose. If required, up to 3 follow – up visits are done ○ introduce/monitor cash book ● In case of doubt receipts, purchases of materials are checked with suppliers. ● Procedure for entering results of Project Monitoring in data base & format for data base reports developed ● More than 95% of the beneficiaries use the funds as agreed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● People don't fill cash books for self-monitoring of income & expenses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cash-books appear to be not a practical means for self-monitoring ● If addresses cannot be found a letter is sent by mail & via GS asking beneficiaries to provide location/address in order to do progress monitoring.
<p>13. Process Monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The project team regularly reviews the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation process and makes necessary adjustments if required. ● The documentation is used by the management for steering and operational reporting 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The regular reviews within the project team allow common search for better solutions and create a kind of “team ownership spirit”. ● Process Monitoring traces the history of implementation and provides a good base for reporting.

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<p>14. Impact Monitoring (IM)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IM carried out by the CfLR Project for Pilot Project Karaitivu & Ninthavur ● Report prepared and distributed for comments. ● IM Form streamlined (061113 IM Form) and field tested. IM with 100% coverage carried out for Pilot Project Karaitivu & Ninthavur. ● Findings of IM used for project steering (adjustment of implementation procedures) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IM Report suggests different procedure for forthcoming IM exercises, i.e. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 100% survey using a simplified questionnaire to be done by volunteers ○ additional in-depth survey (5-10% random sample) ● IM with 100% coverage allows collection of demand for credit (see access to micro-credit) ● IM done internally by Project staff generates useful learning and insights. The benefits of the latter outweigh potential risks of lack of objectivity.
<p>15. Access to micro-credit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaboration with SEEDS. Concept paper prepared and agreed upon (060709 Micro-Small Enterprise Development - Collaboration SEEDS-Helvetas) ● Potential beneficiaries identified for Pilot Project Karaitivu & Ninthavur. 		
<p>16. Training</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organised an exposure programme for poultry including farmer-to-farmer exchange ● A brief manual on broiler production prepared 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of knowledge and skills observed in some businesses (hygiene in food processing) but suitable training providers are yet to be identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training and training material must be practical and hands-on ● Farmer-to-farmer exchange most effective ● Need to give more attention to provide practical skill development and advice for selected activities.

Organisational level

Actors and main components	What worked well?	What made it difficult or created problems?	Lessons learnt & good practices
Project Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Motivated team (6 persons) covers all functions needed for implementation ▪ Use of part-time staff (Volunteers) is an effective means for good quality field operations ▪ Using a team approach, most staff - beside their key responsibility - participate also in the field work (registration, grant approval, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The gender balance is not adequately addressed in the team and difficult to meet for various reasons. Gender is better balanced in the volunteer teams and the livelihood committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Small team complemented with part-time staff ensured high level of efficiency ➔ Team approach enhances motivation and efficiency
Project Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Weekly staff meetings to review the work of the last week and plan for next week. ▪ Project Manager facilitates participatory planning of work and takes timely decisions. ▪ Feedback from HSL programme office and <h> headquarter and external backstoppers provided on request. 	.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Weekly planning meetings and weekly reporting facilitate adjustments of procedures (process monitoring), and keeps all stakeholders informed ➔ Keep reporting to the minimum required ➔ Feedback from the headquarter and backstopper should be on request (specific strategic issues) but may also include pro-active advice including practical tips

Actors and main components	What worked well?	What made it difficult or created problems?	Lessons learnt & good practices
Private partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People's Bank is a cooperative and efficient partner for payments to beneficiaries. ▪ Collaboration with 2 local NGOs (CPBR Kalmunai and A Little Smile Association Sainthamaruthu) providing volunteers for registration, on-site verification, progress monitoring, etc. ▪ Volunteers of partner NGOs get qualified (short trainings, supervision and advice during field work) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Following allegations of INGO staff involvement in sexual abuse of women working for INGOs, and leaflets distributed in Kalmunai actively discouraging women to work with INGOs all CPBR women volunteers have resigned. At present only 5 out of 25 volunteers are women. ▪ New volunteers (A Little Smile Association) still lack necessary know-how and efficiency in some of the tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Established collaboration with private partners (People's Bank, local NGO's) proved its worth. ➔ Collaboration with more than one NGO reduces dependency for getting volunteers ("don't put all the eggs in one basket!") ➔ Part-time work, in addition, to providing a welcome source of income, may enhance volunteers' future career opportunities.
Local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good collaboration with Government (Divisional Secretariats). The Project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ makes use of existing beneficiary list (government grant for houses) ○ provides beneficiary lists to DS ○ makes use of logistic support by DS (e.g. venue for meetings) ▪ DS's feedback on the project is highly appreciative. Some GS's have been supportive beyond expectations. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Collaboration with the local Government is limited to information sharing. This arrangement seems to suit both sides. In addition, it reduces potential risks of bribes and biased selection.
Framework conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helvetas policy is to delegate project management on the principle of subsidiarity. This allows the project management to act flexibly to local conditions ▪ Helvetas Programme Office Colombo supported the project with logistic and administrative services and provided necessary conceptual inputs when required 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Project steering based on the principle of subsidiarity is, among others, a key-factor for effective implementation of a Cash project.

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Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Project is part of the INGO security tree (with SMS messages, etc.) ▪ The Project uses Helvetas security guidelines. ▪ Vehicle with the standard security equipment (no arm sticker; flashing blue light, Helvetas flag, etc.) ▪ All local staff has mobiles and keeps each other informed on Hartals and security risks ▪ Satellite phone purchased in case that the mobile service would be shut down (till date this situation did not arise) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frequent Hartals mess up planned schedules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Security guidelines are useful but need to be used with common sense and sensitivity to local people's behaviour in tense situations
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making use of existing infrastructure (Cash for Host Families Project) ▪ Use of rented vehicles: 1 Toyota van rented on monthly basis. In addition another Toyota van and 3-Wheelers are hired as and when required. ▪ More office space (after Dec. 2006) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➔ Laptop computers are useful to ensure continued work also during Hartals and power cuts ➔ Renting vehicles is more cost-effective than purchase ➔ Good quality equipment enhances the job satisfaction and effective implementation