

**FINAL REPORT  
ON  
MANNAR DISTRICT REHABILITATION AND RECONSTRUCTION  
THROUGH COMMUNITY APPROACH PROJECT  
(MANRECAP)  
IN  
SRI LANKA**

**ADDITIONAL VOLUME**

**MARCH 2008**

**JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY**

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**M&Y CONSULTANTS CO. LTD.**

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## **Additional Volume**

- Appendix 1. Report of Prof. Hosaka, a short-term expert
- Appendix 2. Minutes of Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) meetings
- Appendix 3. Minutes of Project Implementation Committee (PIC) meetings

January 2008  
Mitsuhiko HOSAKA

## MANRECAP REPORT BY A SHORT-TERM CONSULTANT ON PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

1. This is a consolidated report on my field observations over last four years, from a participatory development perspective, while focussing on the findings obtained in the current and last year. It deals with (1) the issues and prospects of participatory development aspects of MANRECAP, (2) the review of and suggestions for a diploma course on community participation initiated in partnership with Jaffna University, and (3) some recommendations as a follow-up to MANRECAP for sustainable development in Mannar.

2. I was assigned to MANRECAP for a period of four weeks every year. Two weeks out of this period was spent in the field. The dates of the field assignment were as follows:

29 August to 12 September 2004

28 August to 11 September 2005

27 August to 10 September 2006

05 August to 19 August 2007.

My reports in the previous years respectively highlighted the following topics:

CAP and participatory settlement policies; concept of human security (2004)

Women's Bank; Jaffna University's training proposal (2005)

Sustainability in time of crisis; community-based safety net (2006)

Achievements and limitations of MANRECAP (2007 interim report).

### I. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN MANNAR

#### A Challenge

3. From a viewpoint of participatory development, a most difficult task the Project was faced with was to undertake two seemingly conflicting activities. On one hand, the Project was under heavy pressure for providing essential infrastructure to village people as soon as possible, not only because of meeting the engineering schedule, but more essentially because life-support infrastructure was, without doubt, urgent needs of people in Mannar for their "human security" purpose. On the other hand, it was one of the Project's primary purposes to institute genuine participatory processes toward sustainable self-reliant development, which normally goes very gradually. A solution at this juncture was not to select either one or the other, but to identify participatory elements *within* the infrastructure development activities and nurture viable "people's processes". In order to meet this challenge, the Project adopted a triple-track approach: Community Action Planning (CAP), Community-Managed Rehabilitation (CMR), and Women's Bank (WB). The following is a review of these three.

#### Concept of CAP

4. The CAP method consists of a structured series of community workshops where community members collectively analyze their issues, prepare action plans and formulate strategies to

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negotiate with the authorities. Workshops are also an opportunity for them to acquire new information and knowledge, and forge their sense of solidarity. A set of workshops with various subjects is organized in particular communities depending on the local needs and stage of settlement improvement. It was first introduced to shanty areas in Colombo in 1985 by National Housing Development Authority (NHDA) under the Million Houses Programme of the Sri Lankan government. NHDA staff went to unimproved shanties every weekend to organize CAP workshops, assisted in land re-blocking as per workshop outcomes, advised in house design, arranged house loans, and supported in organizing women mutual-help groups.

5. The CAP approach at that time was sustained by strong political support, which in turn brought about favourable policy environment, and made the institutions workable for the poor. The strong political commitment, however, led to politicization of housing processes down to the grassroots. Both people and officers tended to look to politicians. When there was political turbulence and a change in the government in the early 1990s, the favourable policy framework largely disappeared, and since then CAP workshops have been less organized by NHDA.

6. Yet, CAP approach became absorbed by several local authorities and NGOs in the field of environmental improvement and women's livelihood betterment. It has been also practiced in rural areas by some JICA-funded projects. A lesson learnt was that both the wider adaptability and political limitations of CAP methods were attributed to its participatory, but top-down, mobilization approach in the past, and that how community members could internalize the methods was a key to people-initiated development.

**CAP at the initial stage of the Project**

7. Within half year since the inception of MANRECAP, an initial set of CAP workshops was completed in each of all the (then) nine focal villages. There were positive aspects of critically importance to be noted in this first-round of the CAP exercise. First, it was obviously the first-ever experience for village people to see their expressed priorities being reflected in actual work. It led to the growing sense of ownership and confidence of villagers thus cultivated, which was evident from enthusiastic discussions observed in most of the workshops. Second, it was very essential at this initial stage for the Project to demonstrate its seriousness to people, showing that workshops were not ceremonial but followed by actual implementation. The Project achieved to build the trust between people and staff.

