

Framework Contract (FWC COM) 2011–Lot 1– Studies and Technical Assistance in all Sectors,  
funded by the European Union's DCI ASIE–DEVELOPMENT–for Sri Lanka

**Evaluation of the  
EU-funded housing reconstruction programmes  
in Sri Lanka implemented by UN-Habitat**  
(Aid to Uprooted People AUP-2010 and AUP-2012)

Letter of Contract 2013/330-201

**MISSION 1 FINAL REPORT**

**Final Evaluation**

**Support to Conflict Affected People through Housing**  
(AUP-2010) Contract N° DCI-ASIE/2010/256-210

**Mid-term Evaluation**

**Improving Living Conditions in Returnee Areas of Sri Lanka through Housing**  
(AUP-2012) Contract N° DCI-ASIE/2012/296-666

January 2015



Funded by the  
European Union



The project is implemented by IBF International Consulting  
In collaboration with STEM-VCR and BAa Consultors

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Contract managed by the  
**Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka and the Maldives**

(Programme Manager Mr Jaime ROYO-OLID)

EVALUATION OF THE  
EU-FUNDED HOUSING RECONSTRUCTION PROGRAMMES IN SRI LANKA IMPLEMENTED BY UN-HABITAT  
(Aid to Uprooted People programmes AUP-2010 and AUP-2012)  
Letter of Contract 2013/330201



*Palampasi Village, Mullativu District*

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January 2015

**Prepared by**

Reinhard SKINNER

Mano KUMARASURIYAR

Mario MARTELLI

## Acknowledgements

The authors of this report were assisted by numerous individuals and organisations while they were carrying out the evaluation. We would like to thank the Implementing Partners, UN-Habitat (in Colombo, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Batticaloa) and SDC (in Colombo and Jaffna) who explained so much to us about the AUP programmes and their own work in them as well as introducing us to other key contacts and organisations. A special word of gratitude should go to UN-Habitat, Kilinochchi whose management and staff, especially Mr. K. Pathmanathan, not only provided a rich source of information and an outstanding facilitation for the evaluation team, but it was also a pleasure to be with throughout the weeks of fieldwork.

Communities and individual families patiently gave of their time, knowledge and opinions so that the evaluators could carry out focus group discussions, observations, case studies and the household survey. In this respect the field survey team is also acknowledged; they carried out their work under unexpected constraints and reduced time, which did not prevent them from completing their task.

The participants at the workshop in Kilinochchi were a source of encouragement and ideas and showed us that the implementing partners and their own partners are looking for ways to continuously improve their work and the results they bring.

Interviewees from government, NGOs and the private sector provided many insights drawn from their substantial experience.

The many geo-referenced photographs in this report were made possible by long hours and days of exertions by Arturo Flaibani.

Finally, the team would like to thank the EU Delegation in Colombo, for its encouragement and openness to new ideas.

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASB	Arbeiter Samariter Bund, German INGO responsible for implementing the AUP-2008 housing programme in Vavuniya District.
AUP	Aid to Uprooted People regional facility funded by the European Union's Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) for Asia
AUP-2010	Aid to Uprooted People-funded project in Sri Lanka entitled Support to Conflict Affected People through Housing (Contract No DCI-ASIE/2010/256-210) implemented mainly by UN-Habitat and partly by SDC from 2011 to 2013. Also called Housing Programme <b>Phase-I</b>
AUP-2012	Aid to Uprooted People-funded project entitled Improving Living Conditions in Returnee Areas of Sri Lanka through Housing (Contract No DCI-ASIE/2012/296-666) implemented mainly by UN-Habitat and partly by SDC from 2013 to mid-2015. Also called Housing Programme <b>Phase-II</b>
AUP-2014	Aid to Uprooted People-funded project expected to commence implementation during the summer of 2015 entitled Developmental Housing Support to Srilankan IDPs
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development. (Note that around November 2013 AusAID was integrated to DFAT ceasing AusAID's operations as a single agency).
BoQ	Bill of Quantity
CBO	Community based organisation (voluntary organisation of and for the community in which it is found, dedicated to community development activities)
CEPA	Centre for Poverty Analysis (is an independent, Sri Lankan think-tank promoting a better understanding of poverty-related development issues)
CSEB	Compressed Stabilized Earth Blocks (one of the many alternatives available for building low cost housing)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee. The section of the OECD (see below) concerned with development cooperation
DAP	Donor Assisted Programme
DFAT	Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as of November 2013. Formerly Australian Agency for International Development.
DRC	Danish Refugee Council (a humanitarian, non-governmental, non-profit organisation working in more than 30 countries throughout the world).
DS	Divisional Secretariat
EC	European Commission
EUD	European Union Delegation to Sri Lanka and the Maldives
FGD	Focus Group Discussion (meeting ideally held with 8-12 persons sharing an interest or specialised knowledge in order to engender discussion and analysis amongst them)
FH	Full House (a newly built house)



FHE	Full house equivalent (means by which grants for repaired houses – which are smaller - are expressed in terms of a full house grant).
FHH	Female Headed Households (households where a female is the head or main breadwinner; usually means that there is no adult male in the household)
GA	Government Agent
GN Division	<i>Grama Niladhari</i> Division (A <i>Grama Niladhari</i> is a Sri Lankan public official appointed by the central government to carry out administrative duties in a Grama Niladhari Division, which is a subunit of a divisional secretariat)
GoSL	Government of the State of Sri Lanka
GS&MB	Geological Survey and Mining Bureau
HCI	High Commission of India (the diplomatic mission of India to the United Kingdom)
ICTAD	Institute for Construction Training & Development, Sri Lanka
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross
IHP	Indian Housing Plan comprising the reconstruction of 50,000 units in Sri Lanka
IPs	Implementing Partners
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NAITA	National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority (Sri Lankan)
NBRO	National Building Research Organisation (Sri Lankan)
NEHRP	North East Housing Reconstruction Programme
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHDA	National Housing Development Authority (Sri Lankan)
NPO	Non-Participant Observation (site visit and interview)
ODP	Owner-Driven Programme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PTF	Presidential Task Force for Resettlement, Development and Security for the Northern Province (Sri Lankan)
RDS	Rural Development Society (almost universal CBO in Sri Lankan villages dedicated to village development activities)
RH	Repair House (a house which has been repaired rather than newly built)
RVTC	Rural Vocational Training Centre (public mobile training centres travelling to villages to provide vocational training)
SCB	Soil Cement Blocks
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation



SIP	Settlement Improvement Plan
SLRC	Sri Lanka Red Cross
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (computer statistical programme)
SSI	Semi-Structured Interview (free-ranging individual interviews guided by a checklist of topics to be covered)
T.O.s	Technical Officers deployed in the field by the implementing partners, and responsible for providing direct technical assistance to home owners and to monitor the construction process.
ToR	Terms of Reference
UDA	Urban Development Authority, under the Ministry of Defence and Urban Development, Sri Lanka
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
VRC	Village Rehabilitation Committee (committee of programme beneficiaries established by UN-Habitat in communities in which they work in order to act as the community's interlocutor and local coordinator of activities under the housing programme).
WRDS	Women's Rural Development Society (same as RDS except is run by and comprises women. Sometimes works together with RDS)
ZOA	Dutch relief and development NGO (ZOA: Zuid Oost Azie, Dutch for "South-East Asia", where the organisation began its work)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report comprises the findings of two evaluations of housing reconstruction programmes in Sri Lanka:

1. the **Final Evaluation** of the **Support to Conflict Affected People through Housing**<sup>1</sup> programme (hereinafter called AUP-2010) implemented from January 2010 to March 2014 (€ 17.4 million<sup>2</sup>) and
2. the **Mid-term Evaluation** of the replica programme **Improving Living Conditions in Returnee Areas of Sri Lanka through Housing**<sup>3</sup> (called AUP-2012) implemented since January 2013 and due to be completed by the end of June 2015 (€ 17.66) million.

Both programmes have been funded by the European Union's (EU) Aid to Uprooted People (AUP) regional facility with a total of € 24 million; the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)—which in 2013 ceased to be an executive agency and was integrated in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)—with € 5.7 million; and the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) with € 5.5 million. In both cases, implementation was mainly undertaken by UN-Habitat and a smaller component by SDC acting both as donor and implementing partner.

Since 2005, the EU-funded housing programmes in Sri Lanka have targeted war-displaced households to assist them rebuild permanent houses on their own lands. This was done through individual grants<sup>4</sup>, technical assistance to home owner driven (HOD) reconstruction and an increasing emphasis on so-called 'flanking measures' (e.g. minor allocations to livelihood support ranging from securing land tenure, community infrastructure to skills training for community building). The AUP-2010 targeted Sri Lanka's northern districts of Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Mannar and Vavuniya. AUP-2012 covers the same but instead of Vavuniya it includes the eastern district of Batticaloa. As at September 2014, more than € 35 million funding from the EU, AusAID/DFAT and SDC had been disbursed to nearly 9,700 households.

The evaluation team comprises Dr Reinhard Skinner (Team Leader and Sociologist/Housing Expert), Mr Mario Martelli (Architect) and Dr Mano Kumarasuriyar (Urban Planner/Architect). The field study was conducted during September 2014. The methodology adopted for the study included **documentary analysis, a household survey of 600 beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, 13 focus group discussions, 30 semi-structured interviews, 19 case studies** of households and **30 non-participant observations** as an audit of the design and construction processes (See Chapter Two for more details on methodology).

The evaluation team concludes that the **AUP-2010 programme has been successful** and that **AUP-2012 is on track to perform just as well**. The implementing partners have performed impressively on several fronts. Both programmes have had a **significant and positive impact on the estimated 32,000 direct housing beneficiaries**. From an outcomes perspective, according to the survey, **68% of AUP-2010 and 88% of AUP-2012 beneficiaries felt that the housing programmes had "greatly" improved their lives**. For AUP-2010 this was mainly because of the "possession of a secure house" (63%) while for AUP-2012 beneficiaries it was also a feeling of "greater peace and harmony" (35%). This suggests that the programmes, particularly AUP-2012, have gone well beyond merely sheltering the homeless and have contributed to building a sense of security and cohesive communities. These are important achievements for the EU's objective to contribute to peace and reconciliation. From a perspective of outputs, both programmes will have delivered more full house equivalents (FHEs)<sup>5</sup> than originally contracted: AUP-2010 delivered 3,843 FHEs (2,869 full houses and 1,948 repairs) that is 16.45% more than the 3,300 FHEs

<sup>1</sup> EU's CRIS contract reference No DCI-ASIE/2010/256-210

<sup>2</sup> This includes additional DFAT funding of €1,438,992 not contracted in the Contribution Agreement with the EU.

<sup>3</sup> EU's CRIS contract reference No DCI-ASIE/2012/296-666

<sup>4</sup> AUP-2010: LKR 500,000 for a full house and LKR 250,000 for a repair; AUP-2012: LKR 550,000 full and LKR 275,000 repair.

<sup>5</sup> Generally a FHE corresponds to a full housing grant and a repair to half a grant hence half a FHE.

originally contracted to no additional cost. With the additional € 1.4 million provided by AusAID/DFAT 4,094 FHEs (24% more) were delivered. AUP-2012 is on track to deliver 4,265 FHEs, 21.85% more than the 3,500 originally contracted to no additional cost. This improved level of output can be attributed to efficiency gains, economies of scale, synergies between various housing programmes funded by the EU and India, use of cost-effective technologies and favourable exchange rates.

However, in agreement with the European Union Delegation to Sri Lanka (EUD) the evaluation report is structured around the main problems identified given their relevance not just for the forthcoming EU housing programme but for reconstruction policy and development planning in rural Sri Lanka at large.

For instance, with regards to the intended improvement in social cohesion, certain aspects of the **beneficiary selection process** are strongly disputed not only by those not selected but also by many beneficiaries. They claim some criteria disregard prevalent cultural norms and values. The evaluators recommend that the scoring system be reviewed with the participation of the target communities to improve its acceptance and to improve a sense of fairness.

Some other problems which have been confirmed by our field mission and surveys and addressed in this report, such as **dependency syndrome** and **indebtedness**, have not been caused by the implementing partners – though they may be unintentional contributors – but have been largely brought about by the post-emergency assistential dynamics in which livelihood and housing assistance have been provided. Further, the implementing partners have been required to work sectorally to deliver housing reconstruction as a complement to livelihood support programmes that in fact most often involved different beneficiaries and locations. Though often adjacent, their complementarity has not always materialised geographically. SDC's whole village approach seems lead to more cohesive results.

The housing typologies and construction standards are somewhat rigid and beneficiary expectations high as a result of two generous waves of post-emergency reconstruction assistance (i.e. post-tsunami and post-war). Technical specifications and expectations have not been sufficiently adapted to changes such as prohibitive inflation of construction costs (both labour and materials). Emerging developmental needs such as the need to ensure locally-sustained livelihood and income opportunities beyond reconstruction are becoming more pronounced and will need to be addressed in order for households to be viable in the long-term. In trying to break away from **assistance dependency syndrome** among the beneficiary communities home owners have increasingly been required to provide in-kind contributions and unskilled labour. This has **improved ownership** of the housing process but also ties them to the house construction and often **denies them the opportunity to work** to cover day-to-day expenses. In Chapter Six, it is argued, that **the combination of dependency, lack of financial literacy and interruptions in income generation through the reconstruction process undermines the sustainability** of the programme.

Allocating either a full house, a repair or nothing translates in either huge gains or nothing for those left out. Towards achieving a broader **spread of benefits**, three alternatives and cheaper incremental housing designs are recommended. These are to be understood as house types to be further adapted to local norms, regulations, and cultural sensitivities. These designs are smaller than the current standard full house equivalents, but are fully functional houses with potential for expansion. It is recommended that an **“incremental housing”** approach be considered in future programmes in which lifecycle demands of house owners are anticipated. Providing completed houses, perhaps smaller than the current 550 sq. feet, but with potential for expansion could free up funds to include more beneficiaries and to provide more livelihood support and training activities. Gradually phasing in non-exploitative financial sources such as loans through sound financial mechanisms creating financial discipline among beneficiaries and other actions to mitigate dependency are presented in Chapters Five and Twelve.

Managing the above is important to halt the general tendency, though less so in Batticaloa, to get deeply **indebted**. Spending on the house far above what the AUP grant permits must be proactively discouraged

in order to sustain manageable levels of debt. Whilst SDC's study on indebtedness underlines that no causality can be directly established between housing reconstruction and unsustainable debt, this evaluation confirms that among AUP-2010 beneficiaries 83% borrowed to complete their construction, while 68% of AUP-2012 beneficiaries did the same. In order to address indebtedness **it is recommended that future grants build in stronger livelihoods and training** components. Although the AUP has built in a training programme for the beneficiaries while building their houses, an insignificant number is using these skills to build a career. It is recommended that these training programmes be appropriately accredited and a suitable training allowance paid to the trainees to motivate more beneficiaries to accept the opportunity of training. **Incentives towards local entrepreneurship** should be considered.

A particular concern in the **construction process** is that, while the overall quality of the houses in both programmes is generally good, the **duration taken for completion is considered too long**. The need for households and their family members to carry out seasonal work (e.g. fishing and farming) and other occasional priorities, together with a serious shortage of skilled labour and sometimes of construction materials in the districts, are the main causes. Proposals are made in Chapter Nine to reduce this time.

The two AUP programmes incorporate beneficiary financial and physical **participation** as well as community participation in the collective/bulk procurement of building materials through the specially created Village Reconstruction Committees (VRCs). However, the potential **contribution of existing CBOs was found not to have been sufficiently exploited**.

Concerning the **visibility of the programmes**, though some aspects are covered well enough, the deliberate low-profile approach could be considered as falling short of donors' expectations.

In the concluding chapter the report gives an overview of successes and shortcomings and provides proposals to improve the design of future housing programmes. Amongst these are the creation of a non-exploitative **housing finance mechanism** and a **community driven as opposed to the present individual, owner driven approach**. Other recommendations are found in the preceding chapters.

Finally, with regards to the donor's exit strategy from a situation of donor-dependency in addressing the post-war housing reconstruction gap, an abrupt disengagement is discouraged and the facilitation of a smooth transition to a local non-exploitative housing market encouraged. The total number of houses constructed under all EU programmes since 2005 being about 20,000 units (likely to reach 23,000 if the AUP-2014 goes ahead) together with the 50,000 being provided by the Indian Housing Project and many others, still fall short of total needs. The outstanding number of conflict-affected families awaiting housing assistance (on a house-for-a-house basis) is unclear, but in the north it is generally considered to be in the range of 30,000-50,000 and in Batticaloa 3,000-7,000. The number in other eastern districts is still to be verified. The present report argues that **the housing reconstruction gap must continue to be addressed through public intervention since no affordable market mechanism is yet in place**. If left unattended, exploitative practices will prevail. The AUP-2014 can take the housing process one step away from dependency to promoting local self-reliance by addressing the structural and technical issues identified. However, it will still remain insufficient and over 100,000 very vulnerable people, who will struggle to ever afford a house, risk remaining in poverty. Based on the current approach and assuming a gap of 40,000 units as of 2016, the additional funding requirement to meet this shortfall is estimated to be nearly €160 million. Addressing this gap seems a possibility and in line with the EU's Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2014-2020 for Sri Lanka. An **integrated rural development approach** cannot do without addressing the housing gap. An integrated rural settlements approach would ideally include a substantially more important livelihoods support component, local value-added microenterprise development, support to incremental housing, access to non-exploitative finance, vocational training and the strengthening of CBOs and major support to social infrastructure. With these and the promotion of a public housing policy the spread of benefits could be much wider and more sustainable.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka's two decade long internal conflict, mainly in the north and the east of the country, coupled with the tsunami disaster of December 2004, which had the severest impact along the north-east and the eastern coastal belt of the country, had left about 365,000 houses fully or partially damaged.

EU's support for the reconstruction of social infrastructure, livelihoods and damaged houses in the affected areas has involved over EUR 674 million since the initial intervention in 2005.

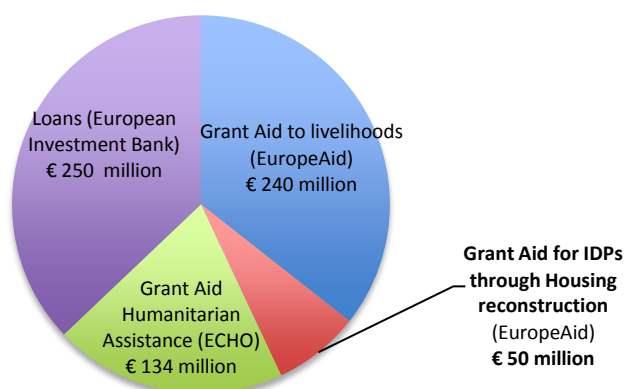


Figure 1: EU aid to Sri Lanka from 2005-2015 (Source EU-Delegation to Sri Lanka)

### 1.1 EU's Aid to Uprooted People (AUP) regional facility applied to Sri Lanka

A regional facility of the EU – Aid to Uprooted People (AUP) – was employed to finance housing reconstruction complementing other EU-funded bilateral humanitarian aid, grant aid to livelihood rehabilitation programmes and soft loans in areas where internally displaced persons from the civil war were to be found. In the first two AUP interventions in 2005 and 2006, a total of €16 million was committed to the World Bank-led North East Housing Reconstruction Programme (NEHRP). It was followed by a third AUP contribution of €12 million in 2008 towards emergency housing implemented by ASB in Vavuniya complemented by ZOA and Practical Action responsible for the so-called 'flaking measures' components.



**Illustration 1: NEHRP permanent house next to transitional shelter, Ampara District, 2007**

In 2010, as the internal conflict-related emergencies added on to the backlog of tsunami housing programmes, the EU responded through the AUP facility with a commitment of €12 million towards Support to Conflict Affected People through Housing Programme, implemented by UN-Habitat and SDC. It is referred to by the EUD as AUP-2010 and by UN-Habitat as Phase I. An additional €4 million was sourced through AusAID/DFAT and SDC (the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation).

The global objective of AUP-2010 is “to contribute to a sustainable resettlement in the place of origin for the returnees and their host communities in North Sri Lanka” and its specific objective “to improve the living conditions and social cohesion of displaced people, returnees and their host communities in the North through provision of permanent housing”.

The AUP-2012 or UN-Habitat Phase II is a replication of the AUP-2010 programme implemented with the same partners – UN-Habitat, AusAID/DFAT and SDC, but adopting a theme of “Improving Living Conditions in Returnee Areas of Sri Lanka through Housing” by targeting 3,000 fully damaged houses for reconstruction and 1000 repairs to those partially damaged. Its global objective is “to address medium term rehabilitation needs of returnees and their host communities in the North and East of Sri Lanka” and its specific objective “to improve the living conditions and social cohesion of displaced people, returnees and their host communities in the North and East through provision of permanent housing”.

The funding breakdown among the partners remained similar to the AUP-2010 programme – EU providing €11.8 million and the combined AusAID/DFAT (which later became DFAT)/SDC contribution being approximately €5.86 million. The programme aimed to reach 100 villages in the four targeted districts in the north – Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Mannar, as well as 1,000 households in the Batticaloa district in the east.



## 1.2 The present evaluation

By the end of this evaluation the two later AUP programmes had produced 3,870 completely rebuilt houses (“full houses”) and 2,346 repaired houses in addition to other outputs such as community infrastructure, training and support in obtaining land titles. Although the programmes have delivered substantial benefits, which are described in the present report, the EU's intention through evaluation is to further improve ongoing programme performance for better and greater impact and to extract lessons learnt for future housing reconstruction actions.



**Illustration 2: Palampasi Village, Mullaitivu District (18 September 2014)**

When the present evaluation was commissioned in January 2014 the shortfall in housing needs in the north was estimated to be 30,000 - 60,000 and an additional 5,000 – 12,000 for the eastern Batticaloa District. How could the programme be scaled up sufficiently better to attend to these deficiencies? In addition, it was observed or suspected that several problems were constraining home ownership or home improvement. These included landlessness, inflation in building materials and labour costs and political intervention in beneficiary selection.

It is against this backdrop that the evaluations of the AUP–2010 and AUP–2012 programmes are being undertaken. It is hoped that the findings and recommendations presented in this report will contribute substantially in helping that programmes and projects in the pipeline will be improved and, as a result benefit the as yet unattended populations in the north and east of Sri Lanka through better policies and programmes.

In February and March 2012 an EU-funded mid-term evaluation was carried out of the “Support to Conflict-Affected People through Housing in Sri Lanka” programme (AUP-2010 or Phase-I) lead by AETS consortium. The present evaluation, led by IBF International Consulting, comprises the final evaluation of AUP-2010 and the mid-term evaluation of AUP-2012<sup>6</sup>. In 2015 a final evaluation of AUP-2012 will also be carried out by IBF.

<sup>6</sup> It had been intended that this would have been a baseline study of AUP-2012 which had only started in January 2013 and was due to end in June 2015. When the evaluation was originally to have taken place, in February-March 2014, it was



The global objective of the evaluations is to:

*Empower key stakeholders involved in EU-funded housing reconstruction programmes in Sri Lanka with knowledge or skills identified through programme evaluations necessary to undertake well-informed decisions, corrective measures or complementary activities to better attain EU development cooperation objectives. (Evaluation TOR: 4)*

Specific objectives are to:

1. identify relevant areas for potential improvement as well as examples of good practice in the implementation and design of the programmes concerned;
2. disseminate the relevant findings in the form of practical and feasible recommendations;
3. mainstream, to the relevant stakeholders, practical methods, skills or approaches to follow up on the recommendations. (Loc. Cit.).

