

Evaluation of Peace and Development

Programme

**Report on the second phase of the programme
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List of Abbreviations

BESSO	Beacon of the East Agrarian Service Centre
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CFA	Cease Fire Agreement
CHA	Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies
CPN	Community Protection Network
DRB	District Review Board
ERRO	Eastern Rehabilitation and Relief Organisation
FLICT	Facilitation Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation
GA	Government Agent
Kg	Kilogram
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
NCB	National Consultative Board
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
P&DP	Peace and Development Programme
RCDS	Rural Community Development Society
Rs.	(Sri Lankan) Rupees
STF	Special Task Force
SIM	Social Development and Informative Movement
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Glossary

Attam: Joint voluntary labour by the community.

Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam pact: Agreement between then Sri Lankan Prime Minister S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and Federal Party leader S.J.V. Chelvanayagam intended to safeguard some of the Tamil rights and concerns as formulated by the Federal Party. The pact was breached by Bandaranaike within the year.

Cadjan: Woven coconut leaves used for roofing and construction

Halwa: Sweets, commonly consumed by Muslims.

Murukku: Sri Lankan snack.

Short eat: Sri Lankan word for snack, normally consisting of dough with fish, meat or vegetables, combined with spices.

Special Task Force: Military section of the police that has assumed army-like responsibilities, particularly in parts of the east.

Uxori-local marriage: Marriage form in which the couple is going to live at the wife's household

Vanni: Region in the north of the country, roughly comprising the Kilinochchi and the Mullaitivu District. It has been under LTTE control for some ten years now.

Vesak: Buddhist religious festival, celebrated with the lighting of lanterns.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Peace and Development Programme

The Peace and Development Programme (P&DP) started its operations at the end of 2003. The Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA) created the programme following the developments after the signing of the Cease-fire Agreement (CFA) in February 2002. It was felt necessary to provide an extra impetus to maintain and support the peace process and to generate grounding for it.

The P&DP aimed, according to the project proposal, at the promotion of diversity, human rights, freedom and equal development opportunities for all Sri Lankans, as well as at human security and the elimination of fear and want through the provision of resources for national civil society organisations to invest in peace and development. The programme document identified a range of tasks, needs and objectives varying from national level goals encompassing the major conflict parties and the international donor community via district level mechanisms to more modest achievements at the local level. The programme had three phases: ‘advocacy and awareness’ (phase 1), the ‘promotion of investments for dividends’ (phase 2) and ‘peace and development’ (phase 3). In course of time, these rather general concepts were made more tangible: phase 2 was designated for income generation through grants and phase 3 was set up as a revolving loan fund. For the operation of the programme, CHA formed a National Consultative Board (NCB), District Review Boards (DRB) in the thirteen participating districts, and a management and monitoring structure located at its office in Colombo.

The Netherlands’ Minister for Development Co-operation, the Australian Agency for International Development, the Danish Development Cooperation Office, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the Royal Norwegian Embassy provided funds for the three-year programme. At the moment of writing this report the second phase is nearing its completion and the selection procedure for proposals for the third phase has started.

1.2 Evaluation

The Royal Netherlands Embassy in Colombo and the CHA have asked Utrecht University, the Netherlands to carry out the evaluation of the P&DP. The evaluation team comprised Prof. dr. Georg Frerks (professor of Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management, Utrecht University; team leader), Mr. Bart Klem (independent researcher; team member) and Mr. Henry de Mel (nominee of the NCB; team member). Apart from preparatory work in the Netherlands, the evaluation has taken place in two rounds, each again divided in two visits to Sri Lanka. In 2005 the team carried out an inception study. This study comprised field visits to seven of the thirteen districts covered by the P&DP, including about half of the projects funded in those districts, and a first identification of issues. The evaluation team wrote a report ‘Evaluation of the Peace and Development Programme, Report on the Inception Phase’ dated 9 October 2005. The second and last round of the evaluation study was carried out in 2006. A first preparatory visit was made from 10-15 July 2006, aimed at interviewing relevant parties in Colombo. In addition, the selection of districts and organisations

for the fieldwork in the second visit was carried out and necessary documentation made available, translated and studied. A field study was conducted from 14 till 28 August 2006. During the field study the districts of Ampara, Badulla, Batticaloa and Hambantota were visited. Batticaloa replaced Kilinochchi District, which had been the intended destination, because of the prevailing security situation and the inaccessibility of the Vanni. In each district, six organisations were visited. With some of them a more in-depth approach was followed and discussions or workshops organised with the beneficiaries and site visits held to see their activities. At the end of the mission the team debriefed the CHA office and the donors involved in funding the programme.

1.3 Evaluative approach

What have been the major concerns and considerations guiding the second phase of our evaluation study? In our original terms of reference we already argued that in a context characterised by several local and national level conflicts, a conventional interventionist approach to development, project planning and evaluation is often not feasible or desirable. The linear ‘cause-effect’ logic with a rigid time schedule was not deemed suitable for peace and development activities, while measurable results and associated forms of accountability were felt to be problematic in the domain of peace and conflict. The lack of systematic evidence on how peace-focused interventions are working and what type of societal causalities and linkages are involved, was another obstacle.

On the basis of our initial reading of the P&DP, we felt that the programme was still largely operated from a developmentalist frame of mind, including a fairly top-down managerial approach. We also wondered how grants for livelihood support and revolving funds as proposed for the second and third phases could comprise an effective contribution to the peace objectives of the programme. Finally, we thought that the more ambitious goals at the national level were perhaps not realistic and that a focus on civil society at district and local levels was probably more meaningful.

On the basis of these preliminary observations and a critical reading of the original project document as well as the findings of our inception study, we wrote an approach paper that was agreed upon with CHA and identified a number of evaluative questions. These can be found in the terms of reference in annex 2. The key questions guiding and focusing this final evaluation phase and its reporting can be summarised as follows:

- What are the benefits of the P&DP at the national, district, civil society organisation and beneficiary level?
- How are the results of the programme to be related to the specific context in which the programme is operating, especially with regard to the ongoing conflict in Sri Lanka?
- Does the P&DP contribute to peace?
- If so, through what mechanisms does it do so?
- If so, what type of peace does it concern and at what level is this achieved?
- Is the executive, operational and programmatic structure of the programme adequate?
- Is the substantive and temporal phasing of the programme adequate?
- What improvements can be made to the current programme?
- Should the programme be continued in the future and what direction should it then take?

1.4 Methodology

In contrast to the inception phase, in the second and last phase of the study, we decided to spend more time in each district, visit more organisations and talk to more beneficiaries to attain a more in-depth view on the programme and its benefits at the district and local level. We also felt that in this way we could do more justice to the link between content and context. Box 1 gives an overview of the evaluative activities undertaken. We provide a detailed list of interviews in Annex 1.

Box 1: Evaluative activities

- Perusal of major files at the CHA office. Relevant documents were copied, translated and notes were taken
- Interviews with CHA staff in Colombo
- Interviews with four of the five donors funding the programme
- Interviews with one NCB member
- Interviews with Facilitating Local Initiatives for Conflict Transformation (FLICT) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Visits to and in-depth interviews with twenty projects/organisations in the Ampara (5), Badulla (5), Batticaloa (5) and Hambantota (5) districts
- Interviews with four organisations that were part of the first phase, but not of phase 2, one in each district
- Nine interactive workshops with between seven and fifteen beneficiaries each
- Interviews with project beneficiaries, individually or in small or medium-sized groups up to thirty people
- Interviews with seven members of the District Review Boards.
- Interviews with five CHA staff in the districts.
- Feedback from P&DP team and Executive Director CHA.

From all interviews and visits, we have made detailed field reports during the trip and occasionally scrutinised, collected or copied additional materials at the organisations visited. Most interviews with organisations lasted between two and three hours and enabled the team a fairly detailed insight into the activities and perceptions of those interviewed. The interactive workshops lasted between two and four hours, while the interviews with donors, NCB and DRB members and beneficiaries took on average about one till two hours. The fieldwork has generally been carried out according to plan except for the unavoidable problems of a logistic nature and delays due to travelling and, occasionally, checkpoints. During the interviews we had in the east, we noticed that the situation had become tense again. Some respondents were afraid or reluctant to discuss the conflict situation openly and did not dare to mention the parties involved by name. They talked about an unspecified ‘they’ or about ‘outside parties’. Others started whispering or looked around whether anybody else could overhear what they said. In such cases we obviously did not pursue and changed the topic of the conversation.

2 Taking stock of Programme and Context

Prior to analysing a number of evaluative issues, we need to take stock of the programme and its context. In this descriptive chapter we thus discuss three things. Firstly, the main findings of the previous round of the evaluation and subsequent changes to the P&DP. Secondly, the changing context of the programme, that is the collapse of the peace process and the resumption of war. And thirdly, the nature and progress of the projects funded under phase 2 of the P&DP, which took place in the past year.

2.1 Earlier conclusions and adjustments to the P&DP

This report reflects the second round of fieldwork of this evaluation, which was carried out in 2006. Nonetheless, it is useful at this point to recall the main findings of our earlier fieldwork as well. Some of our previous recommendations have been taken on by the CHA.

An overarching observation in our previous report was the over-ambitious and ambiguous agenda of the programme. The project document was loaded with ideas, concepts and objectives, while it was unclear how this could all be realised. Meanwhile, the actual activities carried out at field level – at that time mainly awareness raising events – were in fact fairly coherent and focused. We thus recommended abandoning some of the ambitions and tighten the P&DP in line with the evolving practice.

We observed that the programme's institutional structures and procedures were well in place. Staff had been assigned and the National Consultative Board and the District Review Boards were functioning. Regarding the DRBs, we found that they were weak and ad-hoc. The idea of decentralising decision-making was somewhat illusionary in that regard, we argued. The regional structures in the Vanni were a clear exception, as they were in fact very strong. This, however, was a problem in itself, as they were intrinsically tied in with the problems related to working in areas controlled by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

With regard to monitoring, we encouraged CHA's steps at the time to hire a dedicated research and monitoring officer, while also setting up regional monitoring structures. We felt monitoring had to be done conscientiously and extensively with staff spending large amounts of time in the field. This has materialised. For further improvement, we suggested a less technocratic, more open-minded approach to monitoring. In addition to 'filling the forms', staff could usefully spend their time talking to organisations and beneficiaries and draw up a more narrative review. In the course of this year, it seems the CHA has also taken these observations to heart. Regional monitoring officers have commenced work and the qualitative, narrative element of monitoring has improved.

We spent a major part of the report discussing the issue of relevance during last year's evaluation. Defining which activities are relevant contributions to peace in Sri Lanka, strongly depends on the region concerned, we argued. What is considered a step towards peace in Mullaitivu may not be very relevant at all in Moneragala or Puttalam and vice versa. We thus suggested a more differentiated approach, based on the context in a district and the way people view the war and their position in it.

Drawing from this region-specific approach, we had two main observations about the design of the programme. Firstly, the P&DP lacked focus with regard to the level of conflict – domestic, community, regional, national – it aimed to address. We recommended a focus on the middle level. Though there does not seem to have been a formal decision on this, in practice, this recommendation seems to have been adopted. Our second criticism concerned the phased approach elaborated above. We argued that these phases were somewhat artificial, unnecessarily rigid and possibly unsuitable to local contexts and preferences and therefore suggested to abolish this logic. Though there seems to have been some additional thinking on how to approach phase 2 and 3, CHA has not made any adjustments to the phased design as such.