8. Reviewing the process and outcomes of the CAP workshops at the initial stage, however, some technical limitations were also noted. While the limitations were due to the time constraints and for the sake of efficiency, they were analyzed in the following manner. First, the process and outcome of the workshops were somewhat standardized all through the villages. The workshops were conducted according to a uniform format, resulting in considerably similar project proposals, without much reference to specific issues and problems of each village. Second, workshops did not really start with the identification of village problems and resources but with "missing project" inventory. Hence initial attentions were focussed on the listing of service facilities as output indicators, rather than visualizing "stories" of *how* they, individually and collectively, use the required infrastructure for overall uplifting of their livelihood. Third, it was found desirable to have a more community-based process of selecting workshop

participants and allowing fairer representation of different views and standpoints among villagers. This could have been done by organizing separate stakeholder group discussions (children, youth, disabled people, etc.), by using individual blank cards for every participant to fill in, and by ensuring smoother flows of communication to and from all village members.

### **Impact of CAP**

9. In 2007, by attending a CAP Review workshop of three villages (Vaddupiththanmadhu, Theththavadi and Samayapuram), WRDS meetings at Shantipuram and more informal community meetings in five villages in Manthai West, it was obvious that people became empowered. At the initial stage as mentioned before, workshops were arranged and guided by the MANRECAP staff; intra- and inter- village conflicts were discerned; workshop outcomes were almost like shopping lists of infrastructure provisions that people felt forthcoming from JICA. Now, community members in near-by villages proposed having a joint workshop, and their presentations demonstrate specific and clear need identification and realistic propositions. They assign their own roles to contact and negotiate with relevant authorities/organizations, showing that, as one of the community leaders proudly said, they are now less dependent on MANRECAP. Indeed a local Grama Niladhari expressed how he was impressed at the closing of a workshop to see women and men villagers, who said of themselves used to be voiceless and least educated, stand one by one at their own initiative to make a speech how she/he became able to speak in the public and to the authorities, thanks to MANRECAP assistance. It was apparent that the CAP approach was not only successfully practiced in Mannar, but also somehow internalized by people.

10. Another important positive impact was that the local professional staff of the Project became equipped with CAP approach, and an efficient and hardworking team of experts was formed to conduct workshops in a people-friendly manner in a variety of fields ranging from community problem analysis to technical construction design. Though staff turn-over rate was quite high due to unavoidable circumstances, and some may still require technical insights and broader knowledge, yet the human resources thus developed should be considered invaluable assets for future expansion of participatory processes in the North-East.

### **Concept of community contract**

11. As a strategy to meet the above-referred challenge, namely in an attempt to make infrastructure development process participatory, CAP was primarily used in the context of awarding small construction contracts to local communities. Such practice, normally known as 'community contract', was officially called in this Project as "community-managed rehabilitation" (CMR) because people must understand that the infrastructure was being developed as per their decision and not that they were merely awarded a contract of constructing what the Project was planning and executing.

12. The original concept of community contract was developed by NHDA in 1986 for bathing well construction in the context of shanty upgrading in Colombo. By the end of the Million Houses Programme in 1989, NHDA awarded 65 community contracts of basic amenities or infrastructure provisions to community groups in their low-income settlements in Colombo, and

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28 contracts outside Colombo. They demonstrated effectiveness in terms of cost reduction, participatory spirit, employment generation, skill formation, fund accumulation, and community-motivated maintenance, and later incorporated into some Japanese-aided projects.

13. However, the community contract was not necessarily adopted by many local authorities; partly because there still was a doubt prevalent in the public that the technical quality of community contract work done by community-based organizations was lower than that under the conventional private contract system. Later, on this issue, D.Premakumara, on a JICA long-term training programme found, through his doctoral research at Nihon Fukushi University, that the performance of the community contract works was not less efficient than the conventional contractor works in terms of time and cost and indeed much better in terms of relevance to people's needs and level of satisfaction. Another bottleneck was doubt about legal legitimacy in bypassing open bidding. The Sri Lankan Government later institutionalized the practice and legally recognized some specified types of community-based organizations as eligible entities for community contract award. Since the 1990s, community contract has been introduced and disseminated to the Mahaweli area and further to Tanzania, Cambodia, Myanmar and other countries. Sri Lankan engineers were instrumental to this technology transfer.