Both the final and mid-term evaluations are focused on **performance** (the extent to which the implementing agencies have carried out their work efficiently and effectively and generally complying with what was requested of them) and **impact** (the extent to which these activities have produced development changes). The way in which these two fields were measured is explained in the following chapter.

### 1.3 The structure of the report

The evaluators discussed two possible ways of presenting their findings:

- (i) following the format of the evaluation question matrix submitted as part of the proposed methodology and including the five standard OECD-DAC criteria and the EC's (ToR par. 2) and then presenting the answers to each of the main questions asked during the evaluation, or
- (ii) identifying the main underlying issues which emerged during the evaluation and structuring the writing on each of these.

In agreement with the EUD this report has been written giving due consideration to the OECD-DAC and the EC's criteria such that all the evaluation questions have been addressed during the evaluation and are summarised in Annex 10 (the Evaluation Question Matrix and Summary Answers)<sup>7</sup>. However, the report is structured around the main issues which emerged during the evaluation. This is because the present evaluation is intended as per the above objectives to focus on potential improvements hence the emphasis on where change is proposed serves as a source of ideas for the design of a future programme. Following the OECD-DAC criteria a structure for the narrative of the report would have implied the fragmentation of those main findings.

It is understood that this form of presentation will emphasise negative aspects of the two programmes and understate their successes. The evaluation team does not want the reader to conclude that all is wrong with the two AUP programmes; this would be wrong. For this reason, in addition to Annex 10, the report contains references to the Evaluation Matrix and OECD/DAC criteria at various points, which it is hoped will provide balance. For this reason the criteria are mainly referred to in the Conclusions.

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believed that construction work would have been at a sufficiently early stage to consider the evaluation a baseline study. However, by the time the evaluation actually took place, in September 2014, this was no longer the case and it became a mid-term evaluation.

<sup>7</sup> This matrix has been drawn up on the basis of the DAC/OECD criteria all of which are clearly reflected in it.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this evaluation has been described by the evaluation team in detail in its Evaluation Methods Consolidation Report. The following summarises this Report and explains how it applied in the course of the evaluation.

Evaluation criteria had been given in the evaluation's Terms of Reference (ToR). These were relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact, coherence and community value added. From these the evaluation team drew up evaluation questions and compiled them in the Evaluation Question Matrix, which appears in Annex 9. This shows the criteria, questions, likely sources of information and the most appropriate evaluation method to be employed to answer the questions.

The ToR required that the evaluation be both qualitative and quantitative and that household surveys be carried out with each respondent's house being photographed and geo-referenced. The other methods (documentary analysis, focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation) were selected by the evaluation team.

### 2.1 Documentary Analysis

The evaluation requires that the AUP programmes be evaluated at different levels ranging from the global (e.g. their contribution to national development) to the very specific (such as the timely payment of grant instalments). The best source for this data is existing documentation. Strategy level documents provided the answers to the first type of question (e.g. the National Development Plan and the "Awakening the North" regional development strategy) while programme documents address the second. In addition the team has made use of a range of other materials such as the AUP-2010 mid-term evaluation, the programme's Operations Manual, specific research studies (e.g. on indebtedness and vulnerability) as well as academic articles. AUP-2010 ended on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 and by the end of September the implementing partners were to have submitted their final report to the EU Delegation. The evaluation team had hoped to receive a draft of this as an input into the present report but at the time of writing this had not been received.

### 2.2 Household Survey

A local survey team was sub-contracted to carry out a household survey. It carried out a total of 591<sup>8</sup> interviews with householders. These comprised 243 beneficiaries and 98 non-beneficiaries of the AUP-2010 programme and 250 beneficiaries of AUP-2012. Non-beneficiaries were to be used as a control group: what progress has been made by those who have not benefitted from a housing grant? How does this compare with those who have?

Beneficiaries surveyed were successful applicants for AUP grants for a full house or repairs to a house. They were randomly selected from a database maintained by UN-Habitat. Non-beneficiaries were selected randomly from a database of unsuccessful applicants.

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<sup>8</sup> It had been intended that 600 households would be surveyed. However, in some cases in Kilinochchi District the selected beneficiaries were not at home and the reserve list of interviewees, which had been drawn up for all other cases, had been overlooked in these cases. The local security personal did not permit the surveyors to look for replacement households as they did not appear on the list which they required they be shown beforehand.

The questionnaires used by the survey team are attached to this report (Annex 12) and the way in which the survey sample was drawn is described in Annex 13.

## 2.3 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions were held with community members in groups intended to number 10-12 persons. Members included VRC representatives and other key actors in each of the villages. These included representatives of such community based organisations as Rural Development Societies, Women's Rural Development Societies, elderly citizens groups, and fishermen's and farmers' associations.



**Illustration 3: The first focus group in Uthayanagar West, Kilinochchi (12 September 2014)**

In reality the number and composition of discussants was not as methodically determined as this. The evaluators explained to Implementing Partners what the ideal composition and number should be and there is no reason they did anything but their best to ensure this happened. However, in a village a meeting like this can be a significant event and uninvited people often drifted in so that in some cases the group's membership had swollen to twenty or more by the end. Clearly there is no way the evaluators could or would have attempted to remove those uninvited in this situation.

In total thirteen focus groups were convened which were spread more or less evenly over the three districts in which the evaluation worked (see Annexe 7).

## 2.4 Semi-Structured Interviews and Case Studies

Semi-structured interviews were used to complement the household survey by probing fewer key evaluation questions in depth and aiming thereby to reveal ideas and experiences that may not have been considered or hypothesised when designing the Evaluation Question Matrix. They also allowed a closer interrogation of important issues which were raised during the course of the evaluation.



**Illustration 4: Case Study in Uthayanagar West, Kilinochchi (12 September 2014)**

Not all interview questions were formulated in advance. While the Evaluation Matrix specified key questions semi-structured interviews should address, other questions were created during the interviews as the interviewer uncovered new avenues of enquiry suggested by the answers received from the interviewee.

Interviews held were mainly with representatives of donors, implementing partners, government agencies and the private sector. Programme beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries were not included. However, the evaluation team considered that a more in-depth view of the situations of individual households would provide valuable insights and decided that, in addition to the data which it is already committed to providing, it would develop a limited number of household case studies.

In total 19 case studies were carried out and 30 semi-structured interviews held. The location of the case studies and the details of respondents are given in Annexes 7 and 18 respectively.

## **2.5 Non-Participant Observations**

Thirty observations (or technical audits of houses) were made. These were intended to show how houses have been constructed and modified and to identify problems and interesting innovations. They also show how the construction was carried out, by whom, what difficulties were faced and what solutions were found. In addition, consideration was given to the health and safety procedures and / or regulations which were followed and potential environmental impact of the works.

The houses chosen for observation were mainly those interviewed by the household survey team. This allowed the results of the survey to be complemented with technical detail. In addition, some cases were included which the survey team did not cover, such as child-headed households.

A format was devised (see Annex 8) in which the technical findings have been recorded for each case which allows easy comparison between cases. Results have been analysed and some significant pictures included in each case to illustrate the findings.

This method included a desk review of relevant documents (e.g. to check the accuracy of drawings), site visits and interviews with householders, geo-referenced photographs and measurements. Technical details were documented and appropriate non-destructive tests were carried out.

The evaluation team held a workshop for implementing partners halfway through their fieldwork which was intended both as a capacity building exercise and an opportunity to verify the team's findings to date. This produced some ideas from the participants, working in groups, which show that they too had been considering how AUP can be improved (see Annex 15).

## **2.6 Limitations of the Methodology in Practice**

An important limitation of the evaluation requires mention. It had been intended to pilot test the survey questionnaires in order to detect any shortcomings (e.g. in intelligibility of the questions to the respondent). The questionnaire would then be appropriately refined. However, the pilot testing was interrupted by soldiers insisting that the survey and evaluation team lacked the proper clearance to carry out fieldwork despite the evaluation had been approved by the Presidential Task Force for Northern Development (PTF). But since the mandate of PTF had on the mean time been terminated, by the time the Ministry of Economic Development had cleared again our mandate approximately five days of fieldwork time (survey, focus groups and observations) had been lost. The interviews were unaffected as they took place outside the field. This meant that the pilot survey did not take place and this showed itself in some of the results (e.g. where it seems that respondents did not understand the meaning of some of the questions and the surveyors did not ask them correctly). Given that the survey was nonetheless almost totally completed is either a great credit to the survey team or leads one to wonder whether the lost time (35% of the total) forced the surveyors to hurry their work to the detriment of its quality.

This delay also affected the evaluation team. In this case it was agreed with the EU Delegation to reduce the districts the team covered from five to three (leaving out Mannar and Vavuniya). This proved a good solution as it reduced the amount of travel time substantially and only a small proportion of the total fieldwork was lost since these two districts represented by far the smallest of the total housing activities in the programmes.



### 3 BENEFICIARY SELECTION SYSTEM

The success rate of any welfare programme implemented in the developing countries depends largely on whether the most deserving and appropriate have been selected for the benefits. Ideally, in a programme such as the AUP (Aid to Uprooted People) in which every single person in the target group is an equally uprooted person, the programme would be expected to have 100% coverage of the target group. However, in reality, resource constraints require selecting beneficiaries, which, despite well-intended transparent processes, tend to leave out some who believe that they have been dealt with unfairly. The sense of fairness is important for the social cohesion of the communities.

While the implementers of programmes consciously make every effort to be fair and just in the selections, there has been a degree of perceived or real unfairness in the selections for one or more of many reasons. These could be due to subjectively assessing beneficiary applications or the inherent inability of the most vulnerable to make strong enough applications or, undue political interference, just to cite a few reasons. Even when applications are assessed objectively, the design of the programme may be such that some of those selected, though deserving, may not have been the most appropriate for that particular programme.

#### 3.1 Subjectivity/objectivity in the beneficiary selection process

Despite the relatively high levels of transparency, the two AUP programmes are no exceptions to beneficiary selection criticisms.

The AUP-2010 was launched following the end of the war in 2009; the urgency in resettling those languishing in refugee camps had been such that the resettlement programmes would not have had adequate lead time to be systematically planned and implemented. In the absence of tested and proven beneficiary selection systems in a programme of such complexity, the implementers would have had to depend on local level government officials for the identification and prioritization of the most vulnerable among the target groups. The AUP-2010 beneficiaries had been selected on the basis of government officials deciding who deserved and who did not. The survey of non-beneficiaries for the present study revealed that there had been a requirement for as many as 16 different combinations of documents - "Land Deed", "Living Certificate(?)", "ID Copy", "GN Recommendation", "Family List (?)", from the applicants to prove their eligibility. Some had to produce only the Land Deed (15.3%); some the Land Deed and Family List (?) (12.2%); Land Deed + Family List + GN's Recommendation (14.3%); Land Deed + Family List (?) + ID Copy (13.3%). While a majority had to produce the Land Deed with or without other documents (83.5%) there were also some who produced a combination of other documents other than the Land Deed (1%) or did not produce any documents at all (1%) (see Annex 4 regarding survey results for non-beneficiaries). The primary list of beneficiaries had been generated by government officials in each GN division and passed on to the implementers (UN-Habitat/SDC) for scheduling of related activities.

The AUP-2012, on the other hand, attempted to introduce objectivity in the selection process through a scoring system as adopted in the Indian Housing Project (IHP). What AUP-2012 may have achieved in doing so is a higher degree of transparency in the selection process, but not necessarily the acceptance by the target groups that it is a fair system. That is, those not qualifying, as well as the community at large, may accept the verdict on the basis of not having scored adequate points to qualify rather than being



**Non-beneficiary S Meenatchi of Olumadu, Mullaotivu**

S. Meenatchi of Olumadu in Mullaotivu - an aged widow lost all her immediate relatives in the war. Being a single member household, she scored very low in the scoring system, which is biased heavily towards larger families with four or more dependents. She continues to languish in a temporary shed on a one acre plot while watching all around her constructing permanent houses through AUP and other programmes



**Non-beneficiary S Meenatchi of Olumadu, Mullaotivu**

arbitrarily disqualified, but still feel aggrieved as every single person in the target groups, rightly, considers himself or herself to be an “uprooted person” at whom the AUPs are targeted. However, it was quite obvious to the evaluators that a significant majority among the non-beneficiaries as well as the beneficiaries perceived the scoring system to have not been a fair and just selection process<sup>9</sup>. What exactly could have been the cause of the scoring system not performing as expected?

In examining the scoring system and interviewing the beneficiaries, as well as the non-beneficiaries, it became apparent that the criteria and the relative weights assigned to each in the scoring system appear to be very subjective (See Annex 17b). Though well-intended, the scoring system had the tendency to discriminate against some of the most vulnerable. There have been families who had lost several members in the war, something that had reduced them to a small family who now may not be eligible for a house due to the scoring system’s bias towards larger families.

An argument in favour of the system is that an AUP Euro spent towards a larger household goes further than that spent on a single member household. However, should beneficiary selections be influenced merely by numbers in the household disregarding the circumstances? Would not the spread of benefits wider (discussed in detail in Chapter Four) with smaller grants to a larger number provide an opportunity to support more vulnerable households in this programme?

A word of caution is required in arriving at conclusions from the case cited above. An AUP grant of 550,000 LKR per household for house building is no doubt a substantial amount of money. This being so, large extended families, particularly those living on large parcels of land, may sub-divide the land, build temporary huts for each sub-unit of the household on each sub-division and apply for AUP grants for each of those sub-units. That is, families that had lived for

long in the traditional system of joint and extended families, may view AUP as an opportunity to build houses for each sub-unit in the household. In their defence, one may argue that the houses such extended families may have lived in before the war would have been very much larger than the two-bed roomed 550 sq. ft. house being offered under the AUP. Expecting a household of eight to ten or more to

<sup>9</sup> In most of the focus groups the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries understood why the non-beneficiaries had not been selected for a grant but also felt this was unfair.



live in such a two-bed roomed house would be unreasonable and even unhygienic. A thorough examination of the circumstances related to such cases would be required before being rejected by the scoring system.

Another anomaly in the scoring system is the non-acceptance of women over eighteen as dependents when considering household size for scoring. This is considered culturally insensitive by the community as regional tradition dictates that unemployed females, irrespective of age, are dependents in a household until they leave home after marriage. In several focus group discussions examples were cited where large households, who normally would have scored high on the basis of the household size, did not qualify as there were two or three girls who were just over eighteen. Participants at FGDs were unanimous in labelling the scoring system as unfair for these reasons, and in one meeting there was a plea for the scoring system to be discontinued. Many were of the opinion that well deserving cases had been left out of the programme and for some beneficiaries the joy of acquiring an asset through the AUPs was diluted by the sadness of seeing non-beneficiaries languishing in temporary shelters. After all, every member of the target group was an uprooted person who had endured the hardships brought about by the war. No one had less or more need than the other person.

A third contended issue is the cut-off point of 10 on the scoring system. What is sacrosanct about the number 10? Why not 8 or 5 or 12 or 15? A clear definition of the cut-off, explaining what it represents in terms of eligibility as expressed in the objectives of the programme is required. As eligibility scoring is taken to the first decimal point, a thin cut-off line at 10.0 seems unreasonable, particularly when the selection of criteria and their respective weights is subjective. A household scoring 10.0 qualifies but one scoring 9.9 does not! A careful examination of such borderline cases may be required.

### 3.2 Redress of grievance

As mentioned earlier, the two AUP programmes have had several aggrieved persons. In anticipation of there being unsuccessful applicants to the programme who may, rightly or wrongly, perceive that the rejection of their application had been unfair, a three stage mechanism is in place to address the grievances (UN-Habitat Operational Manual 2013-2015, p6). While such a mechanism would be expected to enhance the confidence in the beneficiary selection process, the survey of non-beneficiaries for this study seems to show a degree of apathy and hopelessness among those surveyed. Almost 40% of those surveyed claimed that they were unaware of the reasons why their applications were rejected (Annex 4). As would be expected, **nearly 60% felt that their disqualification was unfair.**

### 3.3 Conclusion

- With limited resources all affected households could not be supported in programmes of this nature. Hence, the most vulnerable need to be systematically identified with a high degree of transparency for the programme to be seen to be fair by beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. The two AUP programmes have, no doubt, striven to perform justly, but it is the opinion of the evaluators that the beneficiary selection process could have been better programmed to gain more acceptance within the community.

- Perhaps the spread of benefits more widely would have given an opportunity to cover a larger number of the needy in the target group – smaller grants to a larger number rather than a larger grant to a smaller number.
- Though the selection process had evolved to be more transparent in the AUP-2012 programme, the scoring system used for selecting beneficiaries is perceived as being unfair and unjust, not only by the aggrieved but also by the community at large.
- The lack of confidence in the beneficiary selection process may be due to inadequate involvement of the target population in the decisions related to identifying selection criteria, assigning weights for these criteria and in finalizing the beneficiary list.
- It may be inappropriate to assume a “one shoe fits all” approach in the programme. Die-hard cultural practices and traditions as well as family sizes and other circumstances need to be taken into account in the selection process.

### 3.4 Recommendations

1. The criteria currently being used need to be revisited. They need to take into account cultural elements such as unemployed girls over 18 being part of the household<sup>10</sup>; aged, either couple or single, living by themselves with no support from children need to be considered as most vulnerable and treated specially.
2. In order that local conditions and cultural norms are factored into the selection process, it would be necessary for representatives of the target groups to be co-opted to deliberate over all matters related to the selection process including the identification of selection criteria and assigning relative weights to them.
3. The cut-off exactly at 10.0 on the scoring system needs reconsideration. It would perhaps be better to have a “grey” band of “unsure” separating the “black” of “definitely in” and “white” of “definitely out”. The “grey” band could be set at 9 to 11 on the scoring scale. Those applicants falling within the “grey” band may be interviewed by a panel which should also include representatives of the target community.
4. A special category of funding support (say, 1.5 to 2 lakhs) could be included for very small households who may have lost many family members in the war or are faced with other compelling circumstances.

<sup>10</sup> Refer to: Observation no. 18 (Annex 8)

## 4 THE SPREAD OF BENEFITS

The following table provides a summary of the amount of donor funding invested during the two phases of AUP and the number of full house equivalents.

	Donor Funding (€) (i)	Full-House Equivalents (FHEs) (ii)	Average Investment Per FHE (€) including investment on flanking measures
AUP-2010	17,396,992 (iii)	4,094	4,250
AUP-2012	17,664,600	4,265 (est.)	4,142 (iv)
Total	35,061,592	8,359	4,194
<b>Notes:</b> (i) The “Donor Funding” column aggregates EU, SDC and AusAID/DFAT funding. (ii) “Full-house equivalents” are a way devised by the mid-term evaluators of adding together fully completed houses and repaired houses to facilitate statistical comparison. Two repair houses are taken to be equivalent to one fully rebuilt house. (iii) Total funding includes the additional DFAT funding of €1,438,992 provided for 241 FHEs which tops up the €15,958,000 for 3,853 FHE’s as per the Contribution Agreement with the EU. (iv) This lower average investment per FHE in spite of general inflation and higher investment on flanking measures is partly explained by a combination of the use of low-cost construction technologies and synergies and economies of scale resulting from the overlap of the implementation times of AUP-2010 and AUP-2012 during 2013 and early 2014.			
Sources: UN-Habitat (2014), <b>Support to Conflict Affected People through Housing &amp; Improving Living Conditions in Returnee Areas through Housing, Implemented by UN-Habitat and SDC</b> , PowerPoint presentation at European Union Evaluation Team Meeting, Colombo, 2 September 2014. UN-Habitat (2014), Quarterly Progress Report No. 7 (July-September 2014).			

This is a substantial number of houses, benefitting about 32,000 direct housing beneficiaries. In addition, the Indian Housing Project (IHP) intends to support the construction of some 50,000 houses to conflict-affected families by mid-2015<sup>11</sup>.

However, it has been estimated that when both the AUP and IHP have ended there will be a remaining 40,000 houses in need of repair or rebuilding. At average house costs of € 4,200 for the AUP programmes the elimination of this deficit would require € 168 million. This is nearly 5 times what has been spent in AUP-2010 and AUP-2012. The Multiannual Indicative Programme 2014-2020 for Sri Lanka with an allocation of € 200 million could cover this.

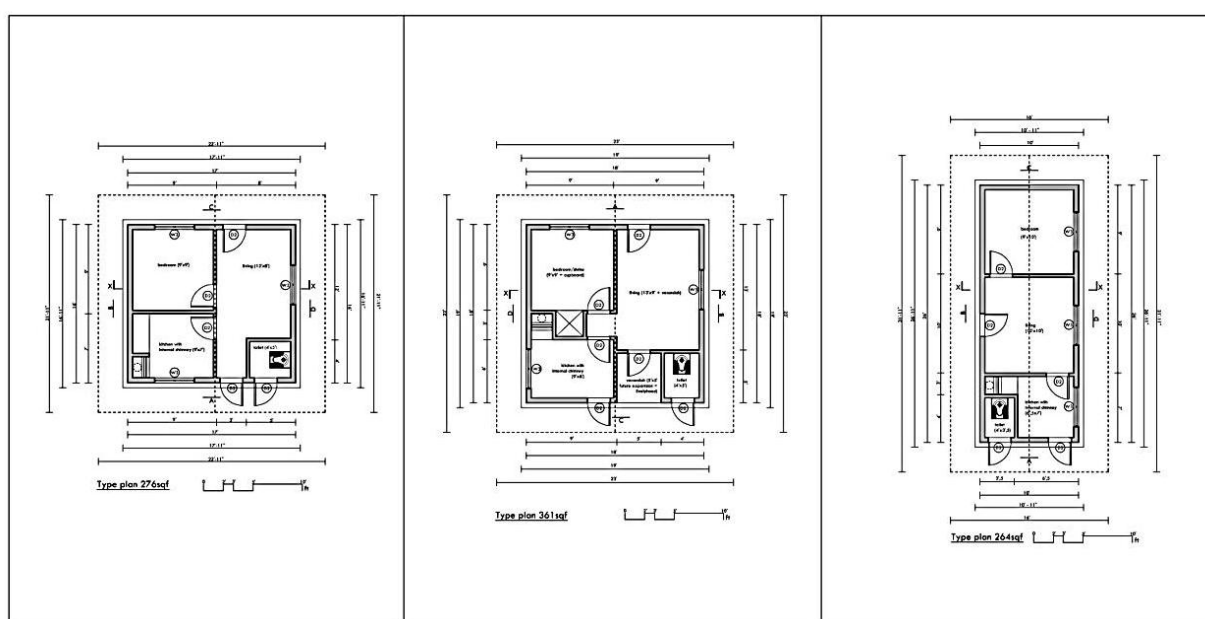
The evaluation team believes that for future programmes to reach the maximum of households housing costs need to be examined and cheaper options found. The team has carried out an exercise which seeks to do this. It presents three alternative house types of different sizes, designs and building materials. These are presented below (the plans themselves appear in Annex 19). The plans and sketches presented below are intended to stimulate discussion on potential new and smaller houses which will allow the incorporation of extremely vulnerable and small in number families (or other households currently not included)<sup>12</sup>. It is hoped that IPs will evaluate the new proposed type plans technically, taking into account local religious beliefs and UDA’s (and other relevant bodies’) prescriptions, and revise the new proposed plans accordingly (e.g. shifting doors and windows).

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.unhabitat.lk/project13.html>

<sup>12</sup> UN-Habitat recently agreed “that there may be a case to include a special category for small households, understanding that this will divert funds from larger families” (Draft Evaluation Report\_UN-Habitat comments\_051214, page 5). The above sentence also applies to SDC’s comments: refer to point 3 of the email, sent on Monday, December 01, 2014 1:03 PM, Subject: “RE: Draft report: Final evaluation of AUP-2010 and Mid-term of AUP-2012”.