On the basis of our field data at the time, we were struggling with the issue of effectiveness. The impact of awareness raising events funded in phase 1 was of course inherently difficult to assess, but we observed that some of the activities had rather tangible and positive effects. In most cases the organisations and their beneficiaries had observed positive responses during the exercise as well as afterwards. Subtle changes in behaviour and attitude were observed. Follow-up initiatives from beneficiaries and spontaneous co-operation also had occurred. Though these observations provided some useful evidence, we feel that the fieldwork conducted this year is more robust in reaching conclusions in the field of effectiveness. We focused on a smaller number of districts and had more time to spend on discussions at beneficiary level. In view of the marginal funds used by each organisation, our previous report argued efficiency was high. Sustainability, we felt, was a weakness, as many projects concerned one-off events. One concrete recommendation dealt with the size of the donations provided. Though the small-scale focus of the P&DP constitutes its strength and eloquence, the grants per organisation were a bit too small, we stipulated. On the basis of this recommendation, the CHA has increased the amount per organisation from Rs. 150,000 to Rs. 250,000 in phase 2.

We were quite critical of the national programme component of the P&DP. We found no link with the programme's main body (community level projects), while some of the projects were driven by donor preferences and there was a risk of duplication, because agencies such as FLICT were supporting similar activities. We, therefore, suggested abolishing the national programme. In line with this, we argued for down-scaling the P&DP ambitions at the national level. In our view, the programme was particularly strong at the regional and local level. Moreover, we did not necessarily consider it a weakness that the programme did not engineer a major national impact. From a people's perspective, local realities are extremely important; P&DP-like programmes that address this level are thus invaluable. Though not formally ruling out the possibility of a new national project, CHA has exercised great restraint in this connection. No new activities were initiated. Therefore, we have not looked into this aspect any more in this evaluation.

2.2 Changes in the context

The P&DP was conceived at a time when the peace process was upbeat. The ceasefire agreement, normalisation efforts and the commencement of direct talks between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE had a major impact on everyday life in the country and hopes were high for the future. Many international donors reoriented their programmes to reinforce these hopeful developments. Bolstering peace and nurturing peaceful attitudes at societal level were part of this

strategy. This had been very difficult under war conditions, but spaces for programmes such as the P&DP were opening in 2002 and part of 2003.

By the time, the programme actually started, the initial momentum of the peace process had been lost. Talks were suspended, political fragmentation prevailed, security conditions in the east deteriorated and popular criticism on the peace process was rife. The split off of the Karuna faction from the LTTE and its evolution as a political and military organisation – the Tamil People’s Liberation Tigers – led to increased tensions and violence. This no-war-no-peace context was further complicated by the tsunami.

In the past year, the peace process reached its terminus. The killing of foreign minister Kadirgamar further upset relations between the LTTE and the government. With the election of Mahinda Rajapakse as president in November 2005, the preceding political impasse in the south was broken, but political space for manoeuvre remained minimal. In December 2005, violence went on a tangent. Assaults of government security personnel, bombing of alleged LTTE positions, killing of civilians and political assassinations took a heavy toll in a short time period. Attempts to curb the escalation and restart negotiations only fed suspicion and mutual accusations. Propaganda and political rhetoric geared up on both sides. In recent months these ‘incidents’ transformed into a limited war, with direct military combat, exchange of artillery, aerial bombing and short-lived territorial advances. Killing of civilians, closing of checkpoints and the cutting off of irrigation schemes led to significant humanitarian suffering and displacement in the north and east. In the south, targeted attacks on political figures continued and the flow of corpses returning from the battlefield recommenced.

At this juncture, the P&DP thus operates in a context that is almost diametrically opposed to its original environment. With the north cut off from the rest of the country and the east caught in an upsurge of multi-polar violence, the programme struggles with limited access and dangers. Moreover, tensions, taboos and intimidation have remerged on the scene, impeding the political climate to talk about peace in many areas. Yet, it transpires that it is precisely at times like this that the P&DP matters. ‘If we forget about a programme like this during wartime, it’s pointless to be a peace organisation,’ one person said.

2.3 Reviewing of the programme

Despite the turmoil, the P&DP proceeded largely according to schedule. With the first round of funding completed, the P&DP moved on to phase 2. The nature of the projects supported in this phase was quite different from the previous round. Though there was a certain level of diversity in phase 1, the bulk of the projects were committed to awareness raising activities. Usually, these projects concerned a number of activities, including cultural ceremonies, inter-ethnic activities and various trainings and seminars related to peace.

Phase 2 was more homogeneous and standardised. All projects were geared towards income generation. In the projects visited, these activities included brick making, rope making, cultivation, setting up small shops or trade businesses, the rearing of chicken, cows or goats. With only Rs. 250,000 per project, the number of beneficiaries was naturally limited. Typically, about 30 people were given an average grant of between Rs. 5,000 and 8,000. The grant was spent on the

purchasing of tools, seeds, animals and other requirements. In some cases all beneficiaries decided to undertake the same activity; while other projects encompassed a diversity of income generating efforts.

The project selection procedure was identical to the first phase. The requirements were widely published, the organisations handed in their proposal, the DRBs discussed the proposal and decided on the final selection together with CHA staff. The Vanni were an exception as phase 1 and 2 were merged together in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu District. Though phase 1 and 2 are essentially accumulative, the continuity of the selected partner organisations was much lower in the other districts. As is shown in table 1, many ‘new’ organisations entered the programme in phase 2. In fact, less than half of them went through the first phase. According to CHA, the reason is that some organisations had no interest to continue their efforts under the P&DP, for example due to the tsunami rush. Other agencies were barred from further participation, because CHA staff felt they had no genuine interest and commitment in the programme and implementation was weak.

Table 1: Continuity of recipient organisations per district

District	# of organisations in phase 2 that participated in phase 1 as well	Percentage
Ampara	3 out of 7	43
Badulla	3 out of 7	43
Batticaloa	2 out of 6	29
Hambantota	1 out of 7	14
Jaffna	4 out of 7	57
Kilinochchi	7 out of 7	100
Mannar	1 out of 7	14
Moneragala	3 out of 7	43
Mullaitivu	6 out of 6	100
Pollonaruwa	3 out of 7	43
Puttalam	2 out of 7	29
Trincomalee	4 out of 7	57
Vavuniya	1 out of 7	14
Total	40 out of 89	45

As was the case in phase 1, several of the organisations selected for funding are quite small. Some of them are nearly community-based organisations (CBOs) with only a few staff members, a small, poorly equipped office and a track record of just a few projects. On the other end, we find organisations such as Mahashakthi Foundation (Ampara), Future in our Hands (Badulla) and Kantha Sangwardena Maha Sangamaya (Hambantota), which are large organisations that have become professionalised to a considerable degree and have executed and continue to carry out dozens of projects funded by sometimes more than ten or twenty external funding agencies. They frequently have substructures comprising some dozens of local CBOs or saving groups, while the number of members may reach up to ten thousand. They all have formal structures and paid staff, sometimes over fifty. Apart from office staff and accountants, most of them employ programme coordinators and field officers or monitors. They frequently work with teams of volunteers as well. They usually carry out a large variety of different activities in the field of education, psycho-social work, vocational training, income generation, water and sanitation, childhood and adolescent development, women activities, capacity building, awareness programmes and empowerment. On a positive note one could say that this bewildering variety of activities reflects the multidimensional

needs of the target group, but it could also be seen as a lack of specialisation or a type of supply-driven approach dictated by anything that funding agencies wish to pay for.

As can be derived from table 2 below, the progress of the projects differs per district. In short, the north is lagging behind, while the Upcountry, Ampara, Batticaloa, Hambantota, Moneragala and Puttalam are making steady progress. Staff reports that the projects in the Vanni have pretty much come to a standstill. Meanwhile, Jaffna, Trincomalee and Vavuniya are not making much headway either. In parallel to phase 2, CHA has initiated the last phase of the programme in four districts and approved 28 proposals, seven in each district.

Table 2: Phases and progress per district¹

District	Phase 1 (# of projects in brackets)	Phase 2					Phase 3		
		Pending	Commenced	Half way	Nearly completed	Completed	Proposals received	Short-listed	Approved
Ampara	Completed (6)			4	3		19	12	7
Badulla	Completed (6)		2	3	1	1	16	13	7
Batticaloa	Completed (6)	1		3	3		0	0	0
Hambantota	Completed (6)		1	2	3	1	13	10	7
Jaffna	Completed (7)		7				0	0	0
Kilinochchi	Completed (6)	1	6				0	0	0
Mannar	Completed (6)		3	4			0	0	0
Moneragala	Completed (6)				7		12	9	7
Mullaitivu	Completed (6)		6				0	0	0
Pollonaruwa	Completed (6)		2	3	2		0	0	0
Puttalam	Completed (6)		1	1	5		0	0	0
Trincomalee	Completed (7)		7				0	0	0
Vavuniya	Completed (6)	1	6				0	0	0
Total		3	41	20	24	2	60	44	28

This chapter has reviewed the adjustments made in the programme on the basis of our earlier findings. In the past year, some improvements have been made to the programme partly on the basis of our conclusions and recommendations. Most notably, monitoring has improved, the grant size has been increased, and the programme has strengthened its local focus and abandoned the national programme. The last year was, however, at the same time characterised by a resumption of hostilities between the government and the LTTE and by violence, abductions, displacement and associated problems. This does not diminish the relevance of the programme, despite the fact that the situation differs radically from the time that the programme was written. It seems even more relevant than ever to strengthen people in their effort to prevent outside pressures from spoiling their direct environment and conjuring up ethnic enmity and violence. It does mean, however, that some districts have become difficult to work in. In the north very little progress was made. More

¹ These data are based on the latest available overview, dated 30 June 2006.

generally, we observed that there is no universal pattern. Despite the standardising logic operated from Colombo, the nature and the speed of progress differ per district and among organisations.

3 Local realities in the East and the South

We have ventured to include a separate chapter on local realities. This may seem to be an odd or bold step in a programme evaluation, but there were three important reasons to do so. Firstly, as we have argued in our previous report, there are major differences between the various regions in Sri Lanka. The war in Sri Lanka is often conceptualised as one phenomenon that is manifest in the various parts of the country, but what the conflict is about, how it is perceived and what would constitute a contribution to peace differs per region, or even per district.

Secondly, the local level matters to people. Interestingly, many people we spoke to seemed to consider the peace process and other national developments an externality that they had little connection with. In the east, for example, only one person referred to president Rajapakse and his policies. People are preoccupied with their immediate neighbours and injustices or conflicts in their immediate environment.

Thirdly, the local level matters to the Sri Lankan peace process at large. Popular attitudes and electoral space are key benchmarks for the political process in Sri Lanka. Ethno-nationalist politics is in many ways a function of the perceptions and opinions of the masses.

For this reason, fourthly, the P&DP was deliberately designed to focus on local contexts and organisations, though it has some national level objectives as well. Contributing to peace at that level entails efforts to transform attitudes and behaviours. To adequately appreciate how such initiatives work in practice, we need to understand inter-ethnic relations and attitudes in the local context.

We thus want to present a few glimpses of local reality in the east and the south of the country, where we did our fieldwork. We base this chapter nearly exclusively on the material gathered during our interviews, so as to construct a bottom-up narrative from the areas covered by the P&DP. We realise that the method followed here can only be based on a small and purposive selection from a much wider reality. Moreover, it reflects the local views, perceptions and discourses we came across. Though one cannot perhaps describe any of those views or discourses completely as factually true, they nevertheless inform people's attitude, behaviour and action and implicate the actors involved and society at large. They provide the qualitative backdrop against which we wish to position the P&DP, so as to arrive at a more contextual analysis in the chapters that follow.