**CMR at the initial stage of the Project**

14. In case of CAP workshops organized for CMR preparations, their subjects are of more technical nature on design of construction works, hence discussions tended to become standardized and unilateral from Project staff. It was desired to de-mystify professional works and make exercises more exciting and easy to visually understand, less dependent on drawing plans. For example, if a simple cardboard model had been introduced, participants may have been amused and activated for design discussion. Indeed, initial community workshops could have left design details for the future. In principle, it may be desired to have such a community facility as multi-purpose hall (MPH) designed simple, flexible and "unfinished" initially, so that people are allowed to easily expand, change and complete according to their varied, and growing, requirements and resources. Furthermore it was observed necessary to encourage participants to discuss *options* of a project (say, MPH) in terms of cost, design, use, construction timing, beneficiary contributions and maintenance arrangements. And this required the Project to be frank and honest in providing information at proper timing as regards what the Project could do and could not do, as well as technical advice on materials, design, construction period, budget and other resources, since these would have clarified the "boundary conditions" for meaningful discussions.

**Impact of CMR**

15. When asked about impact of the Project in 2007, people in focal villages most often referred to "unity and solidarity" developed through CMR engagement. For example, in Santhipuram where people with heterogeneous background used to be so disorganized and isolated, the successful completion of CMR for preschool, MPC outlet, market facility and internal road gave both self-confidence and track-records showing to others their capacity. The latest community water supply project was another leap forward. WRDS and RDS jointly succeeded in getting a community contact from NWSDB, negotiated for an excavator in Vavuniya, inspected

procurement and organized construction work, with MANRECAP training support in financial management and construction. The community further negotiated with a bus company for transport to come into the area. The community consolidation process led to democratization of the WRDS/RDS structure and of its decision making.

16. At the initial stage, it took time to convince people and the authorities of the merit and feasibility of the concept of CMR. Through MANRECAP's strenuous negotiation with the authorities, community training and far-reaching arrangements, it is now evident that communities have accumulated their own common financial assets, acquired management and technical skills, as well as income-earning opportunities. In 2007, people often quoted CMR with particular reference to the opportunity of working together and the accumulation of common funds.

17. The impact was observed even in villages in Manthai West. A young labourer in Ganeshapuram participated in MPH construction under CMR, underwent skill training, and then became a professional mason who has now completed a bus stop structure subcontracted by the government. Using the profit, he is currently building his own earth-bricked house. In Seethuvinayagar Kulam, after experiencing in CMR works on road, tank and water supply, people now contemplate on agricultural land expansion and marketing. Though some works have been seriously constrained since the closure of Manthai West, yet CMR works have functioned as one of the few means of people's survival and self-supported development.

### **Origin of the Women's Bank**

18. During the Million Houses Programme, NHDA selected several capable women and men community leaders from Colombo shanties and assigned them to organize women in poor communities. They visited unimproved shanties, shared their experiences, and linked to NHDA programme. Their focus was on the formation of mutual help groups and the introduction of microcredit schemes for income-generation. After such activities of a year or so, this team wanted to get independent of NHDA. The members did not feel it reasonable to have to report to NHDA on community organizing work for which they thought they should be accountable to themselves. Soon they established their own organization called *Praja Sahayaka Sewaya* (PSS: community support services). At the same time, PSS members reviewed community organizing strategies, revised them, and finally brought into being a women's microcredit organization in 1989. The organization was registered as Colombo Women's Thrift and Credit Cooperative Society in 1991 with 3600 members basically in Colombo District, though the style of their operation was much more innovative than conventional TCCS.

19. As their activities were rapidly extended and deployed to a nation-wide scale, it was re-registered as Sri Lanka Women's Development Services Cooperative Society, Ltd. in 1998 under the Cooperative Societies Law. It is normally known as "Women's Bank". Most of those working as PSS members in the 1980s remain in the National Executive Council that is a body elected from among the WB's "branch" leaders. A lesson derived from this organizational evolution was that, even under "people-friendly" governments, self-reliant organizations that can maintain resilient collective activities for their own are imperative to get less vulnerable to political mobilization from above.