## 4.1 Proposed New Expandable Type-Plans

All three proposed type-plans illustrate fully functional lockable houses that have the same rooms but different surface areas: 264 sq. ft., 276 sq. ft. and 361 sq. ft. respectively<sup>13</sup>. These are to be understood as house types to be further suited to local norms, regulations, and cultural sensitivities. For the time being they can be considered as alternatives which can be incorporated within the existing programme as a cost-effective solution for those few households belonging to the most vulnerable categories, such as widows/widowers living alone or with 1-2 children, childless parents and parentless children who have not obtained sufficient scoring to be eligible for housing support. There are possibilities to expand all house types in the future, as the proposed gable roof allows this. The principle of an expandable house, which underlies these type plans, can be extended beyond vulnerable groups as a possible general model in any future housing programme.



**Figure 2: Three proposed new Expandable Type-plans – comparative table**  
(Source: architect Mario Martelli, on behalf of the Evaluation team)

### Type 1

The 264 sq. ft. type-plan consists of only one bedroom (shrine), a living room, kitchen with chimney and an attached but external toilet.

<sup>13</sup> All room surface areas are close to, adjustable, or greater than the minimum area of rooms in residential buildings – *Guidelines for Housing Development in Coastal Sri Lanka* – NHDA, 2005



**Figure 3: New proposed type plan 264 sq. ft. – perspective**  
(Source: architect Mario Martelli, on behalf of the Evaluation team)

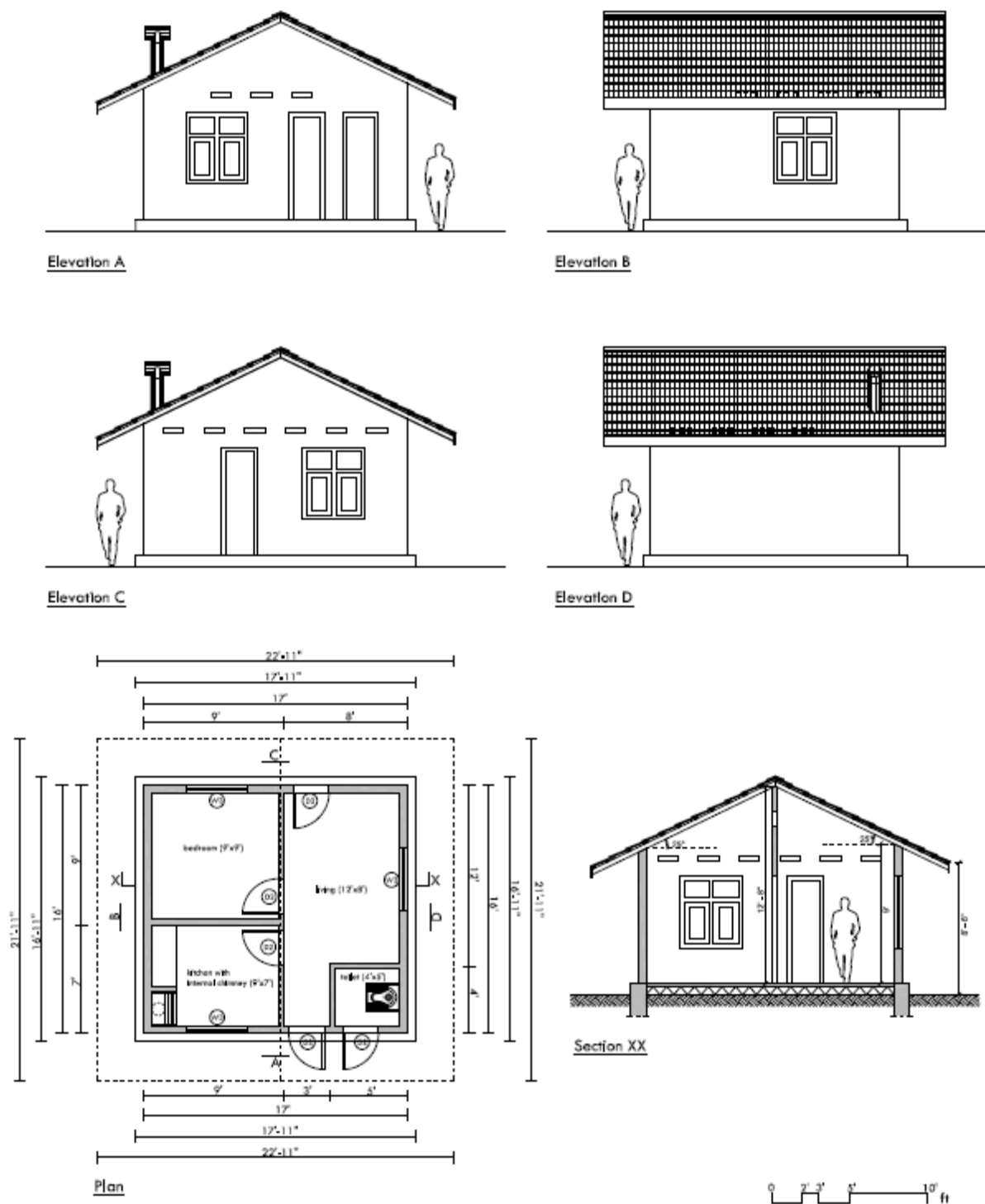


Figure 4: New proposed type plan 264 sq. ft. – plan, section, elevations  
(Source: architect Mario Martelli, on behalf of the Evaluation team)



## Type 2

The 276 sq. ft. type-plan displays optimal separation between rest area and kitchen, and is best suitable for typical lands having stretched shape.



**Figure 5: New proposed type plan 276 sq. ft. – perspective**  
(Source: architect Mario Martelli, on behalf of the Evaluation team)



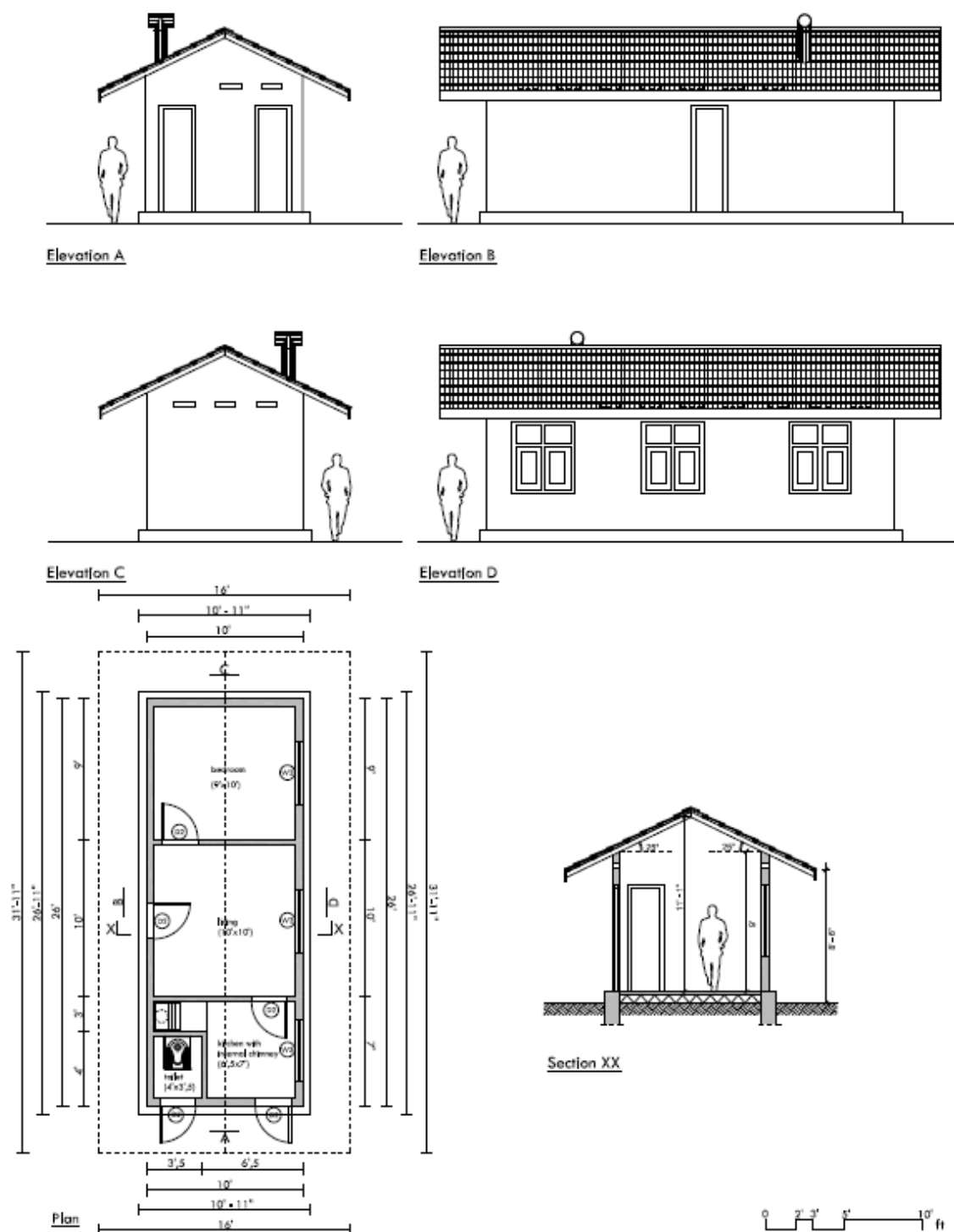


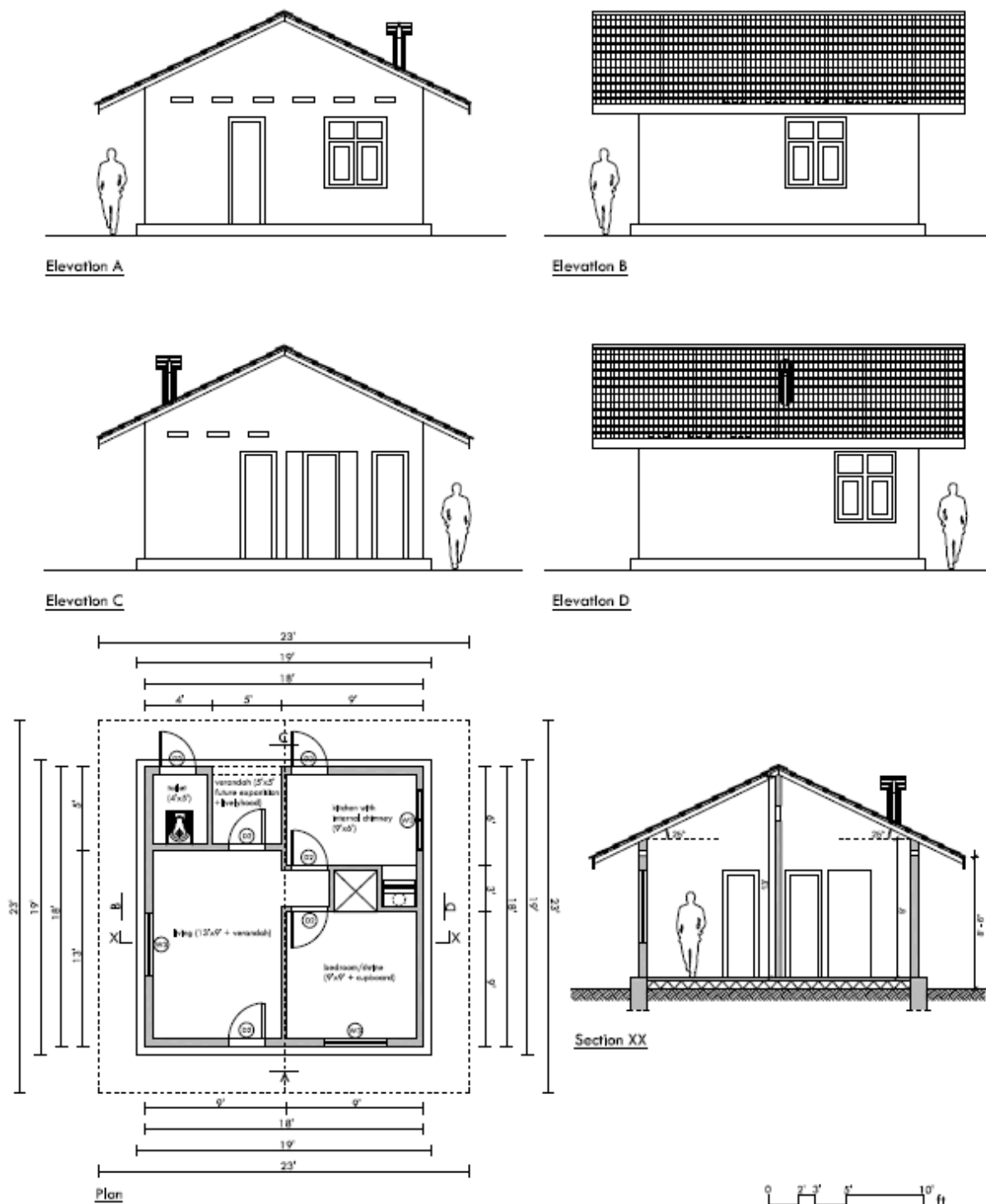
Figure 6: New proposed type plan 276 sq. ft. – plan, section, elevations  
(Source: architect Mario Martelli, on behalf of the Evaluation team)

### Type 3

The 361 sq. ft. type-plan allows a range of flexibility, according to the beneficiary's preferences, such as: the veranda can be closed, resulting in a storage space or it can be left open and used as an external roofed space for livelihood purposes (as displayed below).



**Figure 7: New proposed type plan 361 sq. ft. – perspective**  
(Source: architect Mario Martelli, on behalf of the Evaluation team)



**Figure 8: New proposed type plan 361 sq. ft. – plan, section, elevations**  
(Source: architect Mario Martelli, on behalf of the Evaluation team)

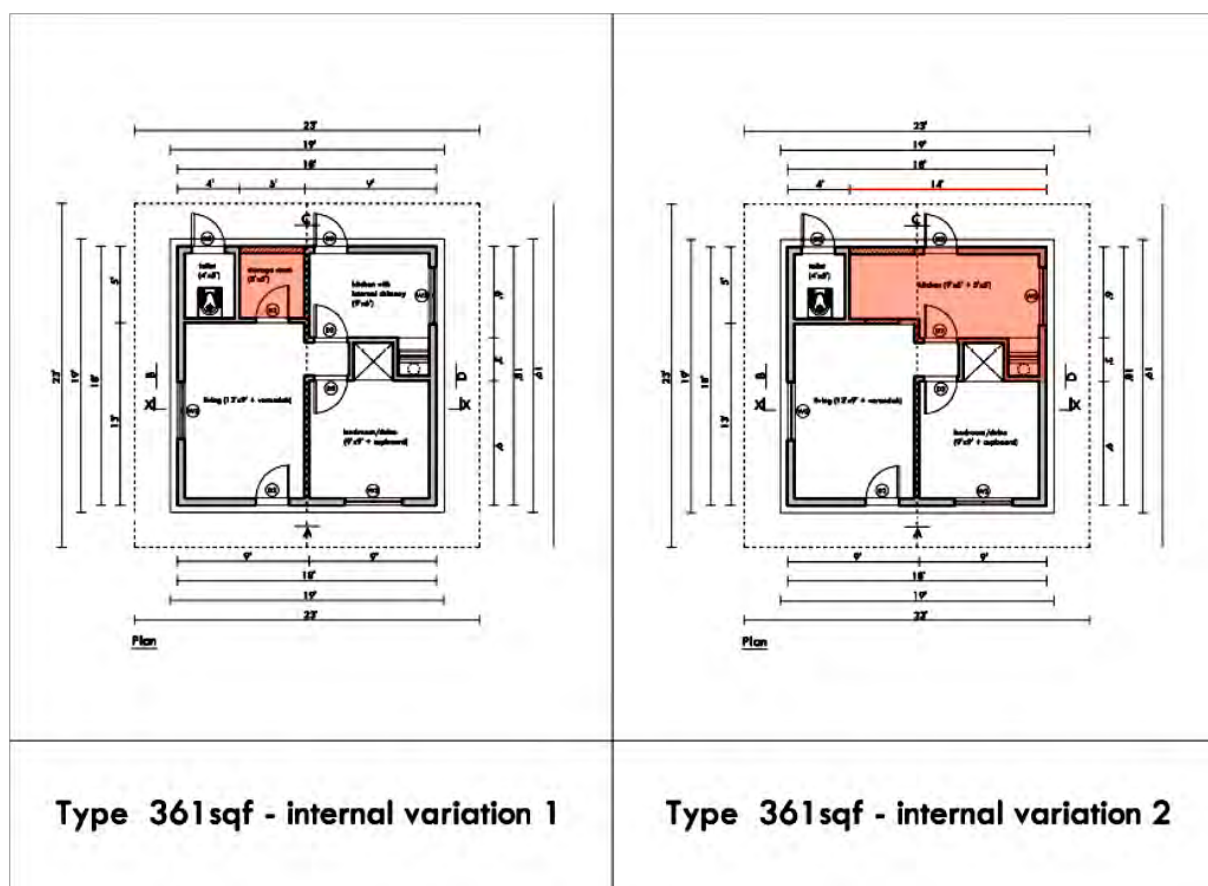


Figure 9: New proposed type plan 361 sq. ft. – potential internal modification, according to households’ preferences  
(Source: architect Mario Martelli, on behalf of the Evaluation team)

All three new proposed type-plans consider all good qualities of larger house (proposed IPs Type-plans), so far implemented: external wall 6" thickness (a 9' height is considered in the BOQ), internal walls 4" thickness, two lockable external doors (main and back door), a decent toilet (4'x5') with soakage pit, a 3' roof overhang to protect external walls from sun rays and rain, a >25° pitch-roof; bedroom, kitchen and toilet are plastered and cement floor rendered.

According to existing updated BOQs and grants amount, both 264 sq. ft.<sup>14</sup> and 276 sq. ft.<sup>15</sup> type plans would cost some 350,000 LKR (meaning some 200,000 LKR less than the currently agreed grant), whereas the 361 sq. ft.<sup>16</sup> type plan would raise the cost to 450,000 LKR. Further cost reductions are also possible through full family member contribution of labour, use of local resources (trees, sand), or by bulk purchasing and recycling materials.

Type plan 276 sq. ft. has a potential expansion up to 451 sq. ft. (one more room and a veranda, to be potentially walled off in the future) as shown below.

<sup>14</sup> 264sqf Type plan and BOQ: refer to [Type plan 264sqf.pdf](#), [Type plan 264sqf BOQ.xlsx](#)

<sup>15</sup> 276sqf Type plan and BOQ: refer to [Type plan 276sqf.pdf](#), [Type plan 276sqf BOQ.xlsx](#)

<sup>16</sup> 361sqf Type plan and BOQ: refer to [Type plan 361sqf.pdf](#), [Type plan 361sqf BOQ.xlsx](#)

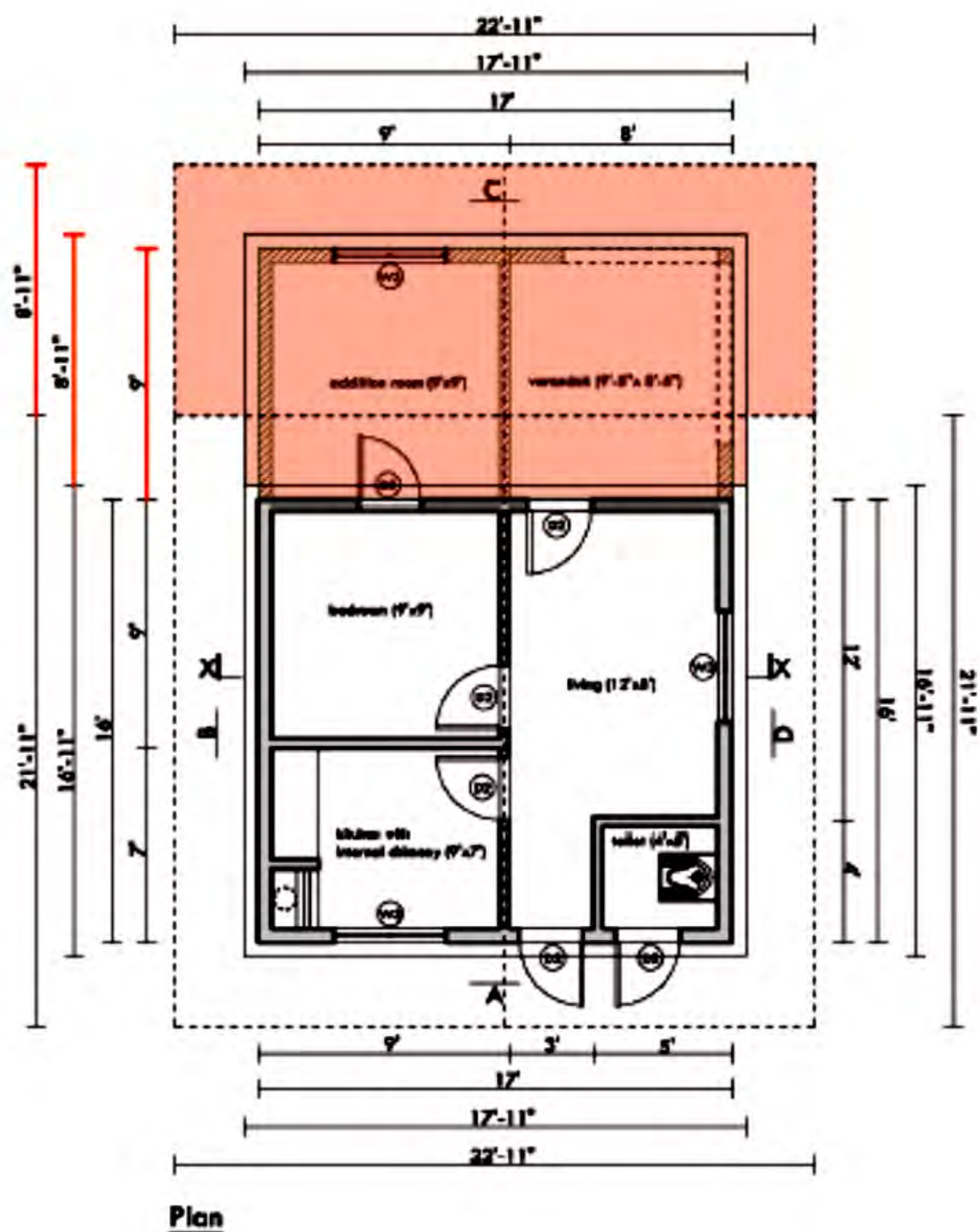


Figure 10: Type plan 276sq. ft. potential incremental growth  
(Source: architect Mario Martelli, on behalf of the Evaluation team)

## 5 DEPENDENCY

Both the AUP programmes have adopted an approach which aims to place control in the hands of the home owner – the “Home Owner Driven” approach also referred to in academic literature as “Owner Driven Reconstruction”. This has had notable success in the sense that most house plans have been adapted to a certain extent by the homeowners and they have been responsible for organising their own construction process. They have also contributed to the construction themselves in kind and to the monetary costs through loans they have made where the AUP grant was not (considered) sufficient for the size of house they wanted.