3.1 Inter-ethnic relations: a pattern of diversity

The ethnic make-up of the four districts included in this report is very diverse. Hambantota is strongly Sinhala dominated, with some small pockets of Muslims and Tamils. The east however is multi-ethnic. Though Batticaloa is Tamil dominated, while interior Ampara is largely Sinhala, Muslims, Tamils and Sinhalese communities live interspersed and in close proximity to each other in both districts. People refer to 'border villages', where they cross the boundary between one and the other community. Finally, Badulla is Sinhala dominated with some Muslim communities and the unique feature of Indian Tamil pockets on and around the estates.

Historically, these patterns and balances have not been static. Muslims, Burghers and Indian Tamils landed in the country in different historic periods. Within the country, there have been movements as well. The east has witnessed a considerable influx of Sinhalese in the past fifty years due to colonisation and settlement schemes in the area that were and still are vehemently contested by the LTTE, as they claim that the east is part of the traditional Tamil homeland. In addition, violence and enmity have resulted in displacement. Anti-Tamil riots in 1983 and before resulted in population movements. More recently, the conflict and the tsunami have reshuffled the demographic make-up in many areas, particularly in the north and east, but also in some parts of the south. The emergence of LTTE controlled – and thus Tamil only – areas in the course of the war has also been a factor here. Local topographies are very much inscribed in everybody's mind and people know the names of the different localities and their histories precisely.

Though development-induced demographic and electoral dynamics are a hotly debated issue at national levels, in the local view multi-ethnicity is largely accepted as a fact. In the east, people typically argue that 'we have always lived here together in the past and so we have also to live here together now and in the future.' Invariably, they refer to the good relations the communities maintained in the past. In fact, there used to be many forms of interrelationship. Likewise, in Badulla and Hambantota, people separate the 'national issue' and the war from their relations with neighbouring communities. Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims in Badulla argued that ethnic conflict is something from the north and east. The Upcountry is different. 'This is not like other areas. There is no ethnic struggle. People live peacefully,' one person said.

In many areas, there has traditionally been a variety of inter-ethnic interactions. Particularly economic links have been persistent. Villages in the east were frequently surrounded by paddy lands owned by people from another community. Especially Tamils used to work as labourers on Muslim lands. Also with regard to business and trade there were many connections between the communities. In other parts of the country, such exchange of labour and goods occurred as well. Particularly, the Muslims play a key role in trade. To some extent, the Indian Tamils were an exception in this regard, as they worked primarily on the estates. In their case, employment was thus an 'ethnic divider'. This, however, is gradually changing. Especially the youth, many of whom have enjoyed better education than their parents, is eager to move out to other economic sectors. In Hambantota, some of the Tamils and Muslims strongly intermingle with the Sinhalese, because of the latter's numerical dominance. Some Tamils find their children hardly consider themselves Tamil anymore. In fact, they make fun of their parents when they speak Tamil.

In all districts, mixed marriages occur, even up to this very day. In the east, people refer to the traditional tendency to have tea and food together, as well as visiting social events and religious festivals of one another. Tamils and Muslims not only share the same language, but also many habits and customs, it was said. Many Tamils and Muslims speak some Sinhalese, while many Sinhalese in predominantly Tamil or Muslim areas could manage a few words of Tamil.

As in every society, all areas included in this study experienced conflicts. Disputes between people over land, assets, marriage, alcohol and other local problems were in fact fairly common. Essentially, the respondents felt these conflicts were unrelated to ethnicity. In an ethnicised context, however, there was a risk that these trivial matters manifested themselves along ethnic fault lines.

A non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Hambantota cited the example of a private conflict between two families, who happened to be Sinhala and Muslim. However, when it came to be portrayed as an ethnic struggle, it took a quantum leap and somebody eventually got killed. Similar examples can be quoted from the war-torn areas.

The major difference between Batticaloa and Ampara on the one hand and Badulla and Hambantota on the other is the proximity to the battlefield. Whereas the east has been the theatre of war throughout the 1990s, the Upcountry and the south have witnessed much less violence after the insurrection of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna in the 1980s. Naturally, there has been violence in the south as well, but people's relation with the war and its atrocities is fundamentally different. We therefore discuss both regions separately in the paragraphs below.

3.2 Inter-ethnic relations in the war zone: violence and responses to it

Nearly all people we spoke with in the east said that the erstwhile good relationships between the different communities had seriously eroded due to the war and spates of arguably externally incited inter-ethnic violence. People invariably blamed politicians, (unidentified) armed groups including the LTTE and the Karuna faction, the Special Task Force (STF) and the army and other 'outside agents' for instigating or provoking violence. Some respondents also referred to the Indian Peace Keeping Force that killed dozens of villagers in the area. The majority of the beneficiaries of the P&DP in the east have been subject to, or have witnessed violence due to the war. Violent incidents have been wide-spread and involved between a few to several hundreds of casualties. There also have been many disappearances, arbitrary arrests and abductions. Beneficiaries tend to know the details of these gruesome acts. Many of them are war widows or have lost other relatives. People had their villages bombed, their houses burned or looted, or had to leave their place of origin due to fighting between the conflict parties or, in some cases, due to inter-ethnic clashes. Of those, several spent years in refugee camps before they could safely return. There were families who had been displaced several times, especially those in border areas, such as the beneficiaries of Social Developmental and Informative Movement (SIM) in Thiyavadduvvan, Mailan Karachi and Polinagar. There were also families who were displaced from their refugee camps due to war or more recently again by the tsunami.

Upon return most displaced found that their houses had been looted or severely damaged, and that their means of livelihood had been destroyed, including their livestock and coconut trees. It is here that loans or grants by the P&DP may contribute directly to restoring the damage to livelihoods and help securing the generation of at least modest levels of income and employment. Other losses included the lack of education in many parts of the east during those years; schools were closed or there were no teachers to educate the children.

The prevailing overall sphere of intimidation led to intense fears and anxieties and the experiences lived through have left mental scars. Suspicions vis-à-vis the other communities, rumours and the continuing violence led to a serious reduction of inter-ethnic contact, if any at all. The earlier economic relationships were nearly completely abandoned and fear prevented people from visiting each other and maintain even minimum levels of mutual exchange. Nobody knew 'who was who' anymore, and maintaining contacts with outsiders or other communities could simply be dangerous. It was no longer safe to discuss war-related or political issues openly, as things could easily be used

against you. ‘We only open our mouth to eat or to yawn’, one informant said. A lady told that ‘we cannot protest or give our opinion, lest we will be shot’. An NGO leader expressed a similar feeling of helplessness and the lack of free speech among the various factions and forces: ‘We are like a drum ... beaten from both sides.’

Most of the civil society organisations from the east in our sample emerged as a local response to these conditions in the mid and late nineties. The founders told they were motivated to do something for the people suffering from the war consequences, as they saw that hardly any help was forthcoming from the government or from outside. Very often these NGOs started as small self-help activities supported by a number of local well-wishers or by organising activities such as printing calendars to raise some income. Some did psycho-social work with support of the South-eastern University, while others set up local savings and loan schemes or small income generating projects in order to regain local livelihoods. Many focused on war victims, widows, women-headed households, children and the poorest segments of the population in general. The existence of an uxori-local marriage system in some areas of the east made that some families nearly completely relied on females and were extra vulnerable, as the sons left their parental house to live with the wife’s relatives after marriage. Interestingly, some organisations focused exclusively on women, as these were deemed more reliable partners and had a good reputation of repaying the loans, whereas ‘men spent the income earned on arrack and failed to pay back’. Several organisations finally focused on school leavers and school drop-outs, as these were deemed extra vulnerable to conscription by armed groups, especially when they had no work or future perspectives.

After some time, nearly all the organisations in our sample managed to attract funds from outside agencies such as international NGOs, embassies, donor agencies, United Nations agencies and in some cases larger local NGOs, or more sporadically, rich local individuals. Most of them have in the mean time carried out twenty or more projects funded by a dozen or even more funding agencies. As a consequence, these organisations grew quickly, registered themselves officially and professionalised to varying degrees.

Nearly all agencies in the east have also included some peace-related work in their programmes, whether in the psycho-social realm, awareness, reconciliation, or by improving inter-ethnic relations through organising exchanges, mixed youth camps and shramadanas.

Several of the agencies visited do work in the uncleared areas. This creates extra hurdles in terms of transport, access and passing checkpoints. The LTTE does not generally interfere with their activities, though they keep a watch on them and once instructed them to focus on low-caste and poor households. One source said that the movement requires a tax to be paid on all activities and contracts carried out. Another source indicated that the movement controlled some local NGOs and also had a level of influence in the local consortium and on the district administration.

Despite continuing levels of violence and intimidation, there have been some positive developments after the CFA, both in terms of regaining livelihoods and improved inter-ethnic relations. The most recent developments, however, are a matter of great concern to the NGOs and beneficiaries in the programme. Hostilities between the government and the LTTE have resumed and killings in the east have increased dramatically. During the days of our visit bodies have been found in Batticaloa town and in Akkaraipattu, there was a bomb blast in the market of Ottamavadi

and shelling took place from army camps in the cleared areas around Batticaloa to the uncleared areas at the other side of the lagoon. Suspicions, rumours and threats led to a pervasive feeling of insecurity and tension, though some people tried to be phlegmatic, saying 'we are accustomed to all of this'. Some respondents were afraid to discuss the conflict situation openly.

3.3 Inter-ethnic relations outside the war zone: frogs in the well

Badulla and Hambantota have witnessed little ethnic violence in recent years and there are a number of interactions between ethnic groups. That is not to say that ethnic boundaries are secondary. In Badulla, people characterised their own society as a compartmentalised one. Even though they lived interspersed with the other ethnic groups and run into each other in the bus or at the market, many people have limited personal contact. In nearly mono-Sinhala areas of Badulla and Hambantota, Sinhalese often did not know a Tamil or Muslim person by name.

In both districts, few people had no first hand experience of the war and developments in the north and east, but they feel the indirect effects of the war. Some of the Upcountry Tamils worry about checkpoints and their lack of identity papers. Some of the Sinhalese worry about the rising costs of living. Their fears are thus fundamentally different from the eastern districts. They felt the resumption of war was unfortunate, but also understandable. Many argued the LTTE left the government little alternative. Without exception, they made it a point though that they distinguished the Tamil people from the LTTE.

Nonetheless, the recent escalation of violence added pressure on inter-ethnic relations. Most people we spoke to were determined not to let these outside developments affect their personal relations, but the return of body bags and the rise of political rhetoric brought along a level of tension, they admitted. A pro- and anti- war camp emerged in some villages. Even far away from the battlefield, the context has become less conducive for peaceful relations, respondents felt.

Also, some people indicated that peaceful inter-ethnic relations left structural injustices and inequalities unaddressed. One young Tamil man indicated he was sceptical when he first heard about the P&DP project. 'You talk about human rights, but we have none' was his response. At the local level, he explained, he was happy to interact with Sinhalese and Muslims, but at the national there were serious issues to be dealt with. The private sector and the government discriminated against Tamils and refuse to speak Tamil. Tamils had to learn Sinhala, but not vice versa. The bus company ran to the Sinhala village, but was reluctant to proceed to the estate. Many Tamils still did not have adequate identity papers, with severe social and economic consequences.