### **Development of the Women's Bank**

20. In a few years after its establishment, the Women's Bank found that 15% of the loanees used the credit for housing purpose, despite its loan interest as high as 4% per month. It implied a high demand on a community-based credit system even in the field of housing, and the WB immediately introduced an experimental housing credit scheme at the interest rate of 2% per month. At present, about 30% of the total loan amount of the Women's Bank is used for housing purpose. Other innovations have taken place since 2000: community-based welfare and safety-net schemes (see my report for 2006). This, at the moment, covers life insurance (*Subhani*), survivors pension (*Rakhitha*), and medical insurance (*Aarogya*). Immediately after Tsunami disaster in 2004, the Bank worked out a special programme geared to immediate relief needs of victims and accommodated them as new members with systematic supervision and advice.

21. One of latest developments of the Women's Bank is community-based water supply and management, as facilitated and supported by an NGO, SEVANATHA. In Colombo's shanty areas, WB branches get community contracts from NWSDB for individual connections, implement the construction project, assign one of local members to work as a water manager collecting water charges and paying monthly bills to NWSDB at a lower rate of bulk use for the whole community. Collected charges could be rotated as part of a revolving fund of the WB until paid to NWSDB.

22. Attention must be paid to the sustainability of the Women's Bank, as a people's organization not led by the "outside" or "above", but built on horizontal experience-sharing from a poor woman to another. It is a *social movement* revitalizing mutual help, and offers a space for interactions and dialogue among members which has led to the formation of agents for community management.

### **Introduction of the Women's Bank to Mannar**

23. Empowerment of women in Mannar through Women's Bank was perhaps one of the most successful aspects of the Project. In the earlier years when movement to and from Mannar was not difficult, exchange visits on existing WB groups in Mahaweli and Colombo were organized. Since the WB is a multi-ethnic organization, it was possible for Tamil members to come to Mannar for advice. Women in Mannar thus started to get organized into Women's Bank. Locally, its membership was widening through words of mouth between neighbouring settlements. In 2006, before the security situation aggravated, there already were three Mannar-based "regional banks" (primary branches) of WB groups: "Shantipuram" and "Vaddupiththanmadhu" in Mannar Division and "Pali Aru" in Manthai West Division. Though they were yet to be designated "primary branches", they were considered actually at the full-fledged stage, and new groups further spread to outside the project areas. I observed the groups' very active discussion on prospective income generation activities. However, individual credits alone would not have led to income-generation under the circumstances. While encouraging women's groups, it was essential also to create economic environment of monetary resources being accumulated and circulated within the area. Combination with CMR works was crucial in this context.

24. After the physical movement was suppressed in 2006, leaders of the Mannar primary branches at times went to Anuradhapura and met leaders from Colombo for guidance, though leaders from Pali Aru could not join. It was ironical that the emergence of able leadership in WB groups in Mannar, particularly in Vaddupiththanmadhu, was due partly to the inaccessible and isolated situation. Later, such leadership was also taken over, as in Santhipuram new women leadership emerged and offered to extend support to saving groups even in Manthai West where Colombo-based groups were unable to access under the current situation. Moreover, women saving groups in Santhipuram provided a solid organizational foundation to local WRDS that attained democratic re-organization.

25. Women groups in Mannar Division, while thus maintaining contact with and somehow receiving advice from Colombo-based branch leaders, explored their own way of doing and established Mannar-specific rules and procedures in 2006 learning from a special programme for Tsunami victims. Even in Manthai West, though the inter-community wide primary branch could not function due to the restriction, individual saving groups in Seethuvinayagar Kulam and Kurai were expanding their activities, providing loans to chilli cultivation and others from their accumulated savings. In 2007 NHDA District Office was officially advised by its chairman to contact and work with Women's Bank in the housing programme.

### **Summery observations**

#### *Varied situations*

26. During my assignment period in 2007, I visited all the ten focal villages of the Project. Apparently these villages now exhibit different types of needs and requirements and demand more community-specific interventions. For example, people in Mannar Division seem to have become confident and most concerned with viable income generation activities, while some villages in Manthai West (Kurai, Pali Aru and Ganeshapuram) are still handicapped by lack of essential infrastructure and housing due to the retardation in planned construction work.

27. I, however, encountered, in all the villages, the voices of unanimous appreciation by people toward MANRECAP/JICA. This was partly because of staff attitudes of living closely with people and working diligently with them under the situation of hardship, and partly because of infrastructure and service provisions by the Project. In fact, community dynamism now observed particularly in villages in Mannar Division seemed to get momentum quite recently, though there had been a long process of ground work. A *synergy effect* of the triple-track approach has now started to show its impact. Its delay is due largely to the security problem.