Lyons (2009, 395) has compared owner-driven and donor-assisted approaches to post-tsunami housing in Sri Lanka and concludes:

*The findings clearly demonstrate that the Owner-Driven Programme in Sri Lanka (ODP) performed better than the Donor Assisted Programme (DAP) on both quantitative and qualitative criteria (Cernea, 1997, 2000). The ODP produced more houses, more quickly, of better construction quality, and at less cost. Space standards were generally better, and the designs, layouts, and locations were more acceptable to beneficiaries. Infrastructure, services, and amenities were more readily provided to ODP sites.*

He explains that DAPs also produced dependency amongst beneficiaries:

*Far more than the ODP, the DAP fostered a culture of dependency among beneficiaries, arising from long periods in transitional shelters, often away from both original and final places of abode, with no active role for beneficiaries to play in the development of their own futures. In contrast, the ODP fostered (re)development of a cooperative local social fabric and institutions achieved only exceptionally in the DAP and, as a process, met a range of human rights needs generally neglected by DAP [...]. It created opportunity for integrated development (Cernea, 1997, 2000), built on beneficiaries’ energies (Oliver-Smith, 1991) and enhanced resilience of individuals and communities (Schilderman, 2004).*

The AUP programmes have adopted the ODP approach and appear to have captured many of the benefits described by Lyons. Ironically though, it seems also to have created the dependency he finds in the DAP approach which was adopted by some agencies in the post-tsunami housing programmes. The AUP programmes, except where they have been implemented by SDC, have not fostered the redevelopment of a cooperative social fabric and institutions or created opportunities for integrated development and enhanced the resilience of individuals and communities. The UN-Habitat managed programmes have:

- (a) By-passed existing CBOs in favour of VRCs<sup>17</sup> which have no chance of being registered and therefore representing an institutional future for communities’ development. The programmes have unnecessarily implanted an alien organisation instead of strengthening the legitimacy of existing ones.
- (b) Implemented a Settlement Improvement Planning process by means of which priorities are listed but most remain unattended. Of course, AUP cannot meet all needs but communities are left

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<sup>17</sup> Some of these were established under the NEHRP programme and UN-Habitat has simply continued to use them instead of other CBOs.



with a list of priorities with which they do not know how to deal. A valuable planning process has been left incomplete. Focus groups told the evaluation team what the unmet needs were and were looking for *external* assistance to meet them.

- (c) Adopted a sectorial approach too focused on housing rather than an integrated approach which would better develop resilience within communities<sup>18</sup>. This was brought home in almost all focus group discussions where participants were extremely pleased with their houses but were worried that they had little or no income to cover daily expenses let alone repay the debts many of them had incurred as part of the housing process.

The time many beneficiaries had spent as IDPs in camps and transitional shelters no doubt contributed to a culture of dependency. Unfortunately, the design of the AUP programmes only exacerbated this through the granting of, by rural Sri Lanka standards, enormous amounts of money to build or repair their houses. The decision by many beneficiaries to build their house design or specification beyond the minimum standard has driven many of them to take on debts they cannot repay (see Chapter Eight) and increased even further their likely future dependency<sup>19</sup>.

This dependency is reflected in the replies given by most of the focus groups to questions about who would maintain common assets such as improved internal roads or drainage channels. They expected UN-Habitat, the District or NGOs to do it<sup>20</sup>. This was despite the fact that most of the communities in which the focus groups were held had CBOs, such as RDSs and WRDSs, which had carried out such activities as providing organised labour for the road improvements, digging drainage channels, setting up small savings and loan programmes and digging foundations for pre-schools<sup>21</sup>. They have the potential to become a development force in their communities but this has too often not been required or fostered within the AUP programmes and therefore they themselves underestimate their capacities.

## 5.1 Recommendations

- 1) AUP-2012 has included a component of CBO strengthening (leadership training) which until now has not yet created the self-confidence to enable communities to tackle their own needs. This component should be continued and reinforced in any subsequent phase of AUP. This will help empower communities to play a collaborative, rather than dependent, role in future donor- or NGO funded projects.

<sup>18</sup> It should be said that this sectorial approach was a response to the requirements specified by the EU. The guidelines for grant applicants for AUP 2010 stated *“The programme will seek to promote returns of populations to their place of origin by prioritising permanent housing, in addition to previous EU investments in reconstruction notably in the housing sector through the North East Housing Reconstruction Programme (NEHRP).”* It goes on to state that whilst funding for flanking measures is not foreseen within this programme, strong coordination with other EU supported actions will be promoted. AUP 2012 continued this approach. The evaluators are grateful to UN-Habitat for pointing this out. Nor is it the case that there are no ‘flanking measures’ (e.g. community infrastructure) incorporated by the programme. The point is that these investments have been too small compared to those made in housing.

<sup>19</sup> It has been said in this respect that this is the beneficiary’s choice (the peoples’ process is all about people making their own choices) which seems to the evaluators to be irresponsible.

<sup>20</sup> In Iranapallai, the first reply to this question was “the next NGO that comes along”. They then corrected themselves: “We are confident we can do it ourselves” followed by “I think that is the right answer”. Communities are aware of the large resources available from which they can benefit but are also savvy to what development agencies want to hear.

<sup>21</sup> Community infrastructure contracts, signed directly with CBOs, require CBOs to contribute to construction, financial management and the contribution of organized labour. UN-Habitat provides training on finance and construction issues. This has happened in close to 100 community contracts implemented under Phases I and II.



- 2) Incremental (yet fully functional) housing should be promoted. This would establish a development model in which it is clear that a major part of the responsibility for completion of the house is the home owner's.
- 3) The funds saved by implementing smaller incremental houses can be used to reach a larger number of beneficiaries and / or to invest in livelihoods programmes which would assist homeowners in financing their later incremental housing.
- 4) Part of the strengthening of CBOs should consist of training in how to follow up on those aspects of the Settlement Improvement Plan (SIP) process that AUP cannot (and should not) attend. This would include the preparation of plans and identifying development partners.

## 6 SUSTAINABILITY

*Sustainability [in evaluation] is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.* (DAC, 2008, parentheses added).

In the AUP programmes the relevant benefits are their outputs, services and outcomes. The kind of sustainability envisaged is the **maintenance of houses and community services** as well as any **improvements in community organisational capacity and social cohesion**.

Various researchers, consultants and practitioners have discussed the different dimensions of sustainability and how to achieve it (WASH, LinkedIn online, numerous discussants; Roberts & Williams, 2008). From this work we can identify five generic types or components of sustainability as follows:

- 1) Financial sustainability (attained through funding);
- 2) Institutional (the delivery of benefits is taken up by government as part of its policy, strategy, legal framework, procedures or training programme);
- 3) Environmental (natural resources are managed in such a way that, to the extent that they are needed for the delivery or maintenance of benefits, they will continue to be available and, in any case, will not be depleted to an extent that threatens their future existence);
- 4) Technical (the benefits are technically replicable when the programme ends; the technology needed for the continued delivery of benefits is maintained, repaired and replaced);
- 5) Social (the benefits are valued by beneficiaries and are 'owned' by them);

The following figure shows how these types of sustainability apply to the AUP programmes.

Type	Applicability of Type to AUP-2010 and AUP-2012	Possible Strategies to Strengthen Sustainability
FINANCIAL	Home owners value their new houses highly. They are likely to maintain them as far as resources allow. However, incomes are very low and indebtedness will restrain some.	Develop community livelihoods strategies (e.g. community contracting for government) which are not project bound but are open-ended (e.g. road repairs and drainage clearance)
INSTITUTIONAL	Sustainability of community assets, such as roads and pre-schools, is in doubt as local authorities struggle with limited financial resources <sup>22</sup>	Strengthen CBOs so that sustainability of common benefits becomes an accepted communal responsibility. If possible, establish community – government partnerships for this.
ENVIRONMENTAL	The programme is environmentally sustainable. There have been problems such as damaging sand quarrying and Illegal logging in Kilinochchi but according to the GA these are now under control.	GAs should continue the policy of requiring applications to cut down Palmyra trees and IPs should make beneficiaries aware of the alternatives <sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> It is intended that community infrastructure be handed over to District Councils, Divisional Secretariats, Zonal Education Offices and communities. These, however, have financial constraints which make it unlikely that they will be able to maintain it.

<sup>23</sup> The mid-term evaluation mentioned some alternatives which should be examined: "For structural work the beneficiaries tend to use Grandis (*Eucalyptus grandis*) as an alternative to Palmyra and in a small number of cases Palu is used. Traditionally Satinwood is preferred for front doors and Kohomba/Margosa, which has cultural significance, is used for door and window frames. Some beneficiaries proposed using Ginisapu, and subsequent investigation has suggested that it may have possible structural uses"(p.113)

Type	Applicability of Type to AUP-2010 and AUP-2012	Possible Strategies to Strengthen Sustainability
	The Mid-Term Evaluation identified Palmyra tree depletion as a problem without providing data. The present evaluation did not measure this either but had an impression, no more, that the problem was not catastrophic. It is probably best to err on the side of caution.	
TECHNICAL	The construction technology is replicable using local skills. Homeowners can extend their houses or build new houses with / for others in the village or outside. However, the main demand for their service will be during the life of the programme <sup>24</sup> .	
SOCIAL	Home owners value their houses but, because of the dependency generated during the AUP programmes, expect the maintenance of community facilities to be carried out either by government or other development programmes or NGOs. The VRCs, as sustainable CBOs will have little, if any, role to play in sustaining the benefits of the programme. They were established solely for the programme and, although they have had significant success, they lack legal recognition. <sup>25</sup>	Strengthen CBOs and create awareness of communities' responsibility for sustainability.

Thus, few aspects of sustainability are in place. One important overarching constraint on sustainability is the dependency of local communities (see Chapter Five). As long as this remains a strong community role in guaranteeing sustainability is unlikely.

The mid-term evaluators of AUP-2010 extended the analysis of sustainability into the issue of sustainable resettlement as such. They argue that this requires more than the delivery of houses:

*... if only houses are built in villages and other facilities are inadequate or unavailable, the chances for a sustainable resettlement in the place of origin are certainly reduced. Therefore, **sustainable resettlement will to a large extent depend on the success in coordinating and providing complementary infrastructure and services.** [...] the absence of an integrated process may result in a delayed or weakened socio-economic response and recovery by the community. Several villages were visited where limitations on resources, such as water and schools, strained the social fabric.* (Meindertsma and Nixon, 2012: 55-56).

The authors went on to tell of a village where some 100 families had left because of the lack of schools and drinking water.

<sup>24</sup> The mid-term evaluation (MTE) concluded, in addition, that "most of the beneficiaries will not use their basic construction skills after their house is completed, as they will attend their main livelihood activities, such as fishing and agricultural work" (pp. 57-58) In this sense technical sustainability will not be achieved.

<sup>25</sup> The MTE team were of the same opinion: "The VRCs that have been established by the project are likely to be temporary groups only. Whereas they are highly functional and useful during the construction process of houses for resettled households, they have neither the funds nor the sufficient organisational basis and objectives to continue functioning after the project ends."(pp. ).

In almost all the focus group discussions it was revealed that CBOs - in particular, the RDSs and WRDSs - had organised and carried out common activities to the benefit of the community. However, it was equally evident that they did not expect to maintain the benefits of the AUP programmes.



**Illustration 5: Pre-school in Vivekanandanagar, Kilinochchi District, provided by the programme. The RDS helped build it, but will it maintain it? (12 September 2014)**

In summary, it can be stated that:

- Houses will be maintained by homeowners;
- Pre-schools, roads, wells could be maintained by communities if technical support arrangements were put in place (with local government);
- Low incomes and indebtedness threaten capacity for continued individual and community improvement;
- CBO capacities have strong potential but have not been sufficiently developed.

Recommendations:

1. Establish community – local government partnerships;
2. Increase the livelihoods development component in marketable and income generating trades (not only those with a fixed life span, like construction);
3. Strengthen CBOs and emphasise community responsibility for the sustainability of programme benefits.

## 7 LIVELIHOODS AND TRAINING

The current housing programmes in the north and the east are being implemented in the development mode rather than in the emergency recovery mode that they were initiated in immediately following the end of war in 2009. Long gone are the emergency circumstances under which quick-fix solutions were sought to address basic needs of the affected population. In the development mode, while addressing a basic need, its sustainability has also got to be considered (see also Chapter Six on Sustainability). This evaluation of the two AUP programmes considers livelihood and training programmes available to, and taken up by the beneficiaries, are essential elements to ensure the sustainability of the housing programmes. The findings of the study in this respect are presented below.

### 7.1 Starting Life from Scratch

Most uprooted people appear to have lost all they had as sources of livelihood along with whatever movable assets they had accumulated over generations. Having resettled back on their own land with almost nothing but the housing assistance from the AUP programmes, they are struggling to start afresh. Most are totally dependent on casual daily wage, when available, for their day-to-day living expenses. Under such circumstances, a grant for the construction of a full house to replace the house lost in the war or to repair a partially damaged house is received with immense gratitude. However, these housing programmes may cause substantial stress over beneficiaries for the following reasons.

- As beneficiaries are required to contribute to the housing process through the offer of their mostly unskilled labour, this competes with the time necessary to go out and earn a living for the period of house construction;
- When income is reduced, some are driven to taking loans to cover living expenses, which get compounded when loans from the construction get added on;
- When the house construction is complete, they are dependent on the meagre income from whatever irregular casual labour is available to settle all outstanding debts in addition to spending on the family's daily living expenditure;
- Despite having completed the house to a level required to receive the full grant, there are houses still with some incomplete features, such as plastering, doors and windows, etc. Only a steady income enough to save beyond living expenses would see these features completed.

This study found the above conditions affecting all AUP beneficiaries to varying degrees. The chapter on **Indebtedness** elaborates on these conditions. In order that future housing programmes mitigate such stressful financial experiences of the target groups, adequate and appropriate considerations need to be given to the livelihoods of beneficiaries drawn into the programmes. Since the commencement of the two AUP programmes, there has been a strong effort to provide training in masonry, carpentry and other vocations to members of the beneficiary households. However, the serious shortage of skilled labour in the target villages on the one hand and the fact that beneficiary households are struggling to make ends meet, on the other, suggests that the skills training programmes being implemented have fallen short of expectations. It perhaps would be necessary to conduct a focussed study to ascertain why the expected outcomes have not been achieved in these training programmes.

## 7.2 The AUP Programmes' Approach to Livelihood and Training

The two programmes AUP-2010 and AUP-2012 do not explicitly address **livelihood generation** aspects of its beneficiaries. However, in conceptualising the Technical Assistance Package offered to the beneficiaries **skills training** has been considered in earnest (UN-Habitat Operations Manual 2013-2015). Under this scheme, local artisans and youth were to be offered,

- Training in masonry and carpentry (conducted in collaboration with NAITA and GIZ)
- Skills upgrading of skilled construction labour
- Joint effort in finding ways for cost-reduction and improved quality.

Although such skills training had been intended to facilitate those beneficiaries (or members of their households) with the interest to develop the skill primarily to complete their respective houses cost effectively, once acquired, recognised and certified, such skills should be a definite source of livelihood generation. However, less than 4% in each of the programmes had attempted to make a career out of the skills they had acquired. Further, the non-availability of skilled and competent labour has often been cited as reasons for delays in completing the house constructions in the two programmes, which illustrates the demand for such skilled labour in the districts where the programmes are operational.

The beneficiary survey conducted for this study found that 77% of AUP-2010 beneficiaries and 91% of those in AUP-2012 have claimed that they received training, of whom, 63% of AUP-2010 and 87% of AUP-2012 received training in construction related activities. It would be useful to examine this further to find out the specific reasons for such a low performance level with respect to livelihood generation through skills acquired in the house construction activities.

## 7.3 Life beyond the Construction Phase

As it would be elaborated in the Chapter Eight on **Indebtedness**, a large majority in the north and some in Batticaloa are carrying significant post-construction debts, which could be settled only if there are flows of steady incomes to the beneficiaries. A general attitude of the beneficiaries towards these debts is that “...help would arrive from somewhere someday....will wait for such a day...” – a clear case of dependency syndrome (see also Chapter Five on Dependency). Future programmes should be conceived not to let such levels of dependency on external assistance. On a positive note, a very few have taken the debt burden seriously and have already sought and got employment in other parts of the country and overseas, mainly in the Middle East. However, for there to be more of such job seekers among the beneficiaries, adequate skills are required and/or placement counselling should be in place. In this regard, there are a few constraints to overcome.

## 7.4 Lack of vocational skills training

Vocational skills such as in masonry, carpentry, plumbing and electrical works are in great demand, but there are inadequate formal training opportunities (other than the aforementioned training on the house the beneficiaries construct) and/or awareness among the target communities for making a vocation and livelihood from these demands. Other vocations in perpetual demand and for which training could be provided are sewing, housekeeping (for overseas markets), computing (data entry), motor mechanics, poultry farming, animal husbandry and many more.



The evaluation team interviewed the Batticaloa District Manager of NAITA and the Officer-In-Charge of the Kallady Vocational Training Centre in the same city. NAITA has training centres located around the District but unfortunately does not provide mobile training to villages. This would be an expensive training option for villagers who would have to meet transport and accommodation costs, if they were expected to travel to these training centres.

Kallady VTC, however, is one of fourteen Rural Vocational Training Centres (RVTCs) in Batticaloa District which take training to the villages. Courses lead to certificates which are nationally recognized so can be used in applying for jobs. After six months' training trainees are required to carry out six months on-the-job training with an employer near the village which has been found by the RVTC. Moreover, trainees receive 2,000 LKR per month as a stipend and when training on-the-job the employer is expected to provide payment. There are no fees for construction-based courses (although other courses cost 8,000 LKR per month).

## **7.5 Post-training investments for livelihood development**

When asked why no members of the family had sought any kind of training, a typical answer was that with such big debts to carry there is no way that they would be able to pay for training as well. Some had cattle and/or poultry before they were displaced by the war and would be interested in continuing with such livelihoods, but they wouldn't be able to afford to buy new livestock while burdened with current debts. Even those with interests in sewing or computing as careers, the mere thought of having to invest on sewing machines or computers after the training constrains them from considering these vocations.

## **7.6 Training prevents wage earning during training period**

With the house construction in progress, many are unable or reluctant to take up training, even when made aware of training opportunities. Several AUP beneficiary households interviewed during this study claimed that undergoing training deprives them of whatever little they earn from daily wage labour. Before constructions commenced, they would manage with whatever meagre resources they could find. However, having started the construction work, some find they have more expenses on a day-to-day basis, particularly if they have to provide meals to the craftsmen on the job.

## **7.7 Recommendations**

1. Housing grant packages need to consider an element of livelihood development in consultation with beneficiaries. These could be for formal vocational training (as opposed to the current scheme of training offered in each beneficiary's own house construction) or setting up a home based livelihood activity;
2. A focussed review of all AUP programmes linked to formal as well as informal training schemes need to be conducted in order for future AUP programmes to be better designed to increase livelihood development while addressing the labour shortage;
3. Opportunities should be sought to collaborate with Rural Vocational Training Centres such as those in Batticaloa District and described above for formal vocational training;
4. Where households are able to nominate one or two members for vocational training, they could be given bonus points on the selection process;

5. Those being sent on training could also draw a nominal allowance during training, except where these are already provided by the training organisation, such as RVTCs, to motivate more to take up the opportunity. The allowance could be, at least, equivalent to average daily wage they would normally earn;
6. If this allowance is considered unsustainable because of the numbers involved, it could be disbursed as a training loan to be paid back after a certain period on becoming gainfully employed. The loan could be from a revolving fund to be set up by the state or NGO or a partnership of the two facilitated by one or more IPs;
7. For those households who prefer to pursue a livelihood activity such as cattle farming, poultry farming or to set up a small enterprise like a tailoring shop an appropriate grant plus loan scheme could be built in to the housing programme. For such a scheme to be introduced, a clear understanding of all related aspects needs to be comprehended;
8. An awareness campaign on the benefits of livelihood development/vocational training should precede the selection process.

## 8 INDEBTEDNESS

A recent study by the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA) funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in three northern districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu (including the two AUP programmes) revealed that the housing programmes had significantly increased indebtedness of beneficiary households (Romeshun, et al, 2014). The study stressed that such levels of debt had the tendency to increase the level of vulnerability of the households to economic shocks.

### 8.1 Extent of indebtedness

According to the study, 85% of all households in the sample reported indebtedness with an average of 150,871 LKR. However, as this sample included those who had not commenced construction, all of the household debts could not be attributed to the housing programme. The current evaluation, on the other hand, found that the debt situation had improved between AUP-2010 and AUP 2012. The beneficiary survey done for this study revealed that from among the AUP-2010 beneficiaries, 83% were found to be carrying debts, all related to house construction, while there was a marked drop among the AUP-2012 beneficiaries at 68% (see Annex 4). It is not clear whether this drop in indebtedness is real or not. For, while the AUP-2010 sample contained all those who had completed the houses, the AUP-2012 sample included beneficiaries of houses still in progress, some of whom may have not reached the stage in construction requiring funds in excess of the instalments from the housing grant. A scientific study exclusively on indebtedness among AUP beneficiaries would perhaps highlight specific causes and the nature in which indebtedness occurs within this community. However, what is relevant to this study is not such specifics but the revelation of a borrowing trend emerging amongst the beneficiaries, which, if not taken into consideration and appropriately addressed in the programme design, the positive outcome of the AUP may be diluted due to a significant number of beneficiaries being left with long-term debts on completion of their respective houses.

The extent of debts to these levels is clearly because there is a strong demand for loans and an even stronger supply in the districts where the two AUP programmes are operational. On the demand side, the two grants of 500,000 LKR (AUP-2010) and 550,000 LKR (AUP-2012) were expected to fully cover construction expenses if the standard type plans were followed (except for the unskilled labour component which the beneficiaries were to provide themselves as in kind contributions). However, almost all beneficiaries introduced variations to the type plan to suit their specific needs. These variations are said to be the main cause of housing related indebtedness. At the very minimum, beneficiaries had increased the overall dimensions of the house to suit vastu/sahstra (astrological reasons) determinants, some had added an extra room to the plan and/or increased the living room area, and some others had opted for luxury finishes such as ceramic tile floors and doors and windows in costly timber.

These extra features are what had driven the beneficiaries to borrow with no consideration for longer term implications. When questioned during case studies why they let themselves get indebted to this extent, the standard response was that constructing a permanent own house is just once-in-a-lifetime experience and if they fail to do it right now, they would never have another opportunity. Such a view has serious implications for the “incremental house” concept being considered for future programmes. Although the implementing agency, UN-Habitat or SDC, releases the grant to each beneficiary in four

instalments<sup>26</sup> in order to prevent the beneficiary indulging in wasteful spending, there has been a tendency for such spending to take place. Instead of paying for the building material bought on credit when the instalments arrive in the bank, some beneficiaries had purchased flat screen televisions, solar power units and other luxuries. Consequently, the unpaid credit at building materials merchants was carried over as longer term debt.

On the supply side, commercial banks, traders in construction material and moneylenders have all found the housing programmes to be a huge boon to their businesses. According to a Central Bank of Sri Lanka study<sup>27</sup>, the relatively less populated Northern Province's bank branch density (bank branches per 100,000 inhabitants) just prior to the end of the War in 2009, was 7.39 and ranked 9<sup>th</sup> (of the nine provinces) while that for the highly populated Western Province was 17.75 and ranked 1<sup>st</sup>. However, as at November 2014 the Northern Province density reached 21.66 (a near 200% increase in 6 years) and ranked 1<sup>st</sup> and the Western Province density had increased only by 20% to 21.18 and pushed to 2<sup>nd</sup> place. The Eastern Province too moved from 8<sup>th</sup> place with a density of 8.38 before the end of the war to 3<sup>rd</sup> place in 2014 with a density of 16.82.