Interestingly, many of the NGOs in the Upcountry were initiated by Sinhalese outside of the estate, but a significant part of their work focuses explicitly at relieving the hardship and marginalisation faced by the estate Tamils. Contrary to the east, NGOs had not been created in response to the war. They invariably had a local agenda focusing on socio-economic issues. Issues like peace and inter-ethnic harmony were therefore relatively new to the portfolio of many agencies. One Sinhala NGO leader in fact admitted he used to be quite nationalistic. As a result of awareness programmes and exposure, he had however changed his mind and this was reflected in the work of his organisation. He had adopted inter-ethnic harmony and awareness about peace as one of the key objectives of his organisation.

Though their main objectives are essentially of a developmental nature, most of the organisations included in the P&DP had a strong interest in peace. Particularly in the multi-ethnic areas, but occasionally in some of the less diverse regions as well, they placed strong emphasis on the peace component of the P&DP. Observers of the P&DP may have expected that some of the organisations adapted to the peace logic and semantics, only to gain access to project funding. This proves not to be the case. Many of the agencies had themselves adopted a mission with regard to inter-ethnic harmony and related themes. They were quite aware of the underlying rationale of the programme and its objectives. These agencies 'own' the P&DP approach. Some of the agencies in the mono-ethnic areas, however, continued to have a mainly economic focus and had less interest or awareness of the 'peace element' of the P&DP.

In sum, we observe that inter-ethnic interactions are an indigenous feature of Sri Lankan society. Importantly for the P&DP, economic links constitute an important driver of these relations. These forms of peaceful coexistence have come under strain, however, by conflict, violence and political tension. People tend to perceive these factors as outside forces that disrupt or threaten to upset their erstwhile positive interactions. A final important observation for the P&DP is that many of the NGOs involved were either set up deliberately to counter this disruptive, conflict inducing forces or adopted peace related objectives in the course of their work.

4 Benefits created by the P&DP

In this chapter we present the main benefits created by the programme in the four districts studied. At the end of this chapter we revisit the design, structures and processes of the P&DP and make some observations regarding further improvements that may be indicated.

Regarding the structure of the first part of this chapter dealing with the four districts studied, we have decided to split it into multi-ethnic and mono-ethnic areas, as we have observed that this determines to a large degree the relevance and impact of the programme in terms of its original goals. The multi-ethnic areas in our sample comprised most of Ampara and Batticaloa, but parts of Badulla and Hambantota as well. In Ampara, Badulla and Hambantota, respectively one, two and four of the organisations studied worked in mono-ethnic regions. These organisations therefore have been included in the next section on mono-ethnic areas below. We of course realise that there are major differences within the multi and mono-ethnic areas, particularly in terms of the ethnic groups living in the area and the manifestation of open conflict and associated violence that largely characterised the east. Where relevant, we will highlight such differences.

4.1 Effects in multi-ethnic areas

As was discussed earlier, the P&DP in the second phase comprised the provision of grants of between Rs. 7,000 and 8,000 to about thirty beneficiaries per organisation funded. Though these were used for livelihood purposes, they simultaneously had to be instrumental in fostering peace. With the broad range of objectives that the P&DP has, it is interesting to find out what beneficiary populations consider to be the main benefits of the programme. Below we, categorise them under six headings.

Livelihood support: income and employment generation

The relevance of livelihood support to the beneficiaries of the programme *per se* is beyond doubt. Nearly all organisations work for groups or in areas with a large need for economic development in terms of employment and income creation. This is obviously even more so the case in the areas that were hit by the war and where levels of disruption and destruction are high, but Badulla and Hambantota were also considered to be among the poorest parts of the country. Many families had to flee their homes and completely lost their properties and livelihood and had to start all over again after return. Tsunami-struck areas have similar problems, despite the huge amounts spent on those areas.

Most of the organisations had run this type of livelihood support programmes before and the choice of these organisations has been proper in this regard. Most, but not all of them, had also worked on peace activities in one way or another. We feel that the beneficiary selection done by the organisations was in nearly all cases adequate. They had focused on the poorest sections of the population, and more specifically on the aged without much family support, war victims, widows and female-headed households, people who had become unemployed, or school leavers and dropouts. Often, these had been selected by the people themselves. In a very small number of cases we had doubts about the selection. We do, for example, not see the need to help people who are

rich enough to have a television, mobile phone and a hi-fi set, with a grant of Rs. 6,000. There could have been compelling social reasons to have included them, e.g. when they were the only family in that village representing a particular minority group, but in our case that could not be ascertained and thus this apparently is a case of wrong selection or elite capture. However, such cases were exceptional in the areas visited.

As mentioned earlier, the programme supported home gardening, the set up of small shops and businesses, poultry farming and goat rearing, brick making and similar activities. The beneficiaries visited were generally able to put the grant to an effective use. Many of the beneficiaries had some prior experience or skills in what they undertook to develop, or chose something that was suited to their personal circumstances, as the case of Ms. Aminaamma shows.

Ms. Aminaamma was a widow of 63 years living in a Muslim village close to Valechenai on the east coast. She lived in a small hut on the compound of her daughter and had no own income. With the Rs. 5,000 she had received from SIM, she had bought pots, pans, trays and utensils and had started producing and selling food items and short-eats. She herself made the *halwa*, *murukku* and manioc chips, but she also bought mixtures and repacked them in small bags. She sold to the school canteen, to people in the village, but also Tamil children from a neighbouring village would come and buy the short-eats from her house. She told that the income she derived from this was enough to run her life. Moreover, she had done this work earlier and being alone this work suited her, while raising poultry or goats would be much more difficult for her.

Almost invariably, the NGOs involved organised some additional training sessions with regard to the income generating activity or provided the necessary guidance, support, monitoring and follow-up. In several cases, moreover, the beneficiaries had been organised in local-level saving or producer groups that had become part of the 'mother' organisation. In general, there were few constraints in terms of knowledge or skills. Many beneficiaries showed entrepreneurial acumen and were also prepared to take some risk as the story of Ms. Subathra shows.

Ms. Subathra and her husband had rented a two-acre plot and started growing vegetables in Kannagipuram, a small village near Alayavirembu (Ampara District), with the inputs provided by Mahashakhti. They worked both on the plot, but also had to hire a labourer to help with weeding. The husband told that he had already harvested ladies' fingers and wing beans, and that his beans would be ready in fifteen days from now. He could then harvest every three days up to fifty kgs each time, for which he would fetch about Rs. 30 per kg. The husband slept at the plot at night to chase away the elephants that were fond of the beans, he told. He brought the beans to the town on his bicycle, where he sold them to Muslim traders.

The provision of inputs, though for a fairly small amount, did not create bottlenecks. Some organisations had provided the beneficiaries with the grant money. In other cases they had provided them with inputs in kind, especially in the home-gardening projects. Future in our Hands, an NGO from Badulla, allowed the beneficiaries to buy their own needs, but not to handle the funds. A field officer accompanied them to make the purchases. It was common for beneficiaries to combine the grant with some of their own resources. People added some of their savings to buy a cow instead of some goats or they used the money to restart their shop, which had gone bankrupt earlier. Other people were unable to do this as they did not have any savings. Some of these people argued the grants are actually a bit too small. Effects, efficiency and sustainability would be greater when the amounts would be slightly increased. This seems to be a defensible line of action. Nevertheless, even with the small amounts significant income is generated. Neither the marketing nor the prices received for the products appeared to be a problem, as the case of the brick making below shows.

Ms. Malini Hemalatha came from a remote Sinhalese village in the east. She had started a brick making business. She took the clay from her own plot, but had to hire labourers for the heavy work. These were all Tamils, who ate, stayed and slept at her house. She had to buy the husks for burning the bricks from outside. The prices of bricks had gone up from Rs. 3 to Rs. 6 after the tsunami. She could make some thousand bricks a week leaving her with a net profit of between 1000 and 1500 rupees per week.

Some organisations and beneficiaries are well aware of clients' preferences and tastes. There seems to be a general scare for the use of fertilizers, pesticides, hormones etc. and people prefer local products above ones over which they feel they have little control. Hence, numerous organisations propagated organic farming. Training on the techniques was provided to the beneficiaries and the people were encouraged to adopt this approach. Similarly, eggs from local chicken fetched up to three to four rupees more than eggs from chicken kept on a large scale in sheds, and that were sold in supermarkets. The same applied to chicken meat as the following case shows.

Ms. Jency was a Tamil woman of 25 years. She had bought 25 chicken and mesh from the Rs. 8,000 she had received through the Eastern Rehabilitation and Relief Organisation (ERRO). She was doing very well, as the price of the chicken was now Rs. 350 per kg; more than in a shop where broilers did Rs. 320 only. This was because the people preferred her chicken as they could see how they were fed and treated. People were afraid of the bird flu and they could see that her chicken were not ill. She had already finished one round, taking about 45 days, and now had started a second round with 32 chickens, thus expanding her capital.

Some activities faced challenges. This sometimes had to do with climatic conditions – in some areas home-gardening could only be done in the *maha* season due to lack of water, while elsewhere harvests had been disappointing due to drought or goats had died due to lack of shelter against rain and cold. Some ladies sold their food items mainly to schoolchildren and had little business during school holidays. Other factors were related to individual circumstances: the physical ability to do hard labour oneself and thus the need to hire labour which reduced the profits. In the case of women, the possibility – socio-religious of physical – to go out was an inherent constraint. In the east commercial opportunities were sometimes limited by the ongoing violence, checkpoints or lack of access, or simply by the fear to go out.

Even with the modest amounts provided, the livelihood support of the P&DP is significant. The Government Agent (GA) of Batticaloa welcomed the programme as an additional measure so that beneficiaries could use their off-time productively and thus would gain some supplementary income. Though this is true for a number of cases, we have observed that this understates the importance of the programme for a considerable part of the beneficiaries who seem to depend on this activity completely or nearly completely. It also has enabled quite a few to raise additional resources or loans by providing a minimal critical mass, and thus allowed them to expand their business.

Normalisation of life in war-affected areas and reduction of fear

In the war-affected eastern districts, activities such as these were felt to contribute to the restoration of normalcy. As war had destroyed livelihoods, interrelationships, contacts and daily routines, it was deemed important to take up life again. This aspect was stressed not only by the different organisations, but also by nearly all beneficiaries themselves. This normalcy entailed the ability to go around and visit other areas and other communities, to have business transactions and to talk to outsiders. As explained in chapter three all of this was severely affected due to violence,

intimidation and the resulting tension, suspicion and fear. Though evidently restricted to experiences at the beneficiary level and to the local arena, the project has made contributions toward this by enabling the regaining of livelihoods and business transactions across communities. Also people are visiting each other and their areas again, based on trust and contact established or re-established through the activities in both phase 1 and 2 of the project. SIM works in the volatile Valechenai area, but has experienced that relationships have improved after a long history of displacement, mutual fear and violence. People do visit one another increasingly, traders go to other villages, and people contract labourers again from the other community. Several respondents argued that the inter-ethnic relations were nearly as good now as they used to be in the past. The president of ERRO said that peace was a big word and that they could not achieve peace at the national level. But he had seen with his own eyes that informal relations, simply by sharing tea and food and by talking, had improved a lot, and also that the religions were collaborating better than earlier and organisations increasingly undertook joint projects.

Local resilience against externally induced tension and violence

There is a level of consensus among the different communities in the east that the troubles are instigated by outside interests. Actors driven by these interests often try to provoke especially inter-ethnic violence for their own purposes. Several recent killings, such as the bomb blast in the Ottamavadi market, did not produce a popular backlash even though this was clearly the intention according to several respondents. People start to discuss these issues gradually and are prepared to try and prevent this from happening.