#### *Livelihood betterment*

28. In a nutshell, positive changes in focal villages are evident even to the eyes of a visitor. The landscape has changed except, to some extent, Ganeshapuram and Pali Aru, over last three years. Land was allotted, hence people built fences, within which there are houses now often with tile roofs. Original dwelling units have been further extended individually. In their gardens, one may observe chicken raising, vegetable growing and women gathering. Plots are demarcated by improved roads. In front of a community hall, there is a notice board. Community-owned land is intensively used to generate a common fund. Of course one cannot be too optimistic. People live with dug-out against shelling. Temporary shelters for latest IDPs are newly found in Manthai

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West. People in the focal villages are also liable to evacuate if the armed conflict aggravates further. Yet, it is fair to say that MANRECAP has attained participatory resettlement of former IDPs and their livelihood reconstruction. The former GA Mannar is said to mention that everyone came and asked for dry rations four years ago and that they now eat three meals a day from their earnings.

*Applicability of the participatory approach*

29. Each of the above three participatory tools: CAP workshop, CMR and Women's Bank, was originally developed by Sri Lankan people. MANRECAP deliberately tried to study, innovate and adapt them to a new and difficult situation in Mannar. It is now proved that they work well also in Tamil-spoken conflict-affected areas. One of the most important elements in this achievement was the development of a new cadre of human resources that could absorb this approach in the North.

*Limitations of the participatory approach*

30. Yet, there are limitations in the current crisis. Unless the minimum level of safety and freedom is secured for Project staff, little can be carried out as planned. Community workshops discussing future plans are meaningless for villagers, if they are compelled to think always about evacuation. In this sense, hope for cease-fire at the national political level is the most crucial element for participatory development.

31. The self-reliance does not mean self-containment in permanent enclosure and isolation, conversely, wider communication is imperative to promote sustainable development. WB experience in the Colombo area in the past shows that group activities cease to exist once they are organisationally cut off from ample opportunities of exchanging information and experiences with other groups. While survival efforts of WB members in Manthai West should be lauded, their communication and interactions with their counterparts outside the area are hoped to be revived soon. Meanwhile they need to be properly supported in terms of, for instance, mobile phone communications, internal networking and local bank branch establishment.

32. A thrust of participatory development lies in the evolving process for people and a programme to interact with each other and generate new values. In this interactive process, the programme must courageously change its own structure in response to new attempts by people, while supporting people to make new attempts. In fact, the Sri Lankan government was able to maintain a very flexible policy environment to enable poor people in the past, which in part resulted in the institutionalization of community contracts as a departure from conventional regular accounting system. The current community contracts or CMR are, however, at times hampered by government and donor accounting procedures of their own without due regard to specific nature of the community work. There is much for the external agencies to learn from field initiatives and to change themselves, if they are to seriously support participatory approaches.

*New economic opportunities*

33. In Vaddupiththanmadhu, Theththavadi and Samayapuram, MANRECAP approach of forming small groups in the past years is now incorporated in the government Gama Neguma

programme, and based on this organizational foundation, field-level guidance of egg production, compost making, vegetable cultivation and other income generation activities is bearing fruits. While people highly appreciate MANRECAP support in this respect, as a community member told that they were enlightened to use local resources for earning purposes, they now discuss viable marketing strategies and entrepreneurship development.

34. In the long run, people-controlled and sustainable economic activities will support livelihood of the poor in Mannar. MANRECAP facilitated discussions between Mannar-based WB groups and their counterpart in Colombo concerning sales transfer of products from Mannar to Colombo, including dry fish, wood apple jam, limes, palm products and others. In order to establish a new market channel of fish sale, however, constraints in the traditionally dominant fish wholesale system would have to be overcome, while fishermen's unions successfully organised in several villages in the north hardly reach the poor. In this context, it was observed that WB groups in Shantipuram, with the MANRECAP-assisted newly-opened market facility, if it can be in full operation, and with their emergency credit programme for sustainable livelihood, should be instrumental in replacing powerful middlemen and developing a people-controlled local fish market in Mannar, later to be expanded nation-wide.