The pawn broking business appears to be thriving, largely through the forfeiture of jewellery pawned that is not redeemed. A focused study on the banking sector activities in these markets would highlight the exploitative nature of the sector's operations. The moneylenders, on the other hand, lend at exorbitant rates (24% to 30%) to those with



**Vasanthakumari (AUP2010) Paramanthanaru, Kilinochchi**

Vasanthakumari (AUP2010) of Piramanthanaru, Kilinochchi had spent 1,300,000 LKR (2.4 times the grant available to her) on her house mainly on luxury features - costly floor tiles, kitchen finishes and high quality timber for doors and windows. She had added an extra room, enlarged the other rooms and is in the process of adding a modern attached toilet for which provisions had been made in the original altered design of the type plan. Most significantly, the construction which commenced in February of 2012 was completed in six months. All this was possible because she had access to a ready supply of loans – pawned jewellery at the bank, money borrowed from a known lender at 8% interest and was able to get construction material on credit.

She was courageous enough to get indebted to this extent because she aspired to a relatively prestigious home, had the confidence she would be able to clear the debts and, above all, had ease of access to large loans. As fortune favors the brave, she landed a domestic help job in Qatar while the construction was in progress and was able to send home additional funds to supplement the grant and the loans to complete the house. Nearly 80% of her debts still remain unsettled and she is confident of returning to her job in Qatar to pay off all debts within a year.



**Vasanthakumari (AUP2010) Paramanthanaru, Kilinochchi**

<sup>26</sup> In some instances, each instalment gets released in two further instalments after the full instalment is received in the bank account of the beneficiary

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.ft.lk/?s=North+beats+western+province+in+Banking+density>

no collateral to offer. These moneylenders are able to stay in business despite high levels of default because they have sufficient clients to more than compensate for any losses. The influx of extensive international donor subsidies estimated, but unsubstantiated, to be around a billion Euros – EU contribution alone topping a massive EUR 674 million (see Chapter One) – for reconstruction following, firstly the 2004 tsunami and, subsequently, the end of the 30-year War in 2008 may have stimulated a massive construction industry triggering unprecedented levels of building materials consumption in the affected areas. The ones to benefit most from the boost in the local economy, such as, hardware and timber merchants as well as other suppliers of building materials consider extending credit to customers is an excellent business strategy despite the high risk of default involved. One hardware merchant in Kilinochchi claims his business is flourishing even though payments for material he had sold on credit are outstanding to the tune of 2,500,000 LKR. Two timber merchants in Mullaitivu too claimed that the competition is so high that unless sufficient credit is extended to customers they would not be able to stay in business. When one timber merchant set up business in 2011 there were only three such businesses in the Pudukudiruppu area in Mullaitivu. Now there are eleven in the area.

## 9 THE CONSTRUCTION PROCESS

### 9.1 Overall consideration

As mentioned in other chapters of this Report, **the overall quality of the houses** within both AUP-2010 and AUP-2012 **is good**, mainly because:

- Drawings and technical specifications provide a sufficient set of details;
- The beneficiaries fully trusted both the Engineers and Technical Officers' (TOs) recommendations and duly followed their instructions and technical explanations.

As a consequence, the level of satisfaction among beneficiaries is high. Definitely aiming at "... maintaining high standards in construction quality during housing construction and provide regular technical guidance and assistance to the beneficiaries..."<sup>28</sup> had positive outcomes<sup>29</sup>.

It has been noted that by and large, **the house quality and finishing is definitely higher in the Batticaloa District** (all doors and windows are put in place; plastering is almost completed; toilets are attached to the houses - a safer, more practical and cost-saving solution – see recommendation below).

TOs (and Community Mobilisers) and IPs' engineers visited each and every site at least twice a week, which was sufficient to ensure a thorough follow-up of the site implementation (considering the overall low speed of work); during the visits conducted by the evaluation team to both AUP-2010 and AUP-2012 sites, TOs and engineers were very warmly welcomed in all the beneficiaries' houses and could observe that a **sincere and fruitful relationship had been established during the construction time**.

Minor deficits have been noted during the visits however, two defects detected in Veppaveduwan village should have been avoided (i.e.: a fake column corner; and the unfinished flooring, very dangerous, since children live in the house - Observations nos. 26 and 29). Thus, the immediate demolition and replacements have been arranged for reason of these defects. The beneficiaries concerned promised to rectify them which the TO will shortly verify.

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<sup>28</sup> UN-Habitat Operation Manual, page 12

<sup>29</sup> The quality and skills of IPs being involved in the project since the very beginning, was also recognized by the MTE: "*UNH and SDC clearly demonstrate an entirely adequate and indeed strong background in housing reconstruction. Both organisations have extensive local experience in building houses in Sri Lanka, extensive overseas post-conflict and post-disaster experience in construction, (...). The implementing partners and their efforts are well recognised and praised by stakeholders at the national and local level*".





**Illustration 6: Observation 25 (Veppavedduwan village): structurally unsafe fake column**  
(Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)

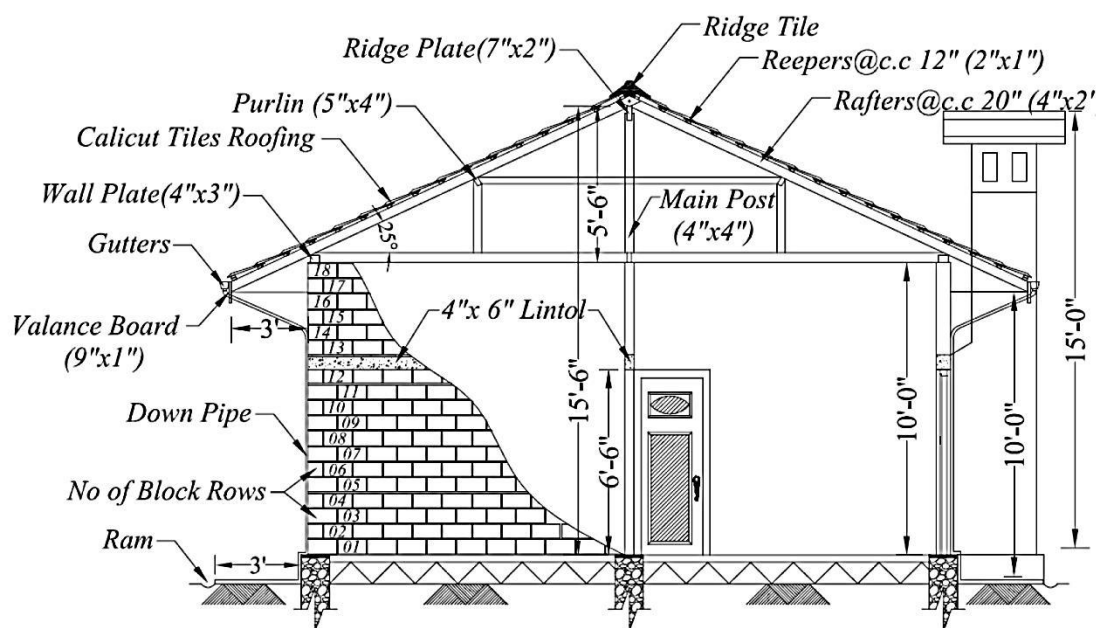


**Illustration 7: Observation 29 (Veppavedduwan village): unpaved floor hazardous for children**  
(Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)

A few building items should be treated as “mandatory” and **room for beneficiaries’ decision be reduced as it has been noted that this has generally led to large family debts.** In fact - as stated during the workshops held in Kilinochchi (17/09/2014) and Colombo (24/09/2014) - beneficiaries have been left with excessive freedom of decision over technical aspects whereas engineers’ opinion should not be amendable; consequently house costs have increased causing debt among beneficiaries (in addition to a further, unnecessary, extension of the construction period – see below).

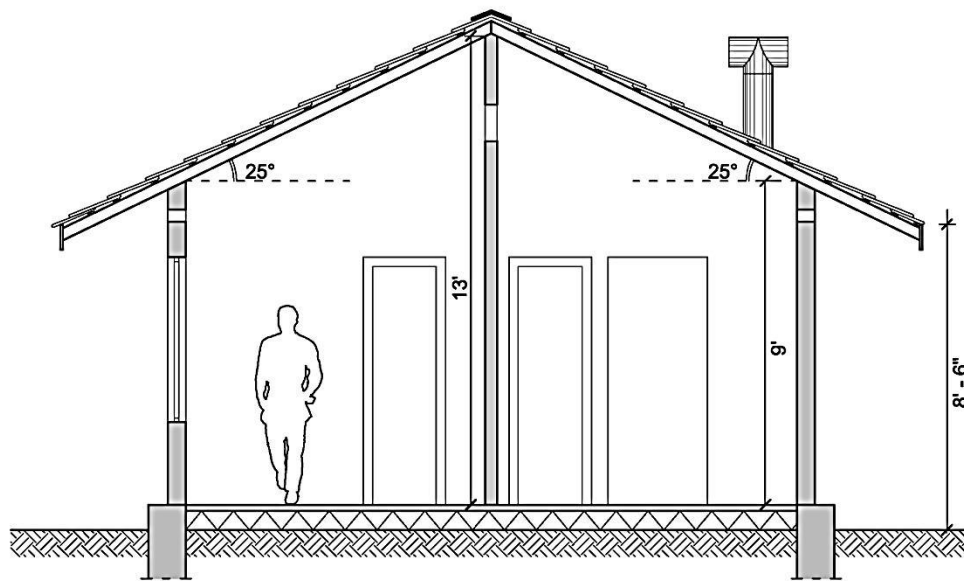
Without prejudice to the beneficiaries’ legitimate aspiration to build their dream-house, **technical key-choices should not be conditioned** by their wishes such as the following.

- **Height of the external walls:** regulations set their height at 9’ (cm. 274), adequate to ensure perfect living conditions, ventilation and thermal comfort inside the house. (The drawings available, as provided by IPs, are not updated as this measure is not reported). Previous regulations established the height limit at 10’ (cm. 305), with some 18 row blocks and lintel (see: below), and have been rightly revised;



**SECTION X-X**

Figure 11: Section (UN-Habitat Type-plan for AUP-2012)

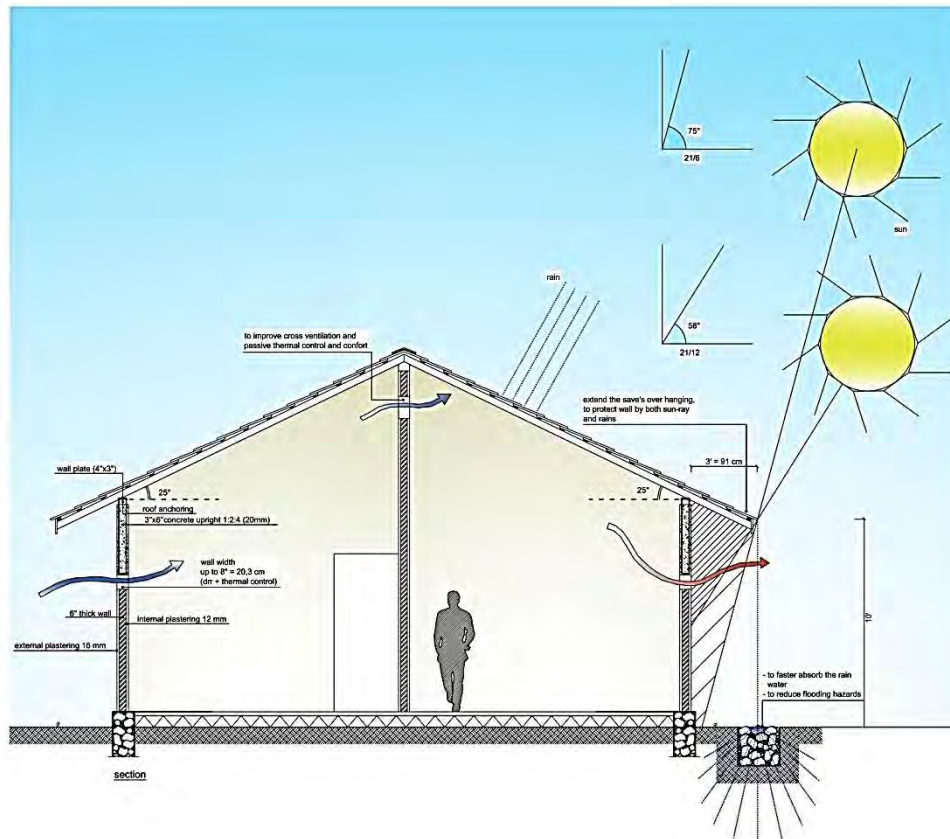


## Section YY

**Figure 12: Section: new proposed Type-plans (Source: architect Mario Martelli, on behalf of the Evaluation team)**

- **Height of the spine-wall:** given that a roof-pitch of  $> 25^\circ$  up to  $27^\circ$  is enough to guarantee optimal living conditions, ventilation and thermal comfort inside the house, regulations set its height as functional to the size of the living room, bedroom/shrine and roof-pitch;
- **Absence of ventilation elements (perforated-blocks) in the spine-wall:** where the spine-wall joins the ridge-plate, the house is physically divided in two. As a result cross-ventilation and indoor thermo-hygrometric comfort are enormously limited (to the advantage of privacy); where the beneficiary prefers not to renounce to more privacy in the bedroom(s), it is recommended to place a perforated-block every 4' (122 cm) in conjunction with the second block-row starting from the top (see: below) in order to **ensure a correct cross ventilation without compromising the privacy** of the different spaces of the house.





**Figure 13: Section (new proposed Type-plans): improving indoor thermo-hygrometric conditions**  
 (Source: architect Mario Martelli, on behalf of the Evaluation team)

Similar lack of strict application of technical specifications was noted with regards to the **rafter spacing**; the Evaluation Team appreciated good spacing (Observation nos.: 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 10, 11, 12, 13SDC, 15, 20, 21) with rafters fairly or even narrower spacing than required (i.e. less than 20"); but spacing between rafters was excessive in Observations nos. 23, 27, 29. **As rafter spacing is one key-point of DRR as mitigation measure against high-winds, strict follow-up should be obeyed in current and future house construction.**



**Illustration 8: Observation no. 23 (Mylawettuvan village)**



**Illustration 9: Observation no. 27 (Veppavedduwan village): rafter spacing (and reinforcement bars not appropriately bent) (Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)**

## 9.2 Construction timing

Normally — as reported by beneficiaries and confirmed by IPs representatives — a 7-8 months (or more) period to complete these kind of houses seems excessive. **Possible explanations are: the scarcity of skilled labourers in the villages** (need to rotate them from house to house) and cement-block curing time.

The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of AUP-2010 (pages 33-34) notes in this regard:

*On average, a full house could be built in three months or less by the concerted efforts of a beneficiary and family, excluding “unworkable days”. This is, however, unrealistic in most cases as the homeowner, their assisting family members, and even their contracted skilled labour will have other priorities. Six months is considered realistic with livelihood and other commitments, with five months an optimum target. Taking into account cultural-religious practices, monsoon and harvest time, additional months may be required. Consequently, seven months would seem reasonable, particularly at the start of the programme and where a number of these aspects coincide.*

This Evaluation team believes that a time frame of 7-9 months is excessive and **assumes that 4-5 months** (besides monsoons or major environmental challenges, harvesting time or any major livelihood needs) **would be a sufficient time to build such a house**. The Evaluators strongly advise the Implementing Partners review the entire project management plan to envisage a faster output. Major challenges to address are site management, procurement and skilled labour availability<sup>30</sup>, which in turn depend very much on how many houses are simultaneously built in the same area/village.

In general — unless a lump-sum contract is agreed (only used in Batticaloa District) — **the longer a house construction lasts, the higher is the ratio of cost of wages for labourers**<sup>31</sup>; as 6 to 9 months to build a house working slowly and intermittently, matches with 4 to 5 months working regularly, definitely **nothing good is to be expected from a long-lasting implementation** (curing blocks and concrete is perfectly feasible within that schedule).

A valuable aspect of owner-driven participation stems from the publication A Home for Our Own (UN-Habitat 2013) which says:

*Following a “home-owner driven” methodology, the project provided assistance to beneficiaries to take responsibility for the design and construction of their homes. Placing people at the centre of the decision making process is the primary step in recovery (...). The end result was a “home” that reflected their own aspiration*<sup>32</sup>.

However, one thing is transferring the responsibility and another to empower owner to take responsibility in a duly informed manner. Owners discretion should take place in the form of technically 'informed

<sup>30</sup> Both Donors and IPs should be aware of this issue, as NEHRP Technical Guidelines for Owner Driven Housing Construction Strategy, chapter 1.7 “Expected constraints” noted: *From the inception, NEHRP faces the following constraints: (...) Shortage of construction workers and experienced construction workers in the project implementation area to undertake implementation*

<sup>31</sup> NEHRP calculated that *some 49% of the construction cost goes as wages to construction workers, such as masons, carpenters and unskilled workers* - NEHRP Technical Guidelines, chapter 4.1.6 “Participation in construction activities”

<sup>32</sup> A Home for our own – pages 4 and 14



choices' and this should be restricted to site opportunities and within limits, in order to prevent unnecessary failures (technical mistakes; loss of time and money; debt; ...).

**Experiencing discontinuity in work activities results in a loss of time and money** (say: 5 to 10% or even more) as a direct result of: labourers moving from site to site with tools; materials deteriorating by being badly protected and exposed to external elements and wastage is to be expected; and loss of enthusiasm, team spirit and interest in completing that particular house. It is worth noting that the NEHRP Technical Guidelines for Owner Driven Housing Construction Strategy, chapter 1.3 states:

*In the year of 2007 (...) some of the beneficiaries failed to construct the house within the specified period of 6 months, ... -*

Further, it should also be noted that NEHRP (also funded by AUP-2005) minimum standards were higher than AUP-2010 and AUP-2012, as it is stated:

*As finishing components, they must complete internal and external plastering, doors and windows and rendering within the grant amount<sup>33</sup>. ... .*

The above findings fully contradicts at least two of the most important aspects of the project (*Efficient management of human and other resources* and *Reducing waste and obtaining better value for money*)<sup>34</sup>, duly mentioned as potential risk factors, but not properly mitigated.

### 9.3 Environmental hazards and related Disaster Risk Reduction

None of the interviewees in **Kilinochchi** area were aware or worried about hazards such as flooding or high-winds (they only seem to fear wild animals); only in **Mullaitivu** area a few expressed a vague concern about those issues. In the **Batticaloa** area, flooding occurs but interviewees (both Beneficiaries, non-Beneficiaries and future applicants) believe that with a >1' foundation height, water won't enter the houses and no major structural damages are to be feared. According to interviewees' experience, Villages targeted by the project are in areas defined "2 – Restricted Zone" and "3 – Warning Zone" in the Guidelines for Settlements Planning and Construction in Flood Prone Areas: these areas are relatively controlled flood prone but, water comes and goes in a few hours or days. At large, national standards provide a convincing set of techniques, sufficient to ensure good response to such a hazards (flooding, high-winds); out of these techniques, the ones referred to flooding (namely: foundation plinth >1' from ground level, then plastered have been properly put in place, whereas **severe concerns should be raised with regards to the techniques aimed at increasing resistance to high-wind**. This important project assumption seems to have been quickly forgotten in one case, as a house extension (refer to: Observation no.: 26) is being constructed by a poor bricks plinth foundation < 15 cm.

<sup>33</sup> NEHRP Technical Guidelines, chapter 1.5 "Minimum requirement"

<sup>34</sup> UN-Habitat Operational Manual, page 22



**Illustration 10: Observation no. 9 (Piramanthanaru village): foundation check gave a good result and confirmed the appropriate implementation of this important structural component (Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)**

Actually, critical elements, related to Disaster Risk Reduction, are the pitched roofs (hip-roof or gable-roof)  $>25^\circ$  and the insertion of plaster-bands on the rooftop. However, to be effective, plaster bands (roof



strips) should be closely spaced<sup>35</sup> then verified during all site visits<sup>36</sup> and/or reinforced using a 4-6mm mild steel inside the band. Unfortunately, **plaster bands are often missing** (see Full Houses Observations nos.: 07, 08, 09, 11, 15 and/or misused: only one for each eave is placed in the middle (see Full Houses Observations nos.: 12, 13SDC, 26, 27, 29, 30), and not reinforced; section size is some 4x5cm (see Observation no. 13SDC). Actions should be taken to **improve the use of this important element** as indicated above, to minimize risks of the roof blowing off by cyclonic or high-wind action.



**Illustration 11: Observation no. 27 (Veppavedduwan village): only one strip per eave insufficient to safeguard roof from strong winds (Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)**

<sup>35</sup> NEHRP Technical Guidance suggests a 6'0" interval (chapter 6.4 "Roof", page 48) meaning 182 cm approx. (and the available sketch is not correct), whereas UN-Habitat Operational manual marks some 1.5-1.2 meters (page 14), with a clear supporting sketch

<sup>36</sup> Also tiles and ridge-tiles are often unsealed (see: [Obs. 9 unsealed ridgetiles.JPG](#)): with this regard, UN-Habitat's representative clarified that "this is left to allow the roof to settle properly to avoid cracking in the sealing. All houses are required to complete this task". Nevertheless, similar defects had already been observed in MTE (page 36 and others), denoting that not enough has been done in the meantime, to rectify this matter.

Apparently official agreements such as Technical specification and BOQ do not mention anything regarding sealing being mandatory. Therefore whether it is acceptable or not to issue completion certification without the roof tiles being sealed, should be the technical responsibility of, and decided by the Implementing Partners and relevant Authorities.

If not, the Evaluation team recommends a timeframe be implemented (for example 2-3 months) for the settling of roof structure and tiles and that sealing them should be done within this timeframe before certification is given.



**Illustration 12: Observation no. 13 SDC (Kilali village): typical strip dimensions: due to the absence of metal reinforcement, they appear insufficient to resist cracking, likely due to roof and tiles settling (Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)**

Many fears had been expressed in the MTE of AUP-2010 about depriving the territory of its natural resources (sand, timber, rock); the same concerns have been mentioned by the responsible of the Geological Survey & Mines Bureau (Jaffna Branch), with regards to sand, gravel and rubble stone mining. The Evaluation Team appreciated that several regulations are being implemented for both timber logging and mineral mining, so that a centralised control is in place (e.g.: many beneficiaries showed the GA's formal permissions to cut trees from their own lands).

Many actors say that illegal logging and sand mining activities are present in different areas and the Evaluation Team confirmed such claims during a visit close to Mylawettuvan village (Batticaloa district), where illegal river sand mining was going on to feed to construction activities in the area.





**Illustration 13: Sand mining (Mylawettuvan village) (Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)**

Surprisingly, the MTE of AUP-2010 statement: "... many forests have been destroyed and the native species Palmyra is practically extinct (few mature trees are left). There are severe restrictions on the cutting of Palmyra. In a number of districts, the DS has permitted households to cut one or two Palmyra trees, but on their own lands only"<sup>37</sup> mismatches with the Evaluation team's opinion as plenty of Palmyra tree plantations are apparent<sup>38</sup> and beneficiaries were allowed to cut many more trees per land<sup>39</sup> (up to 22 trees from one land – see Observation no. 13SDC).

## 9.4 AUP and Indian Housing Programme

The impact of IHP on AUP-2012 field and market did not significantly upset the EU-funded programme, as foreseen in MTE (pages 29-30 and others); in fact, taking into consideration three basic indicators (market price escalation; skilled labourers availability; time to complete the houses), the data referring to AUP-2012 do not differ from comparable AUP-2010 data (when IHP was not yet started). Market price escalation was continuous but not uncontrolled, lack of skilled labourers is no bigger than earlier and the time to complete a house is comparable.