A very similar trend may be observed in the Upcountry. Though not entirely problem-free, the people from the highlands considered their area to be very different from other parts of the country. Despite the multi-ethnic nature of the region, ethnic relations were better and violence much rarer. That relative peace came under strain, however, with a general deterioration in the country. Particularly the home coming of corpses of soldiers caused grief and tension. People were keen, however, to prevent this from disrupting peaceful relations in the region. One Tamil man explained he attended when the bodies were flown in and buried. After the recent riots in Trincomalee District, CHA partners were eager to take some precautionary measures to prevent that kind of hostility in Badulla. 'The DRB suggested *attam*, which is the traditional system of helping each other with voluntary work to get agriculture done,' according to a CHA staff member.

The projects funded under the P&DP were considered to be helpful in that regard. Because of the training and the exposure, people felt 'better able to make their own decisions.' One young woman said: 'We used to listen to monks, school teachers and so on, but now we are less reliant. Sometimes we disagree with what we see on TV or radio. For example, some people argue we need to fight the war in the northeast, but we know that both sides will lose if there's a war.'

Improvement of inter-ethnic relations and dialogue

The projects funded under the P&DP have led to an improvement of inter-ethnic relations. It is important to observe that economic ties have traditionally been an important 'connector' of ethnic groups. Trade and employment have always reached out across ethnic boundaries and these ties were some of the most sustained in times of ethnic tension and divisions. In virtually all cases in

the east this happened, as it are often Tamils who come to work as a labourer, while Muslims in turn are often involved in the trade. The Sinhalese ladies from Sinhapura (Ampara District), for example, sell their vegetables to Muslim traders with whom they have a good relationship. These trading contacts also have a geographical aspect, as people had to move increasingly in other communities' areas, something that was not done much earlier due to fear. The Upcountry is very similar in this regard. The P&DP's peace-oriented income generation projects are therefore not stand-alone activities. They feed on to some of the most resilient processes of inter-ethnic interaction.

In view of the income generating character of the projects, we had expected inter-ethnic interaction to be no more than a side-effect. We wondered whether people would identify this as an aim or outcome of the project. Strikingly, this issue was strongly emphasised across the board. In fact, at all workshops during our fieldwork, participants mentioned improved relations between ethnic groups as a key benefit produced by the P&DP project. In one case, it was even considered to be the most important benefit. The projects are seen as 'peace projects'.

The projects carried out in these areas deliberately included Muslims, Sinhalese and/or Tamils. This, in itself, was an achievement as some people belonging to minority groups had not expected to be eligible for a grant. One Tamil woman from the Upcountry said she had not assumed Tamil people would be included, but she was thrilled to say she got assistance. A Muslim man from Sinhala dominated Mahiyanganaya (Badulla District) had a similar expectation, as there were only few Muslims in the areas. Nonetheless, he got selected.

Through the project, people were united in savings groups. They participated in trainings together and held periodic meetings to discuss the progress of their activity. Also, they shared labour where needed. Unlike a one-off event such as a seminar, this pattern of interaction thus provided a more enduring basis for ongoing exchanges. 'Prior to the project, we talked with others but now we work together and the bonds are closer,' the beneficiaries of the POWER Foundation jointly agreed. Muslim and Sinhalese people stand guarantor for each other's loans, a person from Hambantota observed. That means quite something, he felt.

In addition to the interactions directly associated with income generation, many of the NGOs involved organised additional activities involving the different groups. In the east, for example (pre-) school children of different communities follow classes under one roof and Sinhala, Muslim or Tamil teachers interact and collaborate. Both in the east and the Upcountry, people organised many joint shramadanas, where the different communities clean each other's roads and places of worship. As discussed in the box below, the tsunami activities organised by the Rural Community Development Society (RCDS) were particularly interesting.

Inter-ethnic tsunami aid

The Rural Community Development Society, an agency with three staff members and a ramshackle office near Welimada (Badulla District), was confronted with a challenge. They had organised the youth from Sinhala and Muslim villages as well as the estates into groups. They had motivated and galvanized them, but this entered a lull after the first activities. The youth were eager to undertake something, but it was hard to provide them with an opportunity to do so. The tsunami provided them with the cause they were looking for.

With assistance from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), who provided them with food, the young Tamils, Muslims and Sinhalese got on a bus and went to Kalmunai and Marudamunai, one of the most severely affected parts of the east coast. Each family sent one person, as they could not afford to send more in view of their own conditions. Once the first batch of fifty people returned, the second group went. Some of them stayed up to a month. They cleared the rubble in the daytime and slept in a pre-school in the night. With the limited money they had, they also collected a lorry full of goods to be brought to Panama in Ampara District. 'The people there were down-hearted, but delighted with our help. We had never seen such devastation,' the youth said. They felt very proud of their work. Following this intensive joint experience, the youths developed strong bonds. Though they live quite a few kilometres apart, they visit each other regularly.

Later, they went back to Kalmunai to celebrate Sinhala and Tamil New Year. The people from Kalmunai subsequently visited Welimada to celebrate Vesak. Most of them had never been in the Upcountry. Inter-ethnic ties were thus not merely a project driven phenomenon. The project led to sustained patterns of bonding and spontaneous interaction.

Peace building critics tend to discard NGO initiatives as peripheral. Their isolated events would lead to beautiful ceremonies, but compared to the interventions of politicians or religious leaders, NGOs would have much little effect on actual attitudes and interpersonal relations. At least some of the projects funded under the P&DP seem to withstand that criticism. 'I'm not afraid the effects of our work may be undone by some political people or religious leaders,' one NGO leader said. 'The youth has been really involved and in a very practical and committed way. It will not be easy to change their minds. Moreover, we can get a large group of people together, for example to talk about peace. No political party can do that here.'

We asked beneficiaries which institutions had a big impact on their life. Drawing from the diagrams and sheets they presented during our discussions, the NGOs concerned are no less important than temples or schools, while political parties were considered to be much less relevant. People spontaneously mentioned NGOs and the CHA as agencies that had a key influence on inter-ethnic relations.

Moreover, many of the NGOs deliberately involved other actors, such as the religious leadership in their activities, thus providing the initiative with a certain profile and legitimacy. The Buddhist monk in Sinhapura (Ampara District), for example, had given a piece of land to Mahashakhti, being largely a Tamil organisation, but active in his village, to build the community hall and preschool.

Finally, we observed that improved or increased ethnic interaction has some level of sustainability. A young Tamil woman from an estate commented on the P&DP project: 'We were waiting for an opportunity like this project to better get to know each other. Earlier, it didn't happen. There was a lack of trust and understanding.' Now, however, interaction has become a normal thing, she felt. Likewise, several projects in the east generated such trust and confidence among the beneficiaries that several of them now visit each other's houses again. Also, they visit each other's religious festivals and social events, including weddings and funerals. Access to neighbouring areas thus improved, as much as a consequence of the reduction of fear and suspicion as in the form of an evolving social practice.

The situation in the highlands is, again, quite similar. 'The project has changed the three communities,' a Tamil beneficiary said. 'We give each other a ride now, when we pass somebody on the road. We are no longer scared to pass through each other areas at night. We invite others to our functions. In fact, people are offended if they are not invited.' Some of the youths involved

with the RCDS indicated that they sleep at each other's house when they attend an event and it is too late to return home. This is tight, as their houses are tiny, but you can fit a lot of people on the floor, one of the women explained. Contrary to the formal events where they talk about human rights and the like, they don't speak about any of that when they meet informally. Instead, they discuss 'normal things', like the differences between Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim cooking and they teach each other's language and songs.

Many respondents forwarded ideas on how to further improve ethnic relationships. Apart from having training and workshops on peace and social harmony, they stressed the importance of carrying out concrete works and activities together, for instance shramadanas, by having shared facilities and by working with the youth so that they would grow up with a different attitude.

Changes in local NGOs

The P&DP, apart from other influences, has encouraged local NGOs to reflect more on the peace and inter-ethnic issues at stake and has induced them to involve beneficiaries of the different communities. In the east nearly all P&DP related projects had mixed beneficiary groups leading to a more pluralistic membership. Some organisations had created posts for a representative of the other community at the executive board. Most of them had also employed staff from the different communities in their work force. Some organisations said that they rejected the label ethnic and were truly multi-ethnic or 'no-ethnic'. There is thus a modest, but clear trend in the direction from mono-ethnic levels or organisations towards more plurality, if not a multi-ethnic type of organisation. One agency from Hambantota explained they applied the lessons from the P&DP project to their other programmes as well. The programme thus seems to have some organisational spin-offs.

External linkages

This project has offered the possibility for NGOs of forging links with other organisations. They nearly all have become member of the CHA and the local consortium active in their area. Some organisations have started working together such as BESSO (Beacon of the East Agrarian Service Centre) and SIM, a Tamil and Muslim organisation working in the same areas and thus engendering cross-community relationships. They also have been able to provide multiplier effects to the P&DP by adding own resources or mobilising additional trainings of loans from other organisation. During the focus groups discussions, participants invariably mentioned access to other institutions and service providers – such as the government and NGOs – as one of the benefits of the P&DP project.

In sum

We may conclude that in the multi-ethnic areas, the livelihood projects funded by the P&DP have largely been relevant and effective. They have been significant in terms of income generation and they mostly targeted the proper organisations and beneficiaries. Tuning in with the existing tendency that economic links act as an ethnic interface, the projects have made noticeable and sustained advances in improving and expanding inter-ethnic relations. In the war-torn areas, they

contributed to establishing a level of normalcy and in all areas they reinforced people's attempts to protect their peaceful relations against external pressures of violence and political tension.

4.2 Effects in Sinhala dominated areas

The logic of phase 2 of the P&DP – strengthening inter-ethnic interdependence and interaction by jointly including different communities in an income generation project – was hard to put to practice in areas which were largely mono-ethnic. Most projects visited in Hambantota, some of the projects in Badulla and one in Ampara were confined to Sinhala organisations and Sinhala beneficiaries. Similarly, areas such as Jaffna and the Vanni, are exclusively or almost entirely inhabited by Tamils. Of course, violence in Sri Lanka is not just an inter-ethnic affair. The rebellions in the south in the 1970s and 1980s are a striking proof that conflict is also manifest along the lines of class and that the behaviour of the political elite and popular resistance to it is not confined to multi-ethnic areas. Though the Sinhala-dominated areas have been relatively stable and peaceful in the past fifteen years, it would be dangerous to assume that nothing needs to be done in the south in terms of conflict prevention and peace building. However, the question rises how income generation would contribute to peace in these areas.

Emphasis on income generation

The beneficiaries in Sinhala dominated areas see the P&DP almost completely as an income generating project. In the workshop discussions, we asked them to outline the main benefits of the programme. Invariably, people cited greater income, self-employment, the provision of training and access to governmental services and NGOs as the most important outcomes of the project.

Despite the small size of the grant, these effects of the project were considered to be great. Though we were unable to check this in all cases, our general impression was that the beneficiaries selected for the grant were among the least prosperous. The Rekawa Development Foundation in Hambantota District indicated that some 80 percent of the beneficiaries lived in *cadjan* houses. The neighbouring Ruhuna Rural Women's Organisation deliberately included some of the women who lost many of their belongings to the tsunami.