*Sustainable development in conflict-affected areas*

35. At my meetings with representatives of NGOs and UN agencies in Mannar, MANRECAP team leader suggested that the isolated situation was, in a sense, an opportunity for self-reliant development. A representative of ZOA questioned the notion that the peace is a *prerequisite* for development, since people cannot afford to wait for peace under the circumstances. We reached a common understanding that emergency relief and developmental aid would be complementary: the trust built during the crisis between people and agencies would be essential for development, while local resource-based development would make communities resilient against shocks and disasters.

36. Indeed, MANRECAP activities over last four years prove to have provided some resource base for self-reliant development by former refugees and IDPs. In this sense, MANRECAP showed to relief agencies how sustainable development activities could be combined with emergency relief measures. As a departure from conventional provider-based relief delivery, it assisted in seeds and seedlings rather than vegetables, in chicks of local variety rather than chicken meat, and in fingerlings rather than fish. It delivered these materials and services through government machineries if they existed, to the extent possible (different from many relief agencies), and if none, it facilitated creation of community receiving mechanisms with training support. People in Manthai West could somehow survive on those local resources and organizational mechanisms, even while totally cut from outside since mid 2006. Using skills trained so far and building materials already brought in, CMR works were going on in Manthai West. MANRECAP seems to demonstrate the effectiveness of cultivating basic skills for livelihood betterment and resilient community organizations in the context of conflict and relief.

37. In terms of ecological sustainability, one may note a possibility of highlighting and publicising the environmental aspect of Project activities in the area. In Ganeshapuram and other settlements, solar energy utilisation has been introduced to some individual houses as well as to MANRECAP-supported facilities. There are lots of other environmental resources, at least

latently: bird sanctuaries in marshy coastal wetlands and Giant Tank, blowing wind potential for power generation, possibility of storing rainwater underneath the clay soil, strict environmental control particularly in Manthai West in felling trees, tapping underground water and maintaining clean eatery. MANRECAP tried to promote forestation in the area as protection against wind and sunshine. Such new earning opportunities as egg production, compost making and natural cultivation are also concerned with environment and health. This will make MANRECAP a model scheme of environmentally-sustainable rehabilitation and reconstruction. In this connection, though, the use of asbestos in buildings may be strictly controlled and locally available building materials, such as mud bricks, stone, cow dung, timber and bamboo could be utilized to the extent possible for housing and infrastructure

## **II. VAVUNIYA-BASED HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT FACILITY**

### **Background and a precedent**

38. Capacity development in the North-East is one of the most crucial areas for post-conflict village reconstruction, particularly for institutionally-sustainable participatory development. Thus MANRECAP stipulated as its Output 4 that “government officers engaged in community development are strengthened in line with their abilities to support participatory development approaches”. Strengthening government officers with practical experiences will effectively be possible by providing them with proper opportunities of working with community people and non-governmental sector agents and of unlearning and relearning toward people-centred development under the new concept of local governance. It will also be important, for practical purposes, that a formal learning opportunity can enjoy social recognition and lead to participants’ career development in this field. Hence, a concrete proposal was made for creating an academically-recognized diploma course in the North-East, based on the experiences in participatory approaches of MANRECAP.

39. A useful implication was obtained from an earlier attempt by the Centre for Continuing Education and Extension (CCEE), Peradeniya University to organize an undergraduate week-end course for diploma on “participatory housing and community development”. The course was created with UNCHS (now UN-Habitat) technical and financial assistance a decade ago, when I served as UNCHS Chief Technical Adviser in Sri Lanka. Upon my visit on the present Coordinator of the course, it was found that the course was, as planned, addressed to staff of local governments and aid agencies, and has been well-managed on a self-financed basis. While it was encouraging, it was also noted that there was a need for a Tamil-media course.

### **Policy-level support**

40. The idea of creating a formal training course in Tamil media at a University in North East was well-received by PIC on 17 August 2005. Very strong interests were expressed by core Sri Lankan parties. In September 2005, the then CS/NWP fully supported the idea and expressed that inculcating and revitalizing “inspirational” community leadership, both at the grassroots and in the institutions, are keenly called for. He strongly advised that Jaffna University’s Vavuniya campus could be one of the best locations of such a diploma course. He further suggested that Eastern University’s Trincomalee campus could also be considered in order to

ensure the accessibility from communities in the whole North-East and that government intellectual resources could also be mobilized for the course. The then GA/Mannar also advised that, while social mobilization by many NGOs largely failed in creating sustainable community organizations, an approach should be found and disseminated to support genuine community mobilization for self-motivated and self-reliant community actions.