Analysing this comparison, could conclude that:

- MTE of AUP-2010 forecast was pessimistic;

<sup>37</sup> MTE, page 48

<sup>38</sup> As a mere comment on MTE statement (which was not based on a statistic), this has not a statistic significance

<sup>39</sup> Proposed forest replanting programmes across the Country is a key-objective of "National Physical Planning Policy and Plan – Sri Lanka 2011-2030"

- Skilled labourers likely came from other districts, especially within the Tamil area (and in general move across the Country);
- Addition of 50,000 LKR to the grant for a Full House (from some 500,000 LKR in AUP-2010 to 550,000 LKR to AUP-2012) mitigated the market escalation;
- The coordinated commitment of both the EU-Delegation and the High Commission of India to stick to a maximum of 550,000 LKR housing grant, might have also detracted certain inflationary practices on the demand side including UN-Habitat's additional efforts to use cost-saving techniques, beneficiaries no longer expecting additional grant increases.

## 9.5 Women and family members contributed to the works

**Many family members have contributed to the construction phases and women played a crucial role;** as the empowerment of women was a primary objective and was achieved through their engagement in the community level decision-making process. Women were also encouraged to actively participate in the construction process<sup>40</sup>, many female family members carried out activities such as mixing concrete, moving water and blocks, casting blocks, treating wood elements, preparing meals for the labourers. No harassment or misconducts have been reported.

In general, **the more family members contributed to the works, the less money was spent for skilled and/or unskilled labour wage**, fully matching with the idea of beneficiary's contribution to the house construction.

It is worth noting that NEHRP Technical Guidelines for Owner Driven Housing Construction Strategy, chapter 4.1.3 states that on average can save 50,000 LKR by the adoption of the locally available construction materials. Corroborating this, a particularly notable case: involves a woman (FHH – see Observation no. 30) who saved the said amount, by using sand for plastering from her plot and casting all blocks by herself. The Evaluation Team recommends her case to be used as an example and that she be asked to share her experience to encourage good practices among new beneficiaries in the future AUP-2014.<sup>41</sup>

Mutual support (e.g. beneficiaries helping other beneficiaries or even non-beneficiaries assisting beneficiaries, in terms of labour) was reported during the different phases of the works.

## 9.6 On technical specifications

Mostly, the beneficiaries have shown appreciation for technical aspects of the construction works, namely:

- Screed of 75mm thick (1:3:6) concrete underneath the masonry strip foundation;

<sup>40</sup> *A Home for our own* – page 4

<sup>41</sup> Refer to UN-Habitat Operation Manual, page 24 “Case study publication” and “Good practices and lessons learnt publication”





**Illustration 14: Screed cement (Source: UN-Habitat, March 2013)**

- Use of debris in the filling;
- Linking the lintel beam to the wall-plate (reinforcement bars are bent around the wall-plate – see picture) is definitely a good practice and highly recommended;





**Illustration 15: Observation no. 11 (Piramanthanaru village); detail: corner column, reinforcement bars and wall plate**  
(Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)

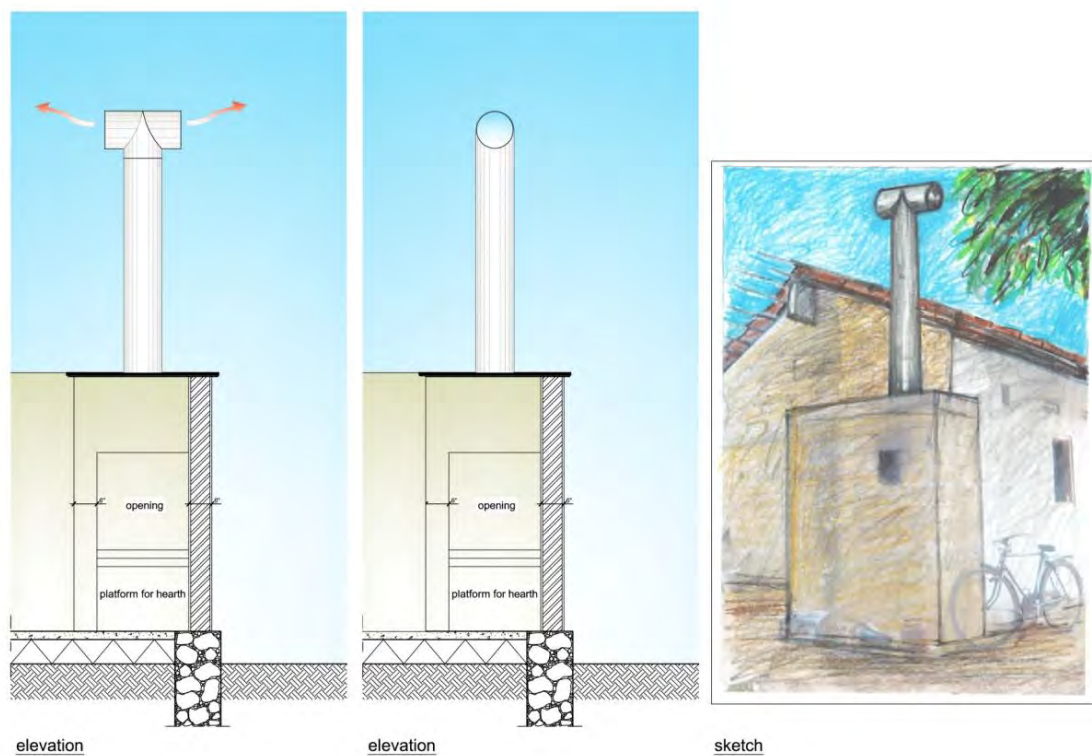
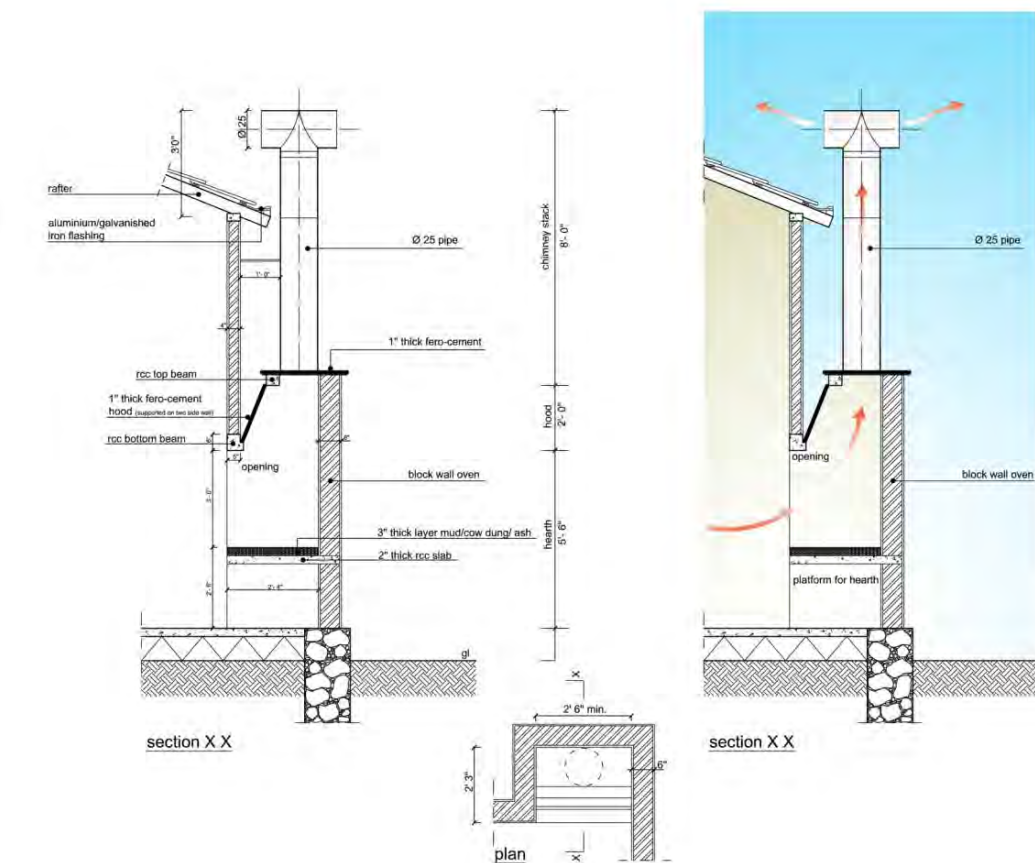
- Construction of corner columns (roof anchoring method) reinforced with 2Ø10 or 12mm iron-bars: is a good improvement (it strengthens the link blocks-wall/wall-plate/roof) and all beneficiaries have indicated it as a notable skill added to their houses;
- Cooking improvement and reduction of indoor smoke has been fully improved, as the totality of the beneficiaries declared that smoke exits easily through the traditional chimney<sup>42</sup>, whilst MTE stated that “... improvements can be made in the efficiency and the reduction of smoke<sup>43</sup>, by using improved cooking stoves and dried wood, and improved ventilation and chimneys<sup>44</sup>. In this regard, a further improvement is designed within the new proposed Type plans, with a Ø25cm cement pipe *in lieu* of the redundant traditional chimney<sup>45</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> In this regard, a further improvement is designed within the new proposed Type plans, with a Ø25cm. cement pipe *in lieu* of the redundant traditional chimney

<sup>43</sup> “Poverty condemns half of humanity to cook with solid fuels on inefficient stoves. Smoke in homes from these cook stoves is the fourth greatest risk factor for death and disease in the world’s poorest countries, and is linked to 1.6 million deaths per year”. Taken from: Smoke – The Killer in the Kitchen, Practical Action, 2004

<sup>44</sup> MTE, page 47 and footnote no. 72

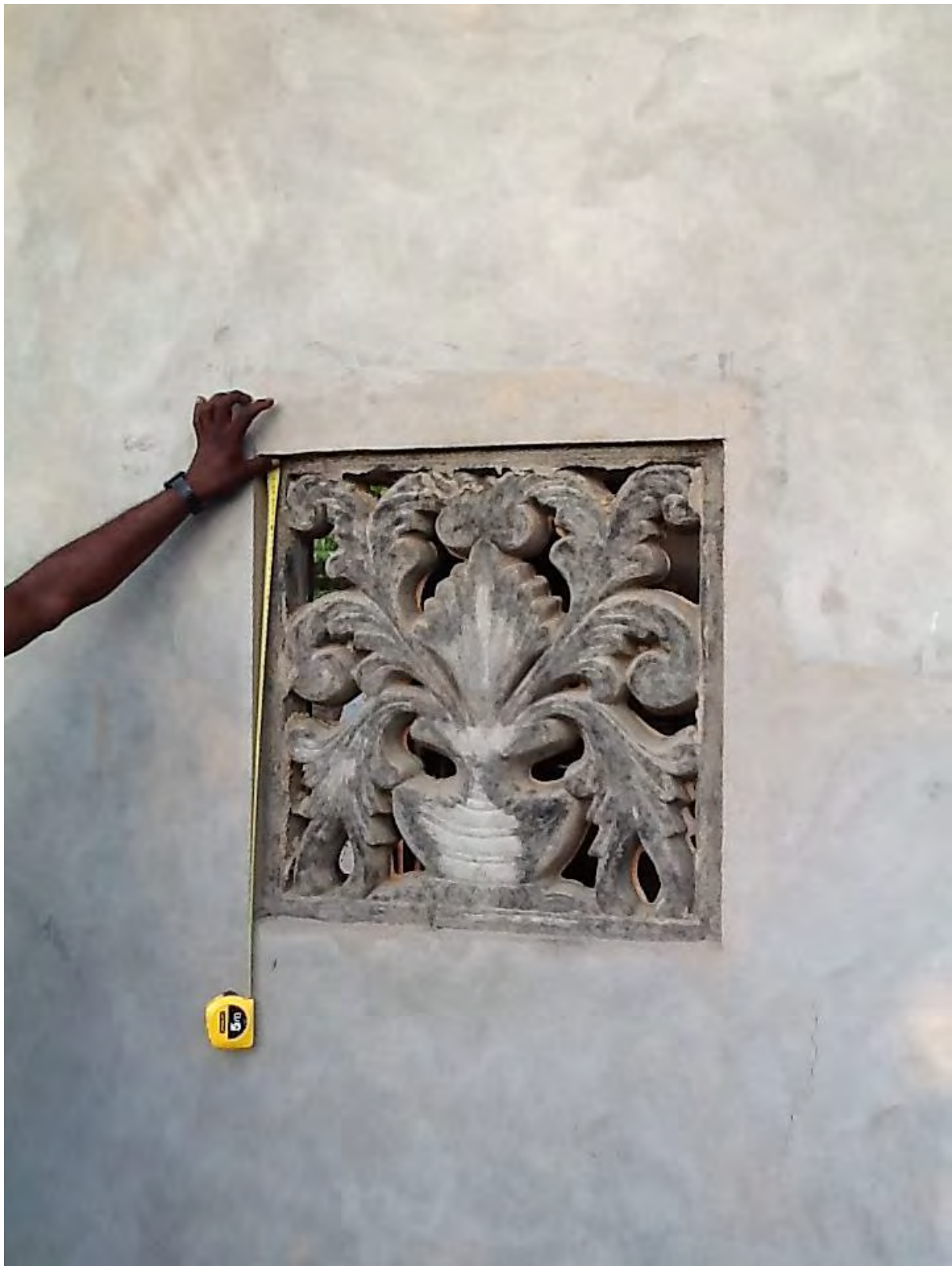
<sup>45</sup> A photo sourced from Evaluation Task Manager, confirmed the proposal being already implemented in Batticaloa



**Figure 14: Proposed new cost-effective chimney – technical details and drawing**  
 (Source: architect Mario Martelli, on behalf of the Evaluation team)

Further improvements and good practices could also be identified:

- To further improve internal cross ventilation, **cement decorative panels** (cm. 60x60 roughly) could be promoted (cost is some 700 LKR only and benefits are significant);



**Illustration 16: Observation no. 8 (Akkarayankulam village) plate (Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)**

- **Timber treatment** such as in Model House is hardly used in individual house. Traditionally used treatment through preservative and/or wasted-oil is suitable for scattered houses and room is



available for micro-credit activity (such as pre-treatment on a village scale); the cost of a used-oil treatment “Soligram” is some: 28 litre/house= 2,100 LKR only;

- **Gravel:** UN-Habitat recently allowed the use of the “white” gravel (limestone; from Jaffna area), whereas SDC always used it because of vicinity of the quarries. Taking into consideration relatively small dimension of the houses and related load bearing, the use of both “white” and “black” gravel is recommended;



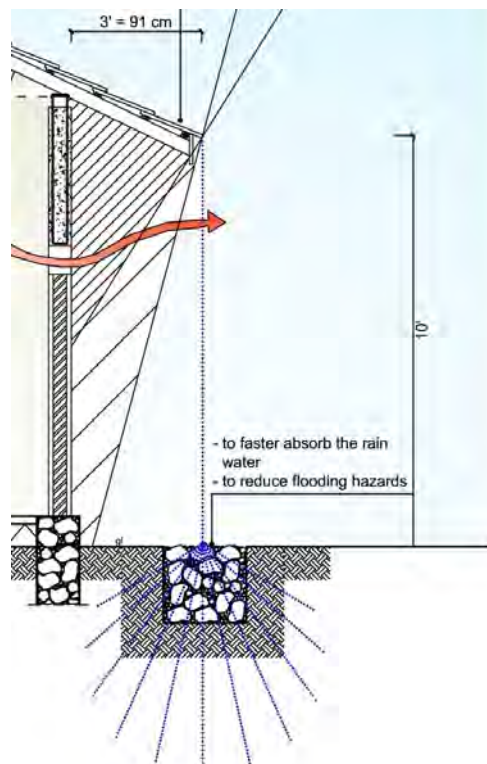
**Illustration 17 Observation no. 14 SDC (Muhamalai village): different qualities of gravel**  
(Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)

- **Rain-water harvesting for non-drinkable use:** both beneficiaries and local practice seem discourage this practice, therefore Indian Housing Project Model house displays a practical solution to be explored;



**Illustration 18: Indian Housing Project Model House (Kilinochchi district) (Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)**

- To **lessen flooding effects** (or delaying water coming close to the house) it could be safe digging a trench at the soil level for the entire length of the façades (both flooding reduction and rain-water absorption): a practical suggestion, economically affordable (manual work + debris).



**Figure 15: Rain-water absorption proposed detail (Source: architect Mario Martelli, on behalf of the Evaluation team)**



## 9.7 Materials quality tests

In order to structurally verify and crosscheck the construction works soundness and integrity, appropriate **strength compressive block tests** have been agreed and carried out during the implementation phase of the Evaluation (as well as similar tests carried out in the month of April 2014 have been provided at Evaluators' request). The concerned blocks have been made available from different sites (both UN-Habitat and SDC), cast in different times and circumstances: the overall results **attest the satisfactory quality of blocks used**<sup>46</sup>.



### Engineering Materials Laboratory- Department of Buildings (N.P) Kilinochchi Compression Test Report

Work Site:- Housing Project at Kilinochchi

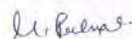
Contractor:- EU Evaluators team

Contracto No:- Mario Martelli

No	Location	Code No	Mix	Date of Casted	Date of Tested	Weight of Cube (Kg)	Compression of Cube (KN)	Area of Cube (mm <sup>2</sup> )	Compression Strength (N/mm <sup>2</sup> )	Age of Cube
1	4" thick Block	SDC 1			18/09/2014	8.709	111.70	300 x100	2.54	7days
2	4" thick Block	SDC 2			18/09/2014	8.816	65.20	300 x100	1.48	7days
3	4" thick Block	UNH1			18/09/2014	8.426	153.10	300 x100	3.48	>28days
4	4" thick Block	UNH2			18/09/2014	8.530	147.80	300 x100	3.36	>28days
5	6" thick Block	UNH3			18/09/2014	12.981	207.20	300 x150	3.14	>28days
6	6" thick Block	UNH4			18/09/2014	12.825	168.70	300 x150	2.86	>28days
7	6" thick Block	UNH5			18/09/2014	12.752	211.20	300 x150	3.20	>28days
8	6" thick Block	UNH6			18/09/2014	12.416	219.80	300 x150	3.33	>28days

Required minimum strength for 7 Days for Grade 1:6 mix > 1.86 N/mm<sup>2</sup>

Required minimum strength for 28 Days for Grade 1:6 mix > 2.8 N/mm<sup>2</sup>

Checked by   
M. Rahuseelan, [T.O.]

  
Approved by  
Eng. P. Thivakaran  
Chief Engineer,  
Dept. of Buildings (P),  
Kilinochchi/ Mullaitivu.  
Eng. P. Thivakaran  
Chief Engineer,  
Department of Buildings (P)  
Kilinochchi

**Illustration 19: Details of blocks compressive tests implemented in Kilinochchi Laboratory  
(Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)**

<sup>46</sup> Quotations have been duly negotiated with a Testing Laboratory in Kilinochchi (Department of Building Kilinochchi – Engineering Materials Laboratory) and submitted to the Evaluators' Company for budget approval

Detailed notes are as follows:

- Test results in Construction of Housing project – Mannar (April 2014): compressive tests on cement blocks aged 24-25 days out the required 28 days: the cement blocks appear of good quality and a number of four out six test-results exceed the minimum required standards;
- Test results in Construction of Housing project – Various locations (September 2014): compressive tests on 6" cement blocks aged > 28 days: the cement blocks appear of good quality and a number of four out four test-results exceed the minimum required standards;
- Test results in Construction of Housing project – Various locations (September 2014): compressive tests on 4" cement blocks aged > 7 days (SDC): the cement blocks appear of good quality and a number of one out two test-results exceed the minimum required standards (same footnote than above);
- Test results in Construction of Housing project – Various locations (September 2014): compressive tests on 4" cement blocks aged > 28 days (UNH): the cement blocks appear of good quality and a number of two out two test-results exceed the minimum required standards (same footnote than above).

Also rudimental blocks crush-tests have been implemented across site visits: blocks were dropped by a height of cm. 150 and generally resulted neither broken nor showed cracks.

## 9.8 Toilets

**Toilets** have been one significant improvement in housing programmes AUP-2010 and AUP-2012. In the **Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts** (Full and Repair Houses) **detached toilets** have often been built many meters away from the house (a paradox, taking into consideration danger of snakes and overall insecurity, especially during night hours). This choice is due to the perception, rooted in the traditional thinking mainly among rural Sri Lankans, particularly of the Tamils and especially in the northern districts, that a toilet in any form is "dirty" and hence needs to be detached and located at a distance from the main house<sup>47</sup> (only the urban elites are comfortable with internal toilets).

Even in **Batticaloa district**, where the Evaluation Team found practical and recommendable **attached toilets**, they were external. According to the existing BOQs, **stretching the toilet out of the squared (or rectangular) shell significantly raises the cost**: more external walls mean obviously more foundation and more elevated structure, larger roof, more plastering, more 6" walls, more time, and so on. On the other hand, it seems that – in spite of cultural traditions – people are now ready to accept a (conceptually speaking) "new" house with toilet, detached or attached (and beneficiaries definitely love it and recognise the great benefits for all family members).

## 9.9 Underused appropriate alternative technologies

Alternative construction materials and/or technological alternatives have been hardly used for the construction of the houses; this is mainly due to the extreme shortage of building material available that differs from the local customs, to the costs potentially linked to the transport, the possibly higher prices of

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<sup>47</sup> A new house with an attached toilet should be introduced to new applicants through thorough capacity building sessions; people are now used to that and the presence of Public Health Inspector would help in winning over people's potential resistance

new materials themselves and to the lack of specific knowledge of the unskilled labour employed. Moreover, culturally, new material and/or technologies cause a certain level of mistrust and fear among the population, thus making the use of new elements difficult<sup>48</sup>.

Some material such as doors and window frames and sashes, blocks and tiles have been recycled (salvaged) and **pre-cast reinforced cement doors and windows frames** were used which is a good practice, in terms of tree-felling reduction; if improved and supported by IPs (both technically and as procurement) this will in turn certainly contribute to the development of micro-credit activities.<sup>49</sup>

Among the material to possibly use in future housing programme, we can identify the **CSEB** (Compressed Stabilized Earth Blocks)<sup>50</sup>; the **SCB** (Soil Cement Blocks) industrially or locally produced; locally produced **tiles and bricks; mud plaster; timber** from controlled tree plantations; **pipe-chimneys**, however for all of these appropriate yet underused materials, strong support is needed in terms of their promotion, cultural and technical backing and training and industrial investments.

It also should be noted that the used of the above, which is consolidated good practice(s) in South India for instance, could substantially reduce the use of cement, some of which is produced locally (a plant is available in Batticaloa) but depends mostly on the import of raw material at a high cost<sup>51</sup>.

It should be noted that a sort of monopolistic production of **tiles** is present in Colombo and in the West coast areas, then transported across the Country. This is why almost all communities interested in AUP-2010 and AUP-2012 organised **bulk purchases of tiles**, sharing transportation costs and optimising logistics (tiles are also partly recycled where possible, but this represents a minor percentage in the total figures of both housing programmes)<sup>52</sup>; in fact, according to “Action Document for *Developmental housing reconstruction support to Sri Lankan IDPs*” assumption, “no major investments in the construction sector services such as the creation of large materials production plants in the North and in the East” are envisaged by GoSL.