As was the case in multi-ethnic areas, an investment of Rs. 5000 to Rs. 8000 was quite a help in making ends meet for very poor families. Many of them indicated that there was a longer-term impact as well. The provision of tools, plants or animals did not merely aid their immediate survival; it also enabled the beneficiaries to save some money for future investments. 'Even our children will benefit from this,' a woman from Mahiyanganaya in Badulla District said. She had received some chicken and assistance in growing cash crops. 'The future looks much brighter.' Likewise, the beneficiaries of the Human Development Foundation, a CBO in the hills close to Badulla town sought a longer-term impact. They chose banana cultivation, not only because it was suitable to the high altitude and the limited availability of water, but also because the plants would grow for some ten years. Given that demand was relatively steady, they expected to gain some Rs. 5000 per month once the plants were fully matured. Finally, many people felt that the training provided to them – usually one or two days directly related to the type of income generation – constituted a structural step forward.

A peace element?

The development component of the P&DP was thus strongly represented in the projects carried out in Sinhala dominated areas. The opposite applies to the peace element. None of the focus groups mentioned peace as major benefit of the programme. In fact, some of the people wondered why we were asking all these questions about peace, ethnicity and politics, while we had come to evaluate their grants scheme. A rather extensive explanation was normally required about the background of the P&DP and the fact that it was not designed as a 'normal' income generation programme. The leader of the Human Development Foundation indicated that it is hard to motivate the people to discuss issues of peace or inter-ethnic relations. 'People are eager to talk about economic issues,' he said, 'but when we talk about ethnic issues, they don't get involved. They seem to feel it does not concern them much.' There had been some awareness programme earlier, he said, but people complained that it did not involve any tangible, economic benefit. Nevertheless, some beneficiaries in both districts had evidently taken an interest in preceding awareness programmes. Standard messages about the various historical agreements – such as the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact – that preceded the war and the need to distinguish between Tamils and Tigers were spontaneously brought up by a number of beneficiaries.

Though the economic dimension was overriding, people did attach value to the fact that their project involved a level of community organisation through CBOs and savings groups and they valued the mutual assistance that this brought along. Most workshops mentioned this as one of the benefits and some of them even rated it as one of the most important ones. In this regard the projects had some value in addressing local level, intra-ethnic divides. The beneficiaries indicated that there were differences of prosperity, caste, geographic origin, religion and political affiliation. Across and within these boundaries there were conflicts over assets, alcohol, suspicion, gossip, employment and so on.

Some of the groups felt that the village organisations set up under the P&DP helped in addressing those conflicts. People particularly appreciated the sharing of labour and efforts to address inequalities. Special attention for people who are sick or disabled and people who lost their job or belongings was very valuable in their eyes. The transparency and inclusiveness of decisions regarding the selection of beneficiaries within the village was also considered to be a great asset. Naturally, these patterns of collaboration were not all brought about by the project; labour sharing for paddy cultivation for example is an age-old tradition. However, many beneficiaries emphasised that these bonds had been strengthened or expanded by the CHA project. It requires mention, though, that the P&DP projects were in this regard not different from 'regular' income generation projects that use CBOs and savings groups.

In sum

Though greater intra-communal interaction and cooperation is a valuable achievement in itself, it can hardly be considered a contribution to peace in relation to the armed conflict and ethnic violence in Sri Lanka. There may be some truth in the assertion that it makes people more self-reliant and less susceptible to political manipulation, but this is somewhat far-fetched. In mono-ethnic areas income-generating projects are probably not the most suitable channel to aid the

resolution of conflict in the country. By consequence of the homogeneous design of the P&DP – phase 2 consists of income generation, no matter where it is done – the programme ended up funding a number of projects in mono-ethnic areas, which are in fact hard to distinguish from other poverty alleviation programmes. The same is likely to be true for the revolving loan funds scheduled for phase 3.

That does not imply that nothing can be done in mono-ethnic areas. A host of sensible interventions can be envisaged. In terms of inter-ethnic relations, more awareness programmes and exposure visits could be envisaged. As was pointed out above, it would moreover be simplistic to reduce the conflict in Sri Lanka to a merely ethnic issue. There are in fact a wide range of underlying causes in fields such as human rights and governance that require addressing. Some of the organisations included in the programme have a large support base and could mobilise significant pressure in relation to these agendas. It is questionable, however, whether the P&DP is best positioned to take on these kinds of initiatives. One could argue that the programme should play to its strengths – working on inter-ethnic relations through economic activities – while leaving the other peace issues to other parts of the CHA (for example, the Community Protection Network, CPN) or other agencies altogether, such as FLICT.

CHA staff and NCB members raised some questions about how to deal with communities that take a nationalistic and critical position with regard to peace initiatives. Working on peace against people's will was naturally considered to be impossible. Working with a 'hidden peace agenda' was moreover considered to unethical and generally undesirable. If the CHA takes the above recommendation and focuses more strongly on inter-ethnic areas, this will be less of a problem. In the alternative case, CHA may indeed face challenges and political pressures. During our field work, however, we did not encounter many 'hardliners', most people were either supportive or somewhat ambivalent, but not hostile to peace activities.

4.3 Revisiting the design of the programme

In addition to the P&DP projects itself, we have a number of observations regarding the programmatic design and its implementation.

Revisiting collective activism

The P&DP was not envisaged to be a mechanism for transferring support, incentives and ideas to the local level only. It also aspired to amplify voices from local organisations in the region and create a platform for them at a national level. Moreover, it aimed at 'facilitating of overall support for the non-profit civic sector in Sri Lanka, linking key national civil society agencies, catalysing synergy of collective activism. [...] The programme would foster and promote reflections of experiences and knowledge of civil society agencies supported by the programme and encourage synergies among partners i.e. donors and implementing partners.'²

To reach this objective, the architecture of District Review Board and a National Consultative Board was created. So far, however, the role of these institutions has been marginal with regard to advocacy, activism and representing the concerns of local partners. Drawing from interviews and

² Quoted from the programme document dated 24 April 2005.

proceedings, it becomes clear that their role has almost exclusively been confined to consultations regarding the programme, the selection of beneficiary organisations and monitoring the progress of the programme. Some of the DRBs have been *ad hoc* bodies that meet only at the beginning of a new phase. Some have in fact met only for the first phase. In other areas – notably Moneragala, but evolving in other districts as well – the role of the DRB is gradually expanding to include a stronger monitoring role. They aim to meet more frequently and maintain some level of contact with the implementing agencies.

With representation from the Kachcheri and one NGO consortium, it is questionable whether the DRBs actually represent voices from below. Naturally, the GA or the (deputy) director planning have strong influence in the board, but they do not represent civil society. Yet, some of the stakeholders stipulated that they valued the involvement of these civil servants and the opportunity to interact with them. Some of the people interviewed argued that the DRBs need to be expanded to include a broader set of civil society agencies, political actors or the private sector. FLICT has also expressed great interest in the DRB structure of the P&DP. Thought needs to be given to the role of the DRB in relation to similar forums, such as the Community Protection Networks.³

Likewise, the NCB served as a platform for exchanging views between the P&DP, its donors and selected Sri Lankan experts. The people involved invariably feel the board is useful. The donors value the updates and discussions, though they could be more qualitative and substantive. CHA staff appreciates the NCB for feedback. In the past year, the board met five times. Though some people provide a level of continuity, attendance fluctuates.

In addition to these institutions, the CHA made progress in the past year with regard to linking the P&DP and its advocacy efforts. Many of these activities were still being developed at the time of the evaluation. CHA has acquired a monthly slot in some of the newspapers to enable its partners to send their message. Similarly, partners can contribute to the periodical ‘peace focus’. Though there are no costs involved, very few of the partners have shown much appetite for taking these opportunities. Meanwhile, CHA is developing radio and television programmes with peace messages involving people from the region.

Despite these efforts, the P&DP has not accomplished much in terms of amplifying voices from below. Both the interviews in Colombo and in field level identified a number of constraints. Many organisations funded by the P&DP have a strongly local focus. The issues they want to address play out in that arena. Seeking a national platform to speak out against problems at that level is not their natural inclination, it seems. Secondly, some of the agencies have a limited capacity and lack the confidence to widely voice their concerns. They indicated that they did participate in national events, such as a peace march or a workshop on federalism, but they positioned themselves as participants – even beneficiaries – rather than aspiring to set the agenda or take the lead. Thirdly, the political and security climate was hardly conducive for political activism and this has only gotten worse in recent months. Especially in the north and east, people are hesitant to discuss controversial issues within their own office with a small crowd of people. Seeking a broader audience is clearly off bounds. These difficulties do not legitimate the conclusion that the CHA should give up on advocacy. Many of Sri Lanka’s civil society organisations have a rather poor

³ These are also operated by CHA. They consist of a wide range of local NGOs and aim to provide people and local organizations with a platform to file complaints or find contact with the relevant institutions to redress a certain issue.

track record with regard to tuning in with views from the regions and using them to influence the political process. The P&DP architecture itself, however, is geared to project implementation and is therefore not suited for advocacy. We therefore reiterate our suggestion that the P&DP should link in more closely with other CHA programmes, such as the CPNs and the existing advocacy programme.

Revisiting the phased approach

As mentioned in chapter 2, the P&DP adopted a three-phased approach. Though cognisant of the different needs and contexts of the different districts and the different organisations within each district, CHA standardised this approach for all parts of the country. In our previous evaluation we criticised the conceptual underpinning, the contextual suitability and the lack of flexibility of this approach.

Interestingly, our fieldwork revealed that some of the organisations included in the P&DP are actually quite satisfied with the approach. They argued that they could not do everything at once anyway and they thought it was useful to introduce some tangible benefits in phase 2, because phase 1 had been a sensitisation exercise that left the participants without material gains. Moreover, they felt phase 2 was closely related to phase 1, as some of the ideas raised about peace and harmony transpired in the organisations' income generating activities. We must thus conclude that in some cases the phased logic is 'owned' by the organisations and that it makes sense in practice.

On the other hand, a number of objections with regard to the design remain. Firstly, the rigidity of the approach is at loggerheads with the spirit of devolving decisions to the region and creating space for local initiatives. One organisation in Badulla District applauded the fact that they had great freedom in the way they organised phase 1. The second phase, however, was pre-framed and did not suit their priorities and approach. Secondly, the lack of flexibility seems to have resulted in a number of missed opportunities. Some of the agencies were unable to adapt the rhythm of the P&DP, because of the tsunami. They had trouble implementing their project, because there were other priorities and programmes that demanded attention. Now the dust is settling in the tsunami areas, the time is ripe for doing awareness raising and addressing inter-ethnic tensions that have emerged from displacement, resettlement and the distribution of aid. The P&DP framework is insufficiently able to react to such needs and opportunities. Thirdly, there is a level of inconsistency between the phases. As was shown in chapter 2, the majority of the agencies funded in phase 2 were not part of phase 1. They thus skipped the awareness phase and entered the programme in the income generation phase. Finally, the rigid definition of the phases does not allow for a regional differentiation. As pointed out above, income generation and revolving loan funds are hardly suitable for nurturing inter-ethnic ties in areas with limited ethnic diversity. A more flexible approach would thus be advisable. Altogether, the phased approach was adequate in some cases, but led to constraints and missed opportunities in other cases.

Linkages to other initiatives

The P&DP did not take place in isolation. In fact, Sri Lanka has undergone quite a wide range of parallel peace oriented initiatives following the 2002 ceasefire agreement. In some cases, there have been deliberate linkages between some of these efforts and the P&DP.