41. The PDS/LTTE was also of the view, in September 2005, that such a training opportunity for local capacity building was much awaited, since they were fully aware of a need to establish Development Forums at the village, divisional and district levels for well-coordinated local governance, under the circumstances of village people being increasingly marginalized by macro framework, ethnic conflicts and Tsunami disaster, and of village organizations being compartmentalized and disorganized. They hoped that the training course could be expanded further to cover Kilinochchi and Mullaittivu as “satellite” campus and that resource persons could be mobilized not only from the university but from the civic society also.

42. The then VC/Jaffna University welcomed the idea, in September 2005, and asserted that the University was fully committed to and experienced in community-level research and training under its Corporate plan. He advised on several options of organizing practical as well as academic training by the University, and then finally nominated Dean, Faculty of Business Studies, Vavuniya Campus, as coordinator for an envisaged diploma course on community participation. There was then a practical dialogue between the then Dean, Business Studies and MANRECAP staff. The Dean noted previous discussions and suggested that he would attempt to complete all the preparations, including the curriculum building, to make the course useful to prospective participants.

43. Meanwhile, Nihon Fukushi University of Japan, in an attempt to strengthen its ties with world-wide centres of excellence in social development research and training, showed an interest in collaborating with Jaffna University in human resource development in the field of participatory social development. This would enable MANRECAP to involve partnership with Japanese universities, as envisaged in the Project document, and ensure the sustainable capacity building after the project is over. Nihon Fukushi invited the Dean to Nagoya in March 2006 to jointly establish a network of educational institutions for social development, and offered, together with JICA/MANRECAP, some start-up funding support.

### **Operational proposal**

44. Preparations for course structure and practical arrangements were progressed in the Vavuniya campus during 2006, despite aggravating security situations. In brief, the following was the concept.

#### *Scope:*

To establish a practical, yet academically-recognized, training programme in Tamil media, for frontline government officers, mid-career community workers including NGO staff, as well as community leaders to get exposed to new participatory approaches and concepts, and hopefully for them to obtain certain qualifications that could contribute to their career development, as well as to make use of the MANRECAP approach and its experiences as a prototype for

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sustainable livelihood rehabilitation and participatory development in the North-East.

*Modality:*

The course will be an undergraduate-level diploma course of a two-year duration, the first half having weekend course work involving lectures, debate, workshops and presentations, and the second half involving assigned project work with regular professional consultation and academic advice. Training staff may be mobilized not only from the universities, but also from the government administration, field projects including MANRECAP, and NGOs.

*Admission:*

The academic eligibility for the admission is so set as to accommodate local administrators at the Grama Niladhari level as well as community-oriented young field workers. Each year, 30 participants will be admitted.

*Course Structure:*

In an academic year there will be two semesters and the duration of a semester will be 15 weeks. This consists of a modularised credit-valued unit system. Major subjects to be covered may include:

- History of Socio-Economic Development of Sri Lanka
- Political and Administrative system of Sri Lanka
- Gender and Development
- Sociology of Community Development
- Local Government and Rural Development
- Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of North East
- Legal Framework for Development
- Environment and Development
- Poverty and Income Generation
- Management of Community-Based Organisations
- IT for Community Development
- Participatory Rural Appraisal and Project Formulation
- Project Accounting
- Project Documentation and Communication
- CAP and Community-Managed Infrastructure Development and Maintenance
- Project Report
- Proficiency in English

*Finance:*

For the sustainability purpose, the course is self-financed with revenue from tuitions (Rs.20,000) expected to be borne by sending organizations or through government training budget. But initial investments might be required in terms of training equipments, office/class room preparations, teaching materials, initial course announcement/advertisement, and preparatory meetings and seminars.

**Implementation**

45. Under the above arrangement, a course announcement was advertised in Tamil papers, and

105 applications including some from Nuwara Eliya and Anuradhapura were received. All the eligible candidates were invited to an examination. Half of those who passed the examination declined apparently because of difficulties in movement, and 25 got registered for enrolment. Then the course announcement was sent further to NGOs, and MANRECAP also encouraged 17 Mannar-based NGOs and international agencies to participate. After all, 50 participants were enrolled (13 from Mannar and the rest based in Vavuniya). Most of them were from NGOs. There were some from the government and from banking sector, but no Grama Niagara Officers whom the course primarily targeted.