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<sup>48</sup> This surely hampers the potential multiple effects of using local materials (e.g. using CSEB would mean 100% of cost going locally instead of approx. 80% lost, with the many options this provides as there is a potential for micro-enterprises)

<sup>49</sup> In areas close to the forests, it is very difficult to convince beneficiaries not to use free timber resources, whereas in the coastal areas, iron-bar degradation (rusting, expansion of the bars and consequent cracks and collapse of the frames) could be feared on a long-term perspective and people should be made aware of this.

<sup>50</sup> CSEB (Compressed Stabilized Earth Blocks): the blocks are known across the Country and national standards are available (SLS 1382 part 1:2009 – UDC 666.71). Advanced tests have been carried out in the context of the AUP-2012, as well as within the Indian Housing Programme frame (Model house in Kilinochchi - see picture: [HCI Model house.JPG](#)) and the Department of Civil Engineering, University of Moratuwa, as shown during the Workshop in Kilinochchi (September 17th, 2014). Rigorous laboratory tests and detailed analysis support the use of the above-mentioned material and the Evaluation Team also recommends it due to its good thermal and compressive responses. Many experiences around the world show the importance of using CSEB (and SCB; or even mud-blocks, according to local regulation and soil conditions).

<sup>51</sup> Cost of cement is comparatively high in Northern Sri Lanka; a good quality 50kg bag cost (such as: Tokyo Cement, Holcim, ...) is some 940LKR/bag (bulk purchase provides a little discount – 5% approx. – as well as a logistical improvement in terms of transport); in western developed countries (as the 50kg bag is no longer permitted due to workers safety) a 25kg bag costs around 3,80€/bag ; comparatively a 25kg bag would cost 500LKR (as packaging cost remains the same), some 3,00€/bag at a 165 LKR/€rate.

<sup>52</sup> The idea of having a brand new plant in the northern districts of the Country appears unfeasible in a short-medium term, potentially matching with future AUP-2014 (plant should be politically agreed; then funded, designed, built and industrial production implemented, which would take years)

## 9.10 Recommendations

The Evaluators recommend that the total duration of construction can be reduced by implementing the following strategies:

- a) After the beneficiaries are selected in each village and before the first instalment is released, the IP should assess the availability of labour and materials in the village and schedule the construction activities accordingly; this will mitigate both potential labour and material shortage issues<sup>53</sup>;
- b) Enhance bulk purchasing strategies<sup>54</sup> through VRCs and/or CBOs and/or IP itself<sup>55</sup>;
- c) Encourage beneficiaries to use pre-cast doors and window-frames<sup>56</sup> available in the area, before the start of construction work (through groups of beneficiaries from the Village)<sup>57</sup>.

In addition to the above, the Evaluation Team also urges that:

**1. The construction of houses beyond actually affordable household's financial means is definitely discouraged.**

The overall experience and direct analysis of both programmes' frameworks show that a **house built according to the design is feasible within the allocated grant**<sup>58</sup>; this assumption should be guidance for future AUP-2014 as well as for the second half of AUP-2012 since an "indebted happy family" (having their dream house built at a cost of unbearable indebtedness) cannot be considered a good outcome for the project.

2. In the AUP-2014 the concept of a **lockable house** should prevail over the idea of lockable room(s); house visits (Observations) have shown that in some cases the total absence of doors and windows was counterbalanced by the presence of flat-screen TVs and other objects/utilities (grant money partly

<sup>53</sup> As a hypothesis, building 120 houses at once in a planned 8 month time means= (8x120)= 960 months' work; whilst, for instance, 3 cycles of 40 houses each in an expected 5 month time, results in= (5x3x40)= 600 months' work: even though interviewees did not mention the construction timing within their main concerns, saving some 1/3 of time and part of the grant would result in an overall advantage (apart from incalculable beneficiaries' satisfaction and increased protection)

<sup>54</sup> "both agencies should be more pro-active in facilitating procurement... Be more proactive in assisting VRCs in bulk purchasing..." - MTE, pages 38, 39

<sup>55</sup> That is why the Evaluation Team suggests a sort of "partly assisted Owner-Driven Programme" aimed at supporting targeted communities to tackle this challenging procurement, as follows:

- Local VRC supports a group of beneficiaries to organize a bulk purchasing (for instance: tiles) and refers to IP;
- IP takes the responsibility to organize the purchase, the related procurement and storage (using a correspondent ratio of the agreed installment)
- Beneficiary collects his own quantity of tiles from local storage (which remains at the disposal of the Community at the end of housing programme in the area).

The above procurement would save time and reduce room for beneficiaries not to succeed in their purchasing. It has been noted that overall **bulk purchasing** is largely implemented in Batticaloa district (where VRCs seem proactive), whereas it is only partly used in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu districts. SDC does not seem interested to enhance the above proposed system, as it is "not in the Owner-Driven Approach spirit" (interview, 9/9/2014); however, UN-Habitat Operation Manual firmly states (page 11): *The project is home owner driven and beneficiaries are responsible for all procurement. (...) Where possible building material banks could be set up through assisted community managed efforts.*

<sup>56</sup> "This are about two and half time cheaper than wood"- MTE, page 44.

<sup>57</sup> Following NEHRP sentences is entirely agreed: *Nowadays Precast Concrete Doorframes are widely available on the market. The frames are comparatively stronger and durable than timber frame. The price is 30 to 40% less than timber frames. NEHRP recommend using pre cast concrete doors and windows frame. Technical Officers are advised to encourage the beneficiaries to select the precast door and window frames and save more money. The Technical Officer can suggest to encourage the beneficiaries to purchase a mould as a group and cast frames for themselves* – NEHRP Technical Guidelines, chapter 6.5.1 "Pre-cast door and window frame".

<sup>58</sup> Refer to: Observation nos. 11, AUP-2010; and Observation no. 30, AUP-2012 - in Annexes



misused or affordable leasing?). In fact, where the UN-Habitat Operational Manual statement says, “A newly constructed house using the full grant amount shall meet the following requirement ... It should be a “Lockable house” meaning that all external doors and windows are made lockable. ...” this is contradicted in many circumstances<sup>59</sup>. With the exception of local customs (particularly in the Kilinochchi district) that foresee the absence of doors and windows as an option, AUP-2014 should insist more on these defining structural and protective elements.

**3. The Evaluation Team does believe that a step further could be done and an attached toilet enforced also in Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu areas;** actually this would result in a significant cost saving, and a more safe and discrete option (door is opposite the main entrance)<sup>60</sup>.

4. It is recommended that **physical models of adequate scales should be available during the initial session**, when qualified applicants are expected to choose their own future house; despite models being available (the roof is movable, so that there is a perfectly clear view of the house interior), many beneficiaries stated that they made their choice on the basis of banners and 3D images.



**Illustration 20: Model of a typical house, with removable roof (UN-Habitat Kilinochchi office)**  
(Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)

<sup>59</sup> See Observation nos.: 07, 08, 11, 15, 30 where external doors are missing; a UN-Habitat representative recently assured us that “any houses observed by the Evaluators as missing windows or doors are incomplete and will not be certified until these items are installed”

<sup>60</sup> Refer to: new proposed Type plans (Chapter 4 – The spread of benefits).

## 10 THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS



**Annaluxmi Ramalingam of  
Akkarayankulam, Kilinochchi**

Annaluxmi Ramalingam of Akkarayankulam in Kilinochchi, (AUP-2010) is extremely proud of what she had been able to achieve. She added an extra room to the Type Plan she selected, extended the living room and completed the superstructure with only one mason assisted by herself and her handicapped son. The carpenter had brought along two helpers to fix the roof.

Besides helping out in the construction, she also did the material purchasing by hiring a tractor to deliver the goods purchased in town, which was more than ten kilometers away and the access roads are badly maintained. The VRC, she claims, was not of much assistance.

This evaluation looked for evidence on the nature of beneficiary participation in the entire AUP-2010 and AUP-2012 programmes. There was encouraging evidence of very high involvement of beneficiaries in the construction of their own houses as well as in those of others in the community. However, the study also concluded that there could have been and should be greater participation in some other aspects of the programme discussed below.

Being promoted as an “Owner Driven Programme”, it is expected that the AUP programmes employ participatory strategies at all stages of the programme. Such an approach would result in a greater degree of success in the programme as beneficiaries, and as primary stakeholders, tend to take “ownership” of the programme by actively involving in all aspects of the programme.

This study has observed a great deal of beneficiary participation in three forms: Firstly, they have got involved in various ways in the design and construction of their own houses, even though, not necessarily at optimum levels. Secondly, they have voluntarily assisted in the construction of other houses in the village. Thirdly, they have contributed their skills, time and labour towards various aspects in the overall planning and implementation of the programmes or in the planning and/or the construction of community infrastructure initiated through AUP programmes. Perhaps, the only serious concern is the inadequate involvement of the beneficiaries in the beneficiary selection process (as explained in the chapter on Beneficiary Selection Process) and in the

generation of model plans for beneficiaries to choose from.

### 10.1 Participation in Own House Construction

Beneficiary participation in the construction process was found to be very high. The programme, in fact, had been designed to draw in beneficiary involvement not just as clients benefiting from choices but rather as active implementers. In determining the size of the grant at 550,000 LKR towards a 550 sq. ft. house that was estimated to cost 670,000 LKR the programme had an expectation of beneficiary contribution up to 120,000 LKR, almost all of which was to be by way of unskilled labour<sup>61</sup>. However, the fact that a significant number of the beneficiaries somewhat altered the design, which they selected from

<sup>61</sup> Annex 9, UN-Habitat Operations Manual – Improving Living Conditions in Returnee Areas of Sri Lanka through Housing [2013 – 2015]



the four or five type plans shown to them, to satisfy their own cultural, spatial and aesthetic requirements, would suggest that their participation should have been mobilised at a very early stage in the process. Had the specific beneficiary priorities and needs been considered at the time the type plans were generated, the programmes would have been assessed to have had exemplary levels of beneficiary participation.

As for the perceptions of the beneficiaries on their levels of participation in the housing process, there had been some interesting revelations. While only just over half the beneficiaries in the AUP-2010 considered their participation was “great” with another 25% highly satisfied, nearly 70% felt so in the AUP-2012 programme (Annex 4). Though of relative insignificance statistically, nearly 4% of AUP-2010 beneficiaries and 3% of AUP-2012 felt they had not played part of any significance in their respective house construction. When asked to explain their response, 88% of AUP-2012 and 27.5% of the AUP-2010 beneficiaries said they were “shown the plans, which they accepted”, which suggests that “merely being consulted with a pre-designed plan rather than being offered options to build a house” is what they considered to be being involved in the programme. Interestingly, nearly 40% of AUP-2010 beneficiaries claimed “completed with our [involvement]” as the reason for their level of satisfaction in their participation in the programme, while only 3.6% felt so in the AUP-2012 programme. Significantly, some expressed frustrations in the lack of their involvement in the AUP-2010 - 2.5% claiming that the “plans were not shown” and 0.8% stating “Did not take our concerns”. The AUP-2012 appeared to have done better in this regard as only 0.4% nominated each of the these concerns.

The theoretical “ownership” that stakeholder participation is expected to bring to a programme was quite evident in the pride most beneficiaries expressed while describing their experiences. Some talked of how much they contributed in labour towards the construction.



**Ranjanadevi (AUP-2012) of Ganeshapuram, Kilinochchi setting out done with community assistance**

Ranjanadevi (AUP-2012) of Ganeshapuram in Kilinochchi is a partially vision impaired female AUP-2012 beneficiary who is just about to start on her construction (September 2014). Being handicapped and with limited male assistance, she approached the VRC who mobilised voluntary skilled and unskilled labour for the construction up to the foundation level. The volunteers including the mason, themselves new (September 2014) beneficiaries, have delayed commencing on their respective constructions to work on Ranjanadevi’s foundation. The VRC also helped in procuring the materials required at competitive rates. Such examples of the community uniting to prop up deserving individuals could be regarded as an unexpected positive outcome of the programme.



**Ranjanadevi (AUP-2012) of Ganeshapuram, Kilinochchi with community assistance**

## **10.2 Participation in Other Houses in the Village – Village Rehabilitation Committee (VRC)**

Although the expectations of the programmes were for the beneficiaries to contribute up to 120,000 LKR worth of labour, not every beneficiary was in a position to do so. There were several handicapped and aged beneficiaries who had no family members to provide unskilled labour contribution. In such instances, others in the village had come forward with their contributions to various levels. Mobilising such contributions is never spontaneous. Most other villagers would themselves be beneficiaries who would have to spend time and labour on their own constructions and, as such, would not volunteer assistance by themselves unless someone takes the initiative to mobilise the voluntary work force. This is where the Village Rehabilitation Committee (VRC) appears to have played a very significant role.

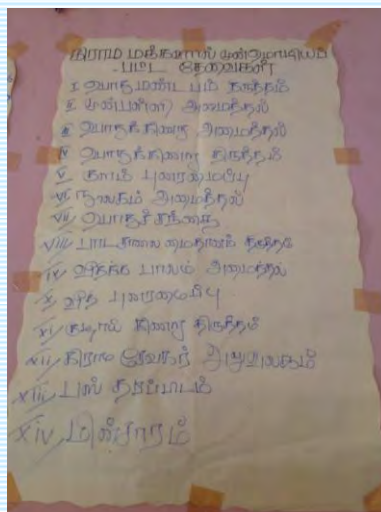
The VRC is a ten-member committee in each GN Division made up of AUP programme beneficiaries in the respective GN Divisions. Their roles have been varied – advocacy to facilitation of skilled labour hire and bulk material purchase to mobilising voluntary unskilled labour. In almost all VRCs there had been a tendency for members of other village level CBOs (Community Based Organisations) such as RDS (Rural Development Society) and WRDS (Women’s Rural Development Society) to be voted in as members. This perhaps is a rural political phenomenon where persons acting with authority in an existing organisation are perceived to be influential enough in the village to be repeatedly voted in to take on any new position being created in the village. For this reason, doubts have been raised as to whether there is a real need for VRCs and if all activities currently carried out by them could not be assigned to existing CBOs. There’s no doubt that the VRCs, formed exclusively for the housing programme, are performing well and are making significant contributions towards the positive outcomes of the AUP Programmes. It is doubtful that CBOs formed for other purposes and reporting to different agencies would be as conscientious as what VRCs have been. Would these other CBOs, for instance, get down quotes from local traders for supply of various building materials and arrange for purchase of materials in bulk for groups of beneficiaries resulting in cheaper and better quality building materials? Would they be able to bring in skilled labour when required by the beneficiaries and, most importantly, mobilise volunteers to provide unskilled labour to the most vulnerable in the village?

In the survey of beneficiaries, more than a three quarter of the AUP-2010 beneficiaries believed that the relationship with other members of the community had improved since commencement of the housing programme. This perception dramatically improved further in the AUP-2012 programme with more than 90% rating highly the positive outcome within the community that was inspired by the housing programme.

## **10.3 Participation in Community Level Planning and Implementation**

The beneficiaries in the AUP programmes are, in effect, setting up entirely new communities. Even though they have all, or at least a majority of them, returned to their own land, in most villages there are no other buildings than the new houses being built. In order for there to be greater interaction amongst members of the community some sort of a community hall would have been useful. However, there is hardly any community infrastructure or facility available in most of the villages. Several meetings the Evaluation Team had with Focus Groups in the beneficiary villages were held in makeshift arrangements – some under trees in temple premises or private properties. Most internal roads are in very poor condition

The Palampasi GN Division in Mullaitivu has listed the following as their SIP priorities:



1. Improvement to Public Hall
2. Pre-school
3. Public Well
4. Improvement to Public Well
5. Irrigation Tank Bund
6. Library
7. Public Market
8. Improvement to School Playfields
9. Road Bridges
10. Roads
11. Improvement to Deep Water Wells
12. GS's Office
13. Bus Stands
14. Electricity

and anyone requiring medical attention may have to take a motorcycle or tractor ride to a hospital 10 to 30 kilometres away. Inadequate potable water, particularly during the dry season when the wells dry up; lack of electricity and several other shortcomings are some of the hardships faced by these villagers.

Towards improving this situation, a Settlement Improvement Planning (SIP) exercise has been initiated in the GN Divisions where the AUP beneficiaries live. They have collectively identified their priorities in the respective villages and are eager to implement them. However, there does not appear to be a clear vision on how they would get about implementing these activities. The dependency levels appear to have been raised significantly in these communities and, consequently, the expectation is for a donor to come by and offer programmes to implement them.

Another matter of concern, as was explained in Chapter Three is the exclusion of communities in the beneficiary selection process - which, how and in what priority beneficiaries should be selected. For reasons already given this was difficult for AUP-2010. However, even though the scoring system introduced for AUP-2012 was intended to inject a higher degree of transparency in the selections, the criteria and their relative weights used for the scoring system are controversial and are disputed in communities as attested by almost all the FGDs held.

## 10.4 Recommendations

- Housing designs need to be flexible enough to accommodate beneficiary inputs at a very early stage in the process. Ideally, workshops should be organized for potential beneficiaries at convenient locations to jointly generate the type plans. This would be a great opportunity, not only to draw in user inputs into the design of the type plans, but also to make the potential beneficiaries aware of the likely financial and other hardships to encounter when deviating from the type plan. Case studies of good practices as well as bad practices with reasons for both, need to be made aware of to all beneficiaries.
- A mechanism to solicit and include target group suggestions to improve the beneficiary selection process should be built into the programmes.
- Regular workshops for community leaders (perhaps for groups of VRCs) with experienced facilitators should be scheduled to implement community action plans such as the SIP.

## 11 VISIBILITY

Visibility and communication issues were apparently not taken into consideration within the MTE of AUP-2010 report, as no recommendations are available.

During the field phase of the present evaluation, the Evaluation Team paid due attention to the subject. The main document to refer to is the Article 6 “Visibility and Transparency” of Annex II to “General Conditions applicable to European Union contribution agreements with international organisations”: this *inter alia* states: “In cases where equipment or vehicles and major supplies have been purchased using funds provided by the European Union, the Organisation shall include appropriate acknowledgement on such vehicles, equipment and major supplies ...”: in this regard, no logos referring to the project were found on cars<sup>62</sup>, which do not adhere with an appropriate and official form of visibility (it seems in general that IPs chose a low profile strategy - e.g. no T-shirts or caps with logos referring to the project are available).

Yet, many villages targeted by the projects have one duly designed signboard<sup>63</sup> showing the project's main information (though in Akkarayankulam Village the board fell down and lies abandoned).



Illustration 21: Typical signboard village (Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)



Illustration 22: Signboard in Akkarayankulam (Source: Jaime Royo-Oluid, September 2014)

<sup>62</sup> In this regard, UN-Habitat's representative recently stated that: “UN-Habitat currently has 23 vehicles. Only one of these has been purchased using EU funds. Many are remaining from previous projects funded by other donors, provided free of charge by other UN agencies or have been purchased using funds of current donors including India, Japan and Australia. ... Since this Report was issued, we have installed donor logos on five of our vehicles”. It should be also noted that “vehicles are currently maintained and repaired with EU funding” (EUD representative statement made since the draft version of the present report). Unfortunately the “in force” contractual agreements do not make any mention of this repairing and maintenance cost, whilst it obviously should be. The Evaluation team's opinion is that it should be intended and that therefore the EU logos should be displayed.

<sup>63</sup> General Conditions applicable to European Union contribution agreements with international organisations – Annex II, article 6: “..., the Organisation shall take all appropriate measures to publicise the fact that an Action has received funding from the European Union. Information given to ..., the beneficiaries of an Action, all related publicity material, official notices, reports and publications, shall acknowledge that the Action was carried out “with funding by the European Union” and shall display in an appropriate way the European logo (twelve yellow stars on a blue background)...”. Refer also to UN-Habitat Operation Manual, page 23 “(with donor logos and the statement “Funded by the European Union, Government of Australia and SDC”



Taking into consideration previous actions<sup>64</sup>, the Evaluation Team do not oppose the use of signboards on houses, listing donors, the schedule and any other relevant information; these plaques are also recommended as form of discrete visibility in the AUP-2012 contract "Annex VI: Communication and visibility Strategy for EU-funded activities in Sri Lanka". Since the draft evaluation report was written the evaluators have been informed that plaques are installed on all infrastructure initiatives recognising donors and the implementing CBO. The team did not notice these but, as it was not specifically looking for them, must accept that this is the case and note that this is very positive.



**Illustration 23: Example of plaque used in AUP-2008 housing project implemented by ASB (Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund)**

Printed material (e.g. leaflets, factsheets, posters, logbooks, file folders, technical guidelines) is widely available and the quality is good<sup>65</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> Refer to: Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund Deutschland "Housing Support to Conflict Affected IDPs in Sri Lanka" - Contract number: DCI-ASIE / 2009 / 204-503

<sup>65</sup> Efforts took surely place in these last two years, as MTE of AUP-2010 (page 40) observed: "A minimal use is made of extension materials, such as posters, detailed pictures, brochures and construction logbooks"





**Illustration 24: Examples of printed materials used for visibility purposes: (left) poster in Tamil language about EU housing project (by UN-Habitat Mullaitivu Office) and (right) notebook for UN-Habitat staff members' use on the field (Source: Mario Martelli, September 2014)**

Project visibility is satisfactory and duly documented in official UN-Habitat Sri Lankan webpage<sup>66</sup>, and fairly well, although in a basic fashion, in the UN-Habitat main portal<sup>67</sup>.

So far Sri Lankan post-war reconstruction experiences (both AUP 2010 and AUP 2012) are not mentioned amongst the ones available in UN-Habitat main portal, which seems negligent<sup>68</sup>.

<sup>66</sup> [www.unhabitat.lk](http://www.unhabitat.lk)

<sup>67</sup> <http://unhabitat.org/4472-2/>; <http://unhabitat.org/international-conference-on-post-emergency-reconstruction-kicks-off-in-colombo/>; <http://www.dailynews.lk/?q=business/holcim-supports-families-north-un-habitat#sthash.Dbc8cTP6>. See also (not related to the Evaluation scope): <http://unhabitat.org/un-habitat-partners-with-australia-to-combat-disaster-risk-for-four-sri-lankan-cities/>; <http://unhabitat.org/coca-cola-un-habitat-partnership-avails-fresh-water-to-over-1600-residents-of-killinochchi-in-sri-lanka/>; <http://unhabitat.org/sri-lanka-formulates-national-habitat-iii-report/>

<sup>68</sup> <http://unhabitat.org/urban-themes/reconstruction/>

## 12 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 12.1 Introduction

In this chapter we look at both the conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation. However, we shall not be listing or reviewing either. They are detailed and summarised in the forgoing chapters and we hope they are useful for improving the quality of the on-going AUP-2012 and future AUP-2014. Here, however, we wish to concentrate on the *overall* conclusions and recommendations - those which can be used to guide the future direction and design of the AUP programmes.

### 12.2 Positive Features of the AUP Programmes

The global objective of AUP 2010 is “to contribute to a sustainable resettlement in the place of origin for the returnees and their host communities in North Sri Lanka.” While the contribution to resettlement is admirable the evaluation team have some doubts about its sustainability as discussed in Chapter Six. These doubts do not, however, include the purely housing component of the programme, which for the larger IP (UN-Habitat) is the focus of its work. As shown in Annex 10, all the key indicators show that AUP-2010 has achieved its objectives. However, we have argued in Chapter Six that other factors undermine sustainability. This suggests that the design of a next phase (AUP-2014) should include consideration of how to mitigate these factors.

The global objective of AUP-2012 is “to address medium term rehabilitation needs of returnees and their host communities in the North and East of Sri Lanka” with the key indicators being: “the number of returnees benefiting directly from improved housing, flanking infrastructure, training in construction or tenure title regularisations as a result of the action”. The target set for these indicators is 19,600 people which the programme is on course to meet.