Firstly, at the level of the implementing organisations, we observed that P&DP projects were incorporated in broader programmatic structures. Many of the partners had implemented other peace-oriented projects as well. The Rural Development Foundation in Badulla District, for example, participated in FLICT funded awareness-raising project. Even though, the organisation had not been involved in phase 1 of the P&DP, the organisation thus combined peace workshops and discussions with the CHA funded grants scheme. Similarly, many organisations embedded the income generation project in their existing poverty alleviation activities. They used their existing network of CBOs and savings groups. The Mahashakthi Foundation, for example, expanded the P&DP project with additional inputs for the beneficiaries concerned. Also, collaboration between NGOs intensified as with BESSO and SIM in the Batticaloa District.

Secondly, some progress has been made within the CHA, to integrate different efforts. The increasing collaboration between the advocacy unit and the peace and development unit is an example here. At field level, however, we found that this has not happened to a large degree. The existing CHA networks in the region and the district offices that have been set up in some areas operate almost entirely independent from the P&DP. The CPN, for example, seems to be very relevant for the P&DP. Some of the rights issues, dialogues and advocacy that takes place in this forum are certainly relevant from a peace perspective. Both NGOs and CHA field staff is interested in collaboration. There thus seems to be a potential for further improvement here.

Finally, there are linkages with some national-level initiatives that resemble the P&DP in some ways: mainly FLICT and to a lesser degree the Nilan Tiruchelvam Fund and the UNDP peace building programme. All four initiatives represented a fund aimed at financing relatively small-scale peace initiatives by local organisations. In fact, some of the donors were ‘furious’ when the P&DP was founded as it was considered an empire building exercise of CHA and the Dutch embassy that duplicated FLICT. With time, however, collaboration between the P&DP and FLICT has increased. De facto, some division of labour seems to have emerged. The P&DP funds local organisations with a minimal sum for a very limited set of activities. FLICT funds a much wider array of initiatives at different levels, among which the national level. UNDP’s fund was linked to the peace secretariats and thus included an element of high politics as well. However, this programme has stopped and is unlikely to resume under the current conditions. Meanwhile, FLICT has started participating in CHA’s NCB. Moreover, a database has been established to maintain oversight of the complete array of activities. Finally, CHA supports FLICT’s effort to establish a pool of resource persons working at the local level. CHA staff has participated in the trainings and provided one of the training blocks. Many of the P&DP partner organisations and DRB members were enthusiastic about the trainings provided to them by CHA, both at a regional and a national level. Many also indicated that further inputs and expertise would be most welcome. FLICT’s resource pool may thus prove to be quite valuable to the P&DP.

Altogether, linkages have emerged between the P&DP and other initiatives at different levels. We encourage these efforts and suggest they could be further expanded and strengthened.

Selection and monitoring

The partner organisations were generally positive about the selection process. They felt the DRBs were a suitable forum. They appreciated the opportunity to elucidate their proposal and they applauded the transparency of the process. DRB members were also satisfied with their role as advisors, while CHA takes the final decisions. Some of the smaller organisations thought it was good that not only the bigger, more sophisticated NGOs were eligible. Though many of the agencies are still quite small and very local, there seems to be a tendency to include more professional and stronger organisations. The minimal size of the P&DP grants did not prevent these NGOs – which run much larger programmes as well – to enrol. Given that some of these agencies may be better able to meet the administrative requirements of the programme, this impulse is understandable. In fact, in the forthcoming phase of revolving loan funds – which requires more organisational capacity – we may see even more ‘strong’ organisations. Caution should thus be exercised to guard the programme’s focus on small organisations.

Monitoring of the projects has been improved in the past year with the recruitment of a research and monitoring officer, regional monitoring staff and an expanding role for the DRB. The CHA aspired to make three visits to each organisation in phase 2. This is a considerable operation in view of the remote location of some of the projects, but in many cases, CHA seems to live up to its ambition. The Vanni, Jaffna and Trincomalee are problematic, however, particularly because of the security and – in the first case – the LTTE regime that feels it can monitor the projects itself without further involvement of the CHA.

In terms of quality, monitoring also seems to have progressed. Increasingly, the excel sheets with quantitative overviews have been complemented with more substantive and qualitative information. NCB members appreciate this development, though they feel there continues to be room for improvement. Feedback on lessons learnt and the significance of projects in the local context is limited and would be very welcome, they feel.

The implementing partners like the intensive monitoring efforts as well. They don’t experience monitors as a nuisance; rather, they appreciate the close involvement and the attention they receive. The systematic procedures are also received positively. The beneficiary logbook, the progress format for implementing partners and the checklist for field monitors provide clarity and adequate guidance. One point of criticism concerned the swiftness of financial transfers. Some organisations had to advance some of the funds, while others had to hold back their programme while awaiting the money.

5 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

1. The P&DP was formulated at a time of optimism regarding the peace process in Sri Lanka and on the basis of assumptions and expectations that now have been thwarted by increasing violence, systematic violations of the CFA and a major deterioration of the political and security situation in what could be called 'no-war-no-peace' and more recently even a 'limited' war. This has, however, not reduced the relevance of the P&DP or its potential benefits. On the contrary, a programme like the P&DP is even more needed in the prevailing context.
2. The second phase of the P&DP focused on projects in support of local livelihoods by providing small grants to beneficiaries through local civil society organisations. The evaluation concluded that these income and employment generating projects were relevant and effective in the four districts studied. Despite the fairly modest size of the grants, the projects contributed in a significant way to the livelihood and income of the beneficiaries. For many beneficiaries the generated income comprised a major if not total part of their income. Individual projects were diverse and built on prior or existing experiences and available skills and were further facilitated by training, support and monitoring by the implementing agencies. The selection of implementing organisations and the beneficiaries was adequate. The DRB played generally a useful role in the selection process of the implementing organisations. This was seen as transparent and legitimate by those involved. Though several of the DRBs were in fact nothing more than ad-hoc institutions with a fairly limited role, some were taking steps to become more involved in the monitoring of projects. Apart from some exceptional cases of 'elite capture', the beneficiaries were war-affected persons, widows, female headed households, children and youth, school leavers and drop-outs, and generally those below the poverty line.
3. In multi-ethnic areas, the income generating projects made a tangible and demonstrable contribution to peace through a variety of mechanisms. These included the fostering of multi-ethnic relations by forward and backward linkages via contacts with suppliers, labourers, traders and clients in the economic realm. The projects and the ensuing interactions also contributed to the normalisation of daily life in war-affected areas, and the associated reduction of mutual fear and suspicion. People started visiting each other's houses and areas again, thereby improving access and mobility. Based on increased trust and confidence, earlier contacts and patterns of exchange were strengthened or re-established and people resumed taking part in mutual festivals, social events and organised joint activities, like shramadanas. These interactions took a seemingly sustainable character and continued independent of the project activities. Increasingly, local organisations initiated joint projects with mixed groups of beneficiaries. All these gains in turn facilitated the reinforcement of local resilience against externally induced tension and violence. Finally, we observed a clear trend from mono-ethnic forms of social organisation towards more plurality, if not multi-ethnic or 'non-ethnic' types of organisation. This was expressed in leadership structures, joint memberships, expansion to other communities' areas, multi-ethnic staffing and joint projects, meetings, and seminars.

4. Many of these effects and mechanisms are possibly even stronger in war-affected areas. Organisational and individual beneficiary action originated in response to a history and continuing context of war. The positive changes both in terms of livelihood and peace are perhaps most evident among those beneficiaries and those areas that have been affected by the war. The lived through experiences of war and displacement, the fears, hopes and unfulfilled needs make the beneficiaries particularly receptive for the approach by the P&DP. There is a strong indication that peace building or inter-ethnic relations can be supported in a more sustainable manner through livelihood projects than through one-off peace events that have few tangible features and in the end give beneficiaries the feeling of being left empty-handed.
5. In war-affected areas – and to a lesser degree the Upcountry – conflict is generally seen as created by political forces and interests from outside that disrupt local inter-ethnic peace and erstwhile good neighbourly relations between the different communities. People have an incipient wish to protect their environments against external political instigations and provocations and be united against the violence invoked.
6. In mono-ethnic areas, the projects funded under the P&DP are almost exclusively livelihood projects. Though there are some effects in terms of intra-community collaboration and harmony, they are no different from ‘normal’ income generation projects. There is thus no contribution to peace as was the case in the multi-ethnic areas. This is not to say that nothing can be done in these regions – even mono-ethnic areas can be conflict prone and in many ways they hold the key to peace at a national level – but income generation does not seem to be a suitable vehicle. CHA’s underlying objective of uniting people around development gains may in itself be sound, but the P&DP activities do not distinguish themselves as peace projects in the wide array of development interventions in the south. Given that the programme is supposed to deal with broader societal issues – rather than, for example, domestic conflict – the P&DP will have to deal more explicitly with social and political issues, if the projects in mono-ethnic areas are continued.
7. Whereas the P&DP has been generally strong in the localised arena, it has not been able to reach its objectives in providing a platform for local voices or a conduit for upward messages directed at the national level. One reason is that this whole notion does not tune in well with local priorities and experiences. People are more concerned about local conditions, realities and relationships than about national-level issues, structures and processes, about which they feel they have no control or which are deemed beyond redemption as politicians are deeply distrusted. Advocacy and civil society linkages between Colombo and the regions are important, but the original idea that the DRBs of NCB could fulfil this role is far-fetched. A closer linkage between the P&DP and CHA’s existing CPN and its advocacy efforts could lead to somewhat better results.
8. The phased and standardised approach followed by the P&DP caused problems in some cases. Not all organisations could keep up the speed and rhythm of the programme, partly due to local variations and constraints, including the tsunami in coastal areas, partly because realities are more diversified than the programme recognised. The lack of flexibility seems to have resulted in some constraints and missed opportunities. Moreover, in the four districts studied, the majority of the organisations had never taken part in the first phase making the desired

9. Local organisations and beneficiaries very much appreciated the supervision, guidance, training and monitoring by CHA. They felt that procedures and the paperwork involved were systematic and even helpful. Moreover, donors observed improvements in the monitoring, particularly the qualitative aspects of it.
10. The P&DP established some links to other projects, partners and funding and training possibilities. Some implementing agencies drew on their own funds, resources and structures to open further avenues for the beneficiaries, while others combined the P&DP programme or its beneficiaries with initiatives by other international or domestic NGOs. Likewise, CHA intensified its collaboration with FLICT in a number of ways. Linkages with regional CHA structures and parallel programmes, such as the CPN, remained limited, however.

5.2 Recommendations

1. In view of its relevant and meaningful contribution to local livelihood and inter-ethnic relations and the benefits accrued to the beneficiaries, we recommend to continue the P&DP for a next period of three years. The changing context makes the programme perhaps even more relevant than in the past with peace under serious threat and local inter-ethnic enmity being provoked and tested. Donors are recommended to continue and support this initiative, despite the deteriorating overall context and diminishing prospects for peace in the country. A firm, stable and committed backing of donors of such challenging programmes, even in times of adversity, nationally or in programme terms, is more helpful than vacillating ‘traffic light’ behaviour.
2. The P&DP should focus on its demonstrated strength of improving local inter-ethnic relations by awareness and livelihood support programmes, be it that their mutual relevance and interrelationship need to be reassessed and recalibrated per region. This implies that the awareness and advocacy component needs to become an integral or accompanying part of livelihood programmes in multi-ethnic areas without necessarily a temporal division in separate phases, while in mono-ethnic areas the livelihood support programme needs to be de-emphasized or removed in favour of awareness and advocacy, as under mono-ethnic conditions livelihood support has no demonstrable effect on inter-ethnic or wider peace issues. Alternatively, it could be considered to downscale activities in mono-ethnic areas altogether. In multi-ethnic areas the peace building potential of livelihood support programmes needs to be secured by ethnicity- and conflict-sensitive operations and monitoring. Therefore, the inter-ethnic and peace aspect need to be closely watched.
3. The P&DP could be strengthened by collaborating and developing further or more intensive linkages with other organisations and programmes. Multiplier effects and synergy may be reached by looking at complementarities and specialisation.