46. On 3 August 2007, a Diploma Course on Community Development and Management was inaugurated by Jaffna University, with MANRECAP represented at the opening. In late September 2007, the first field study by the course participants was conducted in MANRECAP project sites to observe CMR work of water supply system. According to the University, there is a future prospect of linking the course to an ICT-based degree programme on community development.

#### **Some suggestions for the future**

47. Some external funding assistance is highly desired to support financially-weak participants, particularly from small NGOs. The Course Administration could select and commit several awardees of scholarships at the enrolment and then refund the tuition after a semester or two when they show track records of diligence.

48. There are government provisions of training budget for officials so that Divisional Secretaries and/or GAs may be approached for enlisting Grama Niladharis for future participation. There needs to be wider circulation of course announcement and an advocacy role to facilitate individual funding..

49. Library support is another area for assistance, since theoretical and practical literatures and audio-visual materials on community participation, particularly in Tamil language, are extremely limited in Vavuniya campus. Some documents produced by MANRECAP have hence been deposited at Vavuniya campus, while Nihon Fukushi University may forward a set of relevant books on a long-term loan.

50. Some Mannar-based NGOs expressed keen interest in the course, because it is geared to mid-career, grassroots-oriented workers, and yet it provides proper academic recognition. It is important for the course to establish organizational links with NGOs working in the North-East. NGO representatives may be invited to the course as resource persons for lectures and panel discussions, which would in turn give opportunities for them to interact with participants from various fields. Some NGOs may be requested to accept course participants for project work scheduled for the fourth semester. An NGO consortium, as one already in Mannar, could channel information of the course to member organizations, and organize events with course participants. In addition, even some Grama Niladharis, if not course participants, may be invited to a weekend session in Vavuniya for interactive discussions, to facilitate their sensitization.



### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Tasks ahead**

51. People in all the villages I visited as well as the government and the LTTE administrative authorities eagerly wished further extension of the Project. This was not only from the appreciation and sentiment, but also from the facts that in some of the focal villages, infrastructure is yet to be completed and in others, external support is required for newly started income-generation activities. Even some additional infrastructure is called for, in order to upgrade the livelihood. Furthermore, demands on a project like MANRECAP are expressed by communities that were not selected for focal villages but in needy situations as well. Some support mechanism to provide protection and advocacy for the villages still at a vulnerable stage may be genuinely required.

#### **MANRECAP documentation**

52. As a follow-up to the Project, the MANRECAP experience could be compiled for wider use. Let me suggest that there are at least three levels of documentation. First is an overview description of points borne in mind in pursuing sustainable development in conflict-affected areas: how to assess and cope with crisis in terms of procurement, staff management and scheduling; which agencies and authorities were dealt with for what and how; what should be prioritized over what and why; and what have been major considerations in supporting IDPs in high security situations. Second is a technical guideline of rural development practices in North-Eastern Sri Lanka: ranging widely from CAP workshop procedures and legal/institutional basis for CMR to compost making based on local resources and procurement of mat-making machines. Third is a set of case materials for field workers to learn how to apply the guideline to actual situations, based on ample examples of development interventions and experiences by MANRECAP staff. These are invaluable assets, which should not be missed, for future development aid and “peace-building”.

#### **A resource pool**

53. There could be a support mechanism for a team of resource persons who have been working for, or collaborating with MANRECAP and who could work for participatory development in the North-East in the future. From late 1980s to 1995, UN-Habitat assisted NHDA in disseminating the CAP approach to local authorities and NGOs in Sri Lanka. At the end of the UN project, some 70 resource persons who were trained or interested in CAP (NHDA staff, local government officers, academics, NGO workers and community leaders) were brought together. They decided to establish an Association of CAP Resource Persons for Participatory Development (CAPRES). The Association was officially inaugurated in March 1995 with an initial working fund from UN-Habitat. It was expected of CAPRES to act as an independent body, for technical support to various CAP implementing organisations. As a network, and not as a full-time staffed organisation, CAPRES was working in the framework of inter-agency, inter-project cooperation. The Association is now less active, but obviously some local government staff and a quite number of community leaders were able to internalise CAP approach through their involvement in CAPRES. Such an arrangement may serve as an deposit

of MANRECAP experience in participatory development.

54. This kind of association, that might be called Community Action and Participatory Learning Alliance in the North East (CAPLANE) or better be named in Tamil language, could be joined by course participants and alumni of