There are many positive features but the following are some of the most notable:

1. There is a very high-level of **beneficiary satisfaction**, not simply because they now have a permanent house instead of temporary dwellings but because of the technical quality of the houses. The field survey shows that 66.9% of beneficiaries of AUP-2010 felt their living conditions had improved greatly as a result of the programme and 87.6% of beneficiaries of AUP-2012 felt the same;
2. As a result the EU, UN-Habitat and SDC are all held in very high regard<sup>69</sup>;
3. There is a high-level of **home owner participation** but somewhat more in the **construction** than the design of the houses where shortcomings have been identified in Chapter Ten. There has been an attempt **to take local culture** into account though, as pointed out in parts of the report this is not everywhere the case. Toilets are a case in point. These have been one of the significant improvements between in housing programmes AUP-2010 and AUP-2012. In some districts detached toilets have been built to address perceptions that toilets are “dirty” and must be at a distance from the main house;

<sup>69</sup> Though AusAID/DFAT is a donor it was never specifically mentioned by discussants in the FGDs

4. There are parts of the programme where **women's participation** is clearly visible, most notably in the implementation and management of the construction process and in the leadership of the VRCs. The UN-Habitat-provided leadership training has undoubtedly contributed to this;
5. Many **process aspects** of the programme are very good and several have improved in Phase II compared with Phase I. For example, beneficiaries reported almost universally in the survey and focus group discussions that grant instalments were always paid on time and that Technical Officers and other field staff of the IPs were of much assistance in the procurement and construction process. At the management level the monitoring system is a detailed and systematic one providing regular progress updates.

There is evidence that **social relations** have been improved by AUP-2010 and AUP-2012. In the household survey more than three quarters of the AUP-2010 beneficiaries and more than 90 per cent of AUP-2012's believed that the relationship with other members of the community had improved since the start of the housing programme.

Summary of Achievements (Using KPIs from Logical Frameworks of both AUP Programmes)			
AUP-2010 (As per the revised Log-frame of Addendum 3)			
Intervention Logic	Key OVI	Evaluation Findings	Achieved? (>90% target)
Contribute to a sustainable resettlement in the place of origin for the returnees and their host communities in North Sri Lanka	Total Nr of returnees benefiting directly from improved housing, flanking infrastructure, training on construction or tenure title regularisations as a result of the action. <i>(Target 20,000 people)</i>	25,300 persons benefitted.	YES
To improve the living conditions and social cohesion of displaced people, returnees and their host communities in the North through provision of permanent housing.	Estimated share of the total number of beneficiaries who consider their living conditions and social cohesion as having substantially improved upon project completion. <i>(Target 75% of 20,000 people)</i>	66.9% of beneficiaries felt their living conditions had improved greatly and 66.4% that their relations with other community members had improved greatly as a result of the programme	NO
<b>Improved housing for the most vulnerable</b> using the 'Home Owner Driven Approach' in a conflict sensitive and equitable manner	<b>1.</b> Nr of people (specifying if involving women-headed households, disabled) and of families benefiting from the project having moved to permanent housing meeting the established minimum construction standards. <i>(Target: 4,759 families involving 17,000 to 18,000 people, 10% women-headed households, 10% families with a physically disabled member, 55% under extreme poverty).</i>	Approximately 20,000 beneficiaries moved to newly constructed or repaired houses.	YES
	<b>2.</b> Nr of houses built or repaired previously damaged by conflict or disaster <i>(Target 3,795 Full-House-Equivalents).</i>	5068 houses in total (of which 9 left incomplete), that is <b>3,853 FHEs.</b> ( 16% above contract obligation)	YES
	<b>3.</b> % of constructed houses complying with the adopted	100% of houses, both FH and RH meet minimum	YES / NO

Summary of Achievements (Using KPIs from Logical Frameworks of both AUP Programmes)			
AUP-2010 (As per the revised Log-frame of Addendum 3)			
Intervention Logic	Key OVI	Evaluation Findings	Achieved? (>90% target)
	minimum construction standards ( <b>Target 100%</b> )	construction standards, although in 2 out of 30 observations significant defects have been noted (6.6%).	
	4. Eligibility criteria set-up on the basis of transparency, equal opportunities, vulnerability assessment and fair potential access to the project.	Chapter Three argues that the selection system is flawed	NO
	5. % of people and families strictly selected under the established eligibility conditions ( <b>Target: 100%</b> ).	The evaluation did not obtain this information. However, in all the FGDs discussants, including those who were not selected, understood the criteria and none complained they had been wrongly assessed; complaints were limited to the fairness of the criteria.	YES (probably)
Improved tenure security of beneficiary communities	Nr and % of people and of families benefiting from regularisations of deeds/documents of legal land ownership or other documents providing <b>security of tenure</b> through the project. ( <b>Target: at least 2,855 families, or 60% of beneficiaries, involving approximately 14,000 people</b> )	The evaluation did not obtain this information. However, in all the focus group discussions almost 100% of beneficiaries of both programmes said that they had received “land titles” under the programme and therefore security of tenure,	YES (probably)
Improved livelihood capacity and poverty alleviated through temporary/new job opportunities, vocational training and capacity building	1. Nr of individuals, having completed formal construction training and intensive on-site immersion training who then use their acquired skills as a mid-term livelihood profession ( <b>Target: 200</b> ).	The household survey found that 77% of AUP2010 beneficiaries had received training, of which 63% received training in construction related activities. However, less than 4% said they had attempted to make a career out of the skills they had acquired	NO
	2. Nr of individuals trained in and utilising disaster-resilient building methods in housing construction. ( <b>Target: 200</b> )	88 trained and certified by NAITA; also a number of 272 masons trained in better construction practices including DRR measures	YES
	3. Nr of man-days paid for to implement the project for temporary employment ( <b>Target: 250,000 man days</b> )	Data not collected specifically for AUP-2010 but assuming similar rates to AUP-2012 this was probably achieved	YES (probably)
Improved community access to social infrastructure (flanking measures)	1. Nr and % of people (including those not receiving housing assistance) and villages actively benefiting from flanking	No data collected.	Not known

Summary of Achievements (Using KPIs from Logical Frameworks of both AUP Programmes)			
AUP-2010 (AS PER THE REVISED LOG-FRAME OF ADDENDUM 3)			
Intervention Logic	Key OVI	Evaluation Findings	Achieved? (>90% target)
	measures ( <b>Target:</b> 60 villages, 6,000 people and 20% of houses built or repaired).		
	2. Technical Specifications, plans and illustrations of the infrastructure as-built	Unclear what this means. No data collected.	UNMEASURABLE

AUP-2012			
Intervention Logic	Key OVI <sup>70</sup>	Achieved	Achievement (>90% of target)
The overall objective is to address medium term rehabilitation needs of returnees and their host communities in the North and East of Sri Lanka	Number of returnees benefitting directly from improved housing, flanking infrastructure, training in construction or tenure title regularisations as a result of the action (target: 19,600 people)	44,097 beneficiaries have been identified for housing, infrastructure, and training since the inception of the project. Assuming that at least half of these actually receive the benefits for which they have been identified the target will have been more than met.	YES
Specific objective: to improve the living conditions and social cohesion of displaced people, returnees and their host communities in the North and East through the facilitation of construction and repair of permanent housing and of flanking measures.	Estimated share of the total number of beneficiaries who consider their living conditions and social cohesion as having substantially improved on project completion (target: 75% of 19,600)	According to the household survey, 87.6% of beneficiaries felt their living conditions had improved greatly and 72.6% that their relations with other community members had improved greatly as a result of the programme	YES
<b>Result 1:</b> Improved housing for the most vulnerable using the 'Home Owner Driven' approach in a conflict-sensitive and equitable manner.	1. Number of people, women-headed households, disabled and of families benefiting from the project having moved to permanent housing meeting the minimum construction standards (target: 4,350 families involving 18,000 to 20,000 people, 1,000 women-headed households, 150	4,530 households consisting of 15,106 persons had been identified for housing assistance by 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2014. These include 554 female headed households and 317 households which have at least one person with disabilities. The project looks on course to achieve its target	YES

<sup>70</sup> The evaluation team used the OVIs which appear in the Addendum No. 1 to Grant Contract No. DCI-Asie/2012/296-666 which refers to AUP-2012. An earlier version of the logical framework, which had been submitted as part of UN-Habitat's proposal to the EU, contained numerous indicators which were not SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound). The present version represents a significant improvement which allows for better tracking of progress (the same is true for the revised AUP-2010 logframe). The evaluators received the Quarterly Report for Quarter 3 of 2014 when they had already almost completed the draft evaluation report so were unable to incorporate much of its information. However, this final report does make use of them.



AUP-2012			
Intervention Logic	Key OVI <sup>70</sup>	Achieved	Achievement (>90% of target)
	families with a disabled family member)		
	2. Number of houses built or repaired previously damaged by conflict (target: 3,850 FHEs)	As at 30/09/2014 a total of 1,919 houses (1,477 FH and 442 RH) had been completed. A similar number were under construction. The project is on course to reach its target.	YES
	3. % of constructed houses complying with the adopted minimum construction standards (target: 100%)	100% of houses, both FH and RH meet minimum construction standards (except for approximately 20% which require minor repairs or further improvements such as missing doors or windows or an unpaved floor). It is assumed, however, that these defects are temporary and that TOs will ensure their repair	YES
	4. Eligibility criteria set up on the basis of transparency, equal opportunities, vulnerability assessment and fair potential access to the project.	Chapter Three argues that the selection system is flawed. However, in all the FGDs, discussants, including those who were not selected, understood the criteria and none complained they had been wrongly assessed; complaints were limited to the fairness of the criteria.	YES / NO
	5. % of people and families strictly selected under the established eligibility conditions (target: 100%)	There is no reason to believe that the eligibility criteria were not correctly applied and no complaints were received from any non-beneficiaries in this respect.	YES
<b>Result 1b:</b> improved tenure security of beneficiary communities	Number and percentage of people and families benefiting from regularisation of deeds / documents of legal land ownership or other documents providing security of tenure through the project (target: 2,600 families or 60% of beneficiaries, involving approximately 11,700 people).	By September 2014 3,750 households (82% of beneficiaries) had been assisted by the programme to regularise their land tenure. The project looks on track to meet its target.	YES
<b>Result 2:</b> improved livelihood capacity locally and poverty alleviated through temporary / new job opportunities, vocational training and	1. Number of individuals having completed formal construction training and intensive on-site immersion training who then use their acquired skills as a mid-term livelihood profession. (Target:	The household survey found that 91% of AUP-2012 beneficiaries stated that they received training, of which 87% received training in construction related activities. However, less than 4% had	NO

AUP-2012			
Intervention Logic	Key OVI <sup>70</sup>	Achieved	Achievement (>90% of target)
capacity building.	200)	attempted to make a career out of the skills they had acquired.  There is no data in the M&E system on numbers of trainees who received employment after training.	
	2. Number of individuals trained in and utilising disaster resilient building methods in housing construction (target: 200).	Only 13 persons have completed construction training (in Mullaitivu) since the inception of the project.  UN-Habitat has finalized an agreement with CEFE-Net to carry out formal construction training in collaboration with NAITA. The locations for training were identified during Q3 2014 so the results were unavailable to the evaluators for this report.	NO
	3. Number of man-days paid for to implement the project for temporary employment (target: 250,000 man-days)	By 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2014 177,166 man-days had been paid for by beneficiaries. The project looks set to achieve this target.	YES
<b>Result 3:</b> improved community access to social infrastructure (flanking measures)	1. Number and % of people (including those not receiving housing assistance) and villages actively benefiting from flanking measures (target: 40-50 villages, 16,000 people and 20% of houses built or repaired)  2. Technical specifications, plans and illustrations of the infrastructure as-built	14 multi-purpose community centres, 12 pre-schools, 11 wells and 2 tube wells and rehabilitation of 18 rural roads had commenced by 30 <sup>th</sup> June 2014. It is expected that 124 villages will benefit from these infrastructure interventions when complete.  11,372 persons had benefitted by 30th June 2014.	YES

## 12.3 Learning the Big Lessons

In this section we consider how this positive performance can be taken into the future, such as in the AUP-2014 expected to be launched in 2015 and future potential housing-related programmes. AUP has already gone through five phases and donors and implementing agencies have shown themselves capable of learning from the first when designing the following. Similarly, they are now keen to learn from the

lessons of Phase II or, rather, from the combined lessons of Phases I and II<sup>71</sup>. Below we present what we believe to be the most important of these.

### **12.3.1 General Considerations of the AUP Approach**

The preceding chapters have identified several important problems which have not been solved during the implementation of AUP-2010 and AUP-2012 such as dependency, indebtedness and low sustainability. We believe that these can at least in part be traced to the model of home owner driven development as practised in the Owner Driven Model approach in Sri Lanka. We shall explain why and go on to propose how the model can be transformed to make use of its existing strengths while acquiring essential new ones.

#### **The Irony of the Home Owner Driven Approach**

In Chapter Five we argued that the homeowner driven approach has largely failed to exploit the development of a cooperative social fabric or created opportunities for integrated development which could enhance the resilience of individuals and communities. This is because the approach adopted has been sectorial (i.e. housing reconstruction) and has focused on individual household participation in the design and construction of houses rather than village approaches such as practiced by SDC. Flanking work has provided some broader community benefits including the creation of Village Reconstruction Committees but close to none of the organisational framework to make community actions sustainable (e.g. CBOs capable of community level planning, financing, implementation and maintenance). As explained in Chapter Five this focus on housing was required by the donor in the call for proposals<sup>72</sup> under the reasoning that it complemented the multiple parallel livelihood development projects. However, this complementarity is more theoretical than real in so far as they do not always coincide geographically.

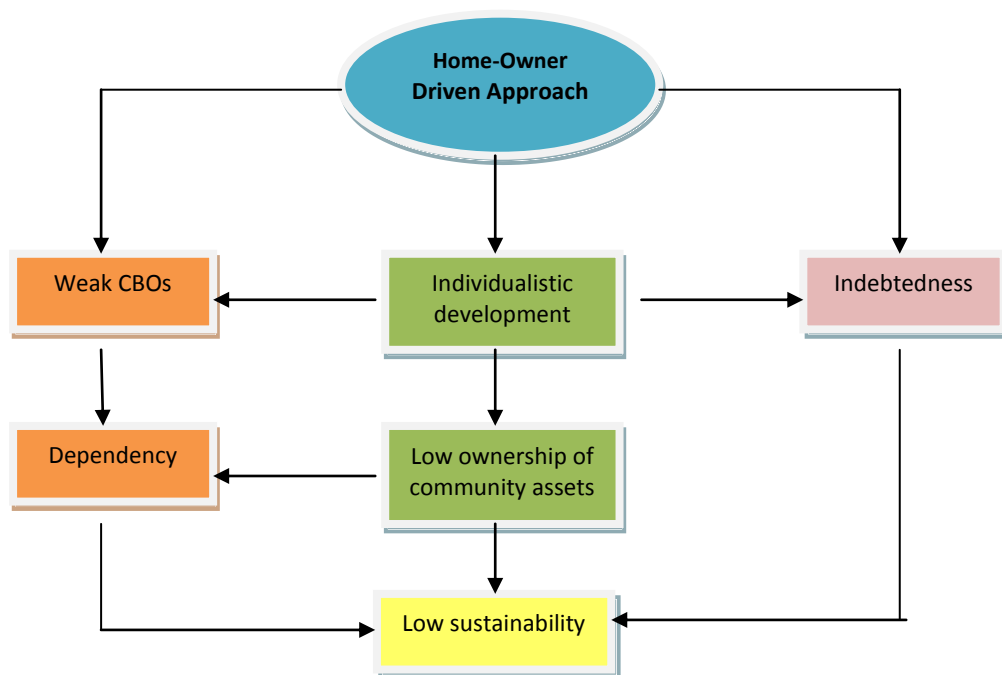
#### **The Unwanted Consequences**

This model of the home owner driven approach has not managed to overcome, and at times might have exacerbated problems of unsustainable indebtedness, dependency syndrome and the low sustainability of community and possibly individual assets. This is not to say that the home owner driven approach is the only cause but it has contributed to it. The way it has done this we presented graphically as an interconnected process in the figure below.

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<sup>71</sup> In the workshop held in Kilinochchi with IPs the participants showed that they had numerous ideas of how to improve the AUP some of which coincide with the evaluation team's ideas. This is a positive sign demonstrating willingness to learn from their own experiences.

<sup>72</sup> Source: UN-Habitat, response to the draft evaluation report



**Figure 16: The Interconnected Process of the Home Owner Driven Approach, Indebtedness, Dependency and Low Sustainability**

The emphasis on the homeowner taking the lead in decisions about his/her house has unintentionally opened contributed to further indebtedness which homeowners cannot manage. Meanwhile the individualistic house-centred approach leaves CBOs weak (though social cohesion is high) and ownership of community assets low. This results in a dependent attitude to the sustainability of the latter.

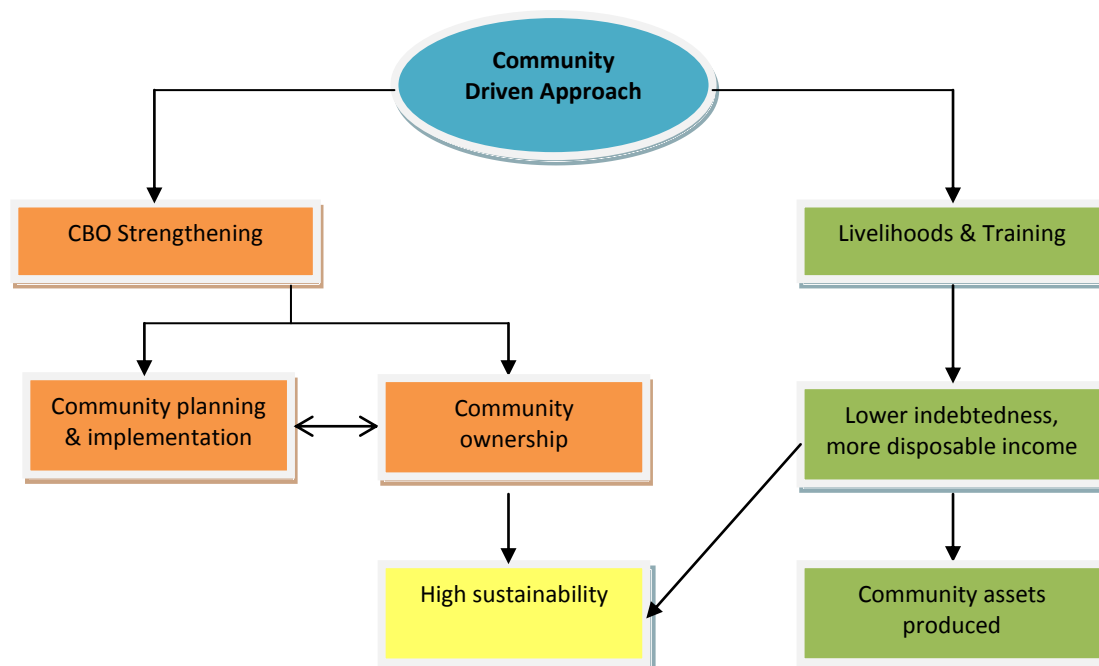
#### **The Shape of Future Housing Assistance Programmes in Sri Lanka**

The evaluation team believes that as we enter the last year of AUP-2012 we have a chance to design a different developmental model for future housing programmes. It will address the key problems of dependency and indebtedness and ensure that benefits are not only sustainable but more widely enjoyed as explicitly formulated in the Action Document for the AUP-2014. An ideal approach places not the individual but the community at the heart, not hand-outs but partnership, not a programme which ends when the project closes, but which continues through strengthened community organisations. This model would be more holistic than at present. Transitioning from household to a form of integrated rural settlement development which would combine housing assistance with major components of livelihoods and micro-enterprise development would provide for a more balanced approach.

#### **The People's Process: a Community Driven Approach**

One can see this approach in the model of the "People's Process" which has been supported successfully by UN-Habitat in many resettlement and reconstruction programmes in South and South-East Asia (Lankatilleke, 2009 and no date, UN-Habitat 2010e). It starts from the premise that while families need a house, they also live in communities and have a responsibility to each other. While households need houses communities need services such as water, sanitation, roads, power, civic facilities, child-care and elderly-care support. Satisfying community needs requires collective, not individual, effort. This extension **from the individual to the community** is what is articulated as the **People's Process** of housing and settlement development.

The figure below presents graphically how this approach would address indebtedness and contribute to sustainability. By strengthening CBOs and providing livelihoods-related training, internal organisational capacity and funds should be generated to both reduce indebtedness and make community asset formation feasible. CBOs would be strengthened not only through leadership training but also through a concerted effort to develop community contracting. These would involve both contracts with local government to undertake construction and maintenance work but also in the non-construction industries such as tailoring, metalwork or farm based enterprises. These trades would be developed through a livelihoods programme.



**Figure 17: The Relationships between the Community Driven Approach, Indebtedness and Sustainability**

Because it is concerned with the whole village the community driven approach to beneficiaries is that all families need to benefit and not only some. This implies examining approaches to construction which are lower-cost (so that the available funds stretch further than they do at present and can reach even the extremely poor) and this leads to the consideration of incremental housing and lower cost alternative materials. Both of these will require the inclusion of robust awareness programmes. It is unfortunate that the approach adopted so far, which has delivered relatively large *complete* houses through *grants*, is likely to have created resistance to the introduction of incremental housing and the use of lower-cost building materials.

### More Questions

This raises the question of whether a grant or whole grant approach is desirable. The full grant approach, when not strictly justified is likely to create dependence more than self-driven development<sup>73</sup>. Alternative funding mechanisms should be sought which emphasise a partnership rather than donor-recipient relationship for households that can afford putting some savings aside. These could include part grant-part own savings arrangements (e.g. 80% - 20%). And it would also encourage homeowners to look more

<sup>73</sup> In an interview with Habitat for Humanity in Batticaloa we were told that the experience of grants, in the form of housing, as part of the post-tsunami reconstruction process, led to such dependency that many beneficiaries even stopped working as they came to expect that all their needs would be met by an external agent.



favourably on lower cost solutions. The own saving contribution would be in addition to the present provision of home owner labour.

The incremental approach to housing coupled with part-granting would reduce the amount of 'up-front' grant cash required by the programme. This could be invested instead in livelihoods programmes.

In an interview with CEPA the team was asked whether housing was even the priority of beneficiary communities. The only way to be sure is to ask them, of course. We believe, however, from the responses received during our focus group discussions, that priorities are multiple and that as houses become less of a priority, others become more important. The community driven approach is well equipped to identify and address the range of community needs and priorities.

A final thought, thinking back to the question of how broadly one should aim to spread the benefits of a forthcoming AUP-2014 (see Chapter Four), is this. One can consider spending almost another €160 million on solving the whole problem of remaining war-destroyed or damaged houses in the North and East based on the current approach. However, this, without improving the local supply chain and without facilitating non-exploitative housing finance, would for little or might even compete with the needs for newly formed households. As the children of present beneficiaries grow up and set up their own families they will require housing. AUP-2014 can leave an important legacy if it establishes a housing finance mechanism which is accessible to young households. For them houses will need to be affordable and they will not have the benefit of the grants their parents had. This will probably mean they have to look for the kind of incremental housing promoted in this report, including the use of alternative building materials. It is recommended that in a future AUP-2014 programme part of the funding be set aside to establish such a financing mechanism.