4. Partly in view of what was said above, it is advisable to downscale the ambitions for national level platforms and associated forms of advocacy or collective activism. The P&DP lacks the operational mechanisms for this and this goal is not in tune with grassroots priorities and needs, which are focused on localised relations and conditions. Neither are the DRBs suitable channels for transmitting local voices to national levels or to foster collective nation-wide peace activism. For that goal, CHA is advised to link the P&DP more closely with other mechanisms. It has its own local consortium meetings supported by local branches and officers, it conducts a well-appreciated Community Protection Network and it has the possibility to gear up with other national level initiatives. The P&DP's main focus should remain its beneficial work for local level inter-ethnic enmity in the districts. This goal is difficult and ambitious enough, we would think.
5. The phased approach has some merit as an organising tool, but should be flexibilised in order to adjust better to local patterns, rhythms and institutional characteristics. However, the distinction between (1) an awareness and advocacy phase followed by (2) livelihood support and then by (3) revolving funds should be abandoned. The programme should be flexible to the needs, context and priorities of the organisations and beneficiaries involved. Particularly when work is continued with the same organisations, if not beneficiaries, it would also be unnecessary to walk through all those stages again.
6. Rather than receiving tables with figures, the NCB benefits from the provision of narrative stories, people's perceptions and impressions of local developments and the role of P&DP projects in it. Though the monitoring system is on the right track, we recommend further strengthening of its qualitative aspects. Further elaboration of the role of the DRBs in this connection – where feasible – is also encouraged. Visits by donor staff to the region have also proven to be very worthwhile and should continue to happen.
7. Despite occasional weaknesses, the DRBs are a suitable mechanism for the selection of organisations and advice on applications, and also may carry out an expanded monitoring role, where those capacities exist.
8. The grant for livelihood support was reaching relatively few beneficiaries per organisation and was fairly small. We suggest both increasing the number of beneficiaries and the size of the grant. This would also aid monitoring efforts, as more funds and more beneficiaries could be dealt with per visit.
9. Though larger and well-established organisations obviously are usually better suited to carry out livelihood support programmes and revolving funds, the P&DP should maintain its ambition to involve smaller and medium sized organisations, eventually supporting them with some additional training and monitoring. The small grants provided under the P&DP cannot be expected to enhance the sustainability of small NGOs. Continued support to the organisations that perform properly is therefore advisable. Helping the agencies to gain access to other sources of funding would also be useful.
10. Prospects in Sri Lanka do not look good. With the experiences of the 1990s in mind, violence and minimal political space may well put severe constraints on the programme, particularly in

Annex 1 List of Interviews

Name	Affiliation	Location	Date
Interviews in Colombo			
Mr. Muralidaran	CHA	Colombo	11 July
Ms. Carina Staibano and Sheila Richards	Swedish Embassy	Colombo	12 July
Ms. Bernadine Jayawardene	CHA	Colombo	12 July
Ms. Malraji	Norwegian Embassy	Colombo	13 July
Mr. Devanand Ramiah	UNDP	Colombo	13 July
Mr. Stanley Joseph	ZOA (NCB member)	Colombo	13 July
Ms. Jean Samuel	(formerly) DANIDA	Colombo	13 July
Mr. Wijaya Jayatilaka and Ms. Stephanie Schell-Faucon	FLICT	Colombo	14 July
Mr. Mathan	CHA	Colombo	14 July
Interviews in Ampara District			
Mr. Manivasagan, Mr. Thulasiman, Mr. Rajaratnam, and Mr. Arumugam	Mahashakhti	Alyadivembu	21 August
Ms. Jegatha, Ms. Vijitha, Ms. Nanthini	Women Development Centre	Akkaraipattu	21 August
Mr. Bawa, Director Planning	Director of planning (District Review Board)	Ampara	22 August
Mr. Paramasingham	Vice-president Amparai NGO Consortium	Ampara	22 August
Mr. Rajamoney	CHA	Ampara	22 August
Mr. Uvaiz, Mr. Cader and one other staff member.	SEEDO	Addelaichenai	22 August
Mr. Alagan, Mr. Chandrakumar, Ms. Latha, and two other staff.	SWEIDO VISION	Thirukkovil	23 August
Mr. Uwaise, and Mr. Ranjith.	ERRO	Akkaraipattu	23 August
Group interview with beneficiaries	ERRO	Akkaraipattu	23 August
Interview with and field visit to female beneficiary and her husband	Mahashakti	Kannagipuram	24 August
Group interview with ten female beneficiaries	Mahashakti	Sinhapura	24 August
Group interview with staff and beneficiaries	DPEPO	Dehettiyakandiya	24 August
Interviews in Badulla District			
Mr. Nadesan, Ms. Wijetunga and Mrs. Jayaratne	NGO Consortium, Uva Province	Badulla	16 August
Mr. Ratnakumar and Mr. Milanka	CHA	Badulla	16 August
Mr. Ranil Pirdashan	CHA	Badulla	16 August
Mr. Abeyratne, Mr. Hemantha and Mr. Van Sandan	USCOD	Badulla	16 August
Workshop with staff and beneficiaries	Rural Community Development Society	Wangiakumbura, Boralanda	17 August
Mr. Aluthgamage	Rural Community	Wangiakumbura,	17 August

Female beneficiary	Development Society Rural Community	Boralanda Wangiakumbura,	18 August
Two female beneficiaries	Development Society Rural Community	Boralanda Estate close to	18 August
Group interview with staff and beneficiaries	Development Society Meuguna	Welimada Mahiyanganaya	18 August
Workshop with staff and beneficiaries	POWER	Badulla	19 August
Group interview with staff and beneficiaries	Human Development Foundation	Village south of Badulla	19 August
Workshop with staff and beneficiaries	Future in Our Hands Development Fund	Badulla	20 August

Interviews in Batticaloa District

Ms. Somawathie, Ms. Priyatharsini and Ms. Kamalawathy	Women Development Forum	Batticaloa	16 August
Mr. Thevarajah	INIYAM NGO consortium	Batticaloa	16 August
Mr. Punniyamoorthi	GA	Batticaloa	16 August
Group interview with staff and beneficiaries	NEDESA	Batticaloa	16 August
Ms. Jareena Rafeek, Ms. M.F. Shamila, Mr. S.M. Harees, Ms. K.L.Shatyia, Ms. M.H. Nijaniya	SIM	Ottamavadi	17 August
Mr. Kumarasingham, Ms. Niranjini, Mr. Suparaj, Ms. Rajulaijni, Ms. Jegatheswary and Ms. Rajeswary	BESSO	Ottamavadi	17 August
Interview with and visit to three female beneficiaries	BESSO	Ottamavadi	17 August
Interview with and visit to one male and one female beneficiary	SIM	Poliganar	18 August
Interview with and visit to three male and two female beneficiaries	SIM	Thiyavadduvan	18 August
Interview with and visit to male and female beneficiary	SIM	Mailan Karache	18 August
Mr. Jesuderasa	DESMIO	Arayampathy	19 August
Mr. Murukamoorthy	PRADO	Batticaloa	19 August
Mr. Sylvester	CHA	Batticaloa	19 August

Interviews in Hambantota District

Mr. Ajith and Mr. Wijsekera	Youth Enterprise Information Centre	Ambalantota	21 August
Male beneficiary	Youth Enterprise Information Centre	Ransiripura, Weerawila	21 August
Male beneficiary	Youth Enterprise Information Centre	Ransiripura, Weerawila	21 August
Female beneficiary	Youth Enterprise Information Centre	Ransiripura, Weerawila	21 August
Workshop with beneficiaries	Youth Enterprise Information Centre	Karambewewa	22 August
Mr. Piyasena and Mr. Weeraratne	GA and Deputy Director Planning (District Review	Hambantota	22 August

Mr. Prematilleke and Mr. Udaya Kumar		Board)	Sri Lanka Red Cross		Hambantota	23 August
Workshop with staff and beneficiaries			Women's Federation	Development	Hambantota	23 August
Workshop with staff and beneficiaries			Sarana Foundation	Development	Beliatta	24 August
Workshop with staff and beneficiaries			Ruhunu Rural Women's Organisation		Village close to Tangalle	24 August
Workshop with staff and beneficiaries			Rekawa Foundation	Development	Netolpitiya, Ambalantota	24 August

Annex 2 Questions posed in the Terms of Reference

At a general level:

- The changes in the general context – Sri Lanka seems to have moved from a peace process to a no war/no peace situation to a low intensity resumption of war – and implications for the P&DP
- The evolution of the programme itself and the extent to which observations in the first evaluation report have been taken on
- The programme's success and potential in terms of enabling perspectives of partners and beneficiaries in the planning and advocacy for development
- The programme's success and potential in terms of identifying development for support through grants by providing successful local examples. CHA staff may suggest examples.
- The position of the P&DP among other initiatives, particularly FLICT and (former) UNDP fund
- The linking of development to peace and effective ways of attaining it.
- The conceptualisation of ethics of peace building to be subscribed to by all partners.
- The identification of areas for advocacy.

At a district level:

- Is it possible to provide district-based focuses within a larger context of development for peace?
- How have the District Review Boards been functioning?
 - To what extent have decisions been devolved to the region?
 - Strengthening the role of the District Review Boards and the districts in the P&D decision making and investments on development
 - What are the opinions with regard to the selection process?
 - Do the DRBs have the potential to be more than the 'gatekeeper of funding' and play a more substantial role in the programme as a whole, especially with regard to decision-making and investments on development?
 - Is the composition of the DRBs adequate?

At the level of implementing organisations:

- What's the organisation's awareness of the overall P&D programme and its objectives?
- What are strength and needs of the implementing agencies?
- What is the relation between the organisation's mission and the objectives of the P&DP? CHA has asked for recommendations on this issue.
 - Does the organisation 'own' the P&DP approach?
- Their appreciation of national and local developments with regard to peace and conflict and their role in these processes
- Enabling perspectives of partners and beneficiaries in the planning and advocacy for development.
- Their appreciation of support and monitoring provided by CHA
- How they feel the project contributes to peace and development?
 - In view of the livelihood focus of phase 2, what is the 'peace element'?

- In mono-ethnic areas, what is the kind/level of conflict that the project tries to address?
- What outputs have been reached?
 - What are tangible signs of improvement? What anecdotal evidence is there?
- How do the intended beneficiaries feel about the project?
 - Are they aware of the scope and aim of the project?
 - Do they support these aims?
 - Have they actually benefited from the programme?
 - Do they think the project accomplished something that would not have happened otherwise?
 - How meaningful and long-lasting do they consider any outputs realised?
- In view of the programmes ambition to amplify voices from the region and provide a platform for advocacy, what kind of messages would they like to propagate?
 - How would they like these messages to be propagated?
- What are the links between the activities funded in phase 1 and in phase 2?
- In the Vanni, how does the project interact with the LTTE administration in the area?
- Are there any remaining after effects of the tsunami that the P&DP should be cognisant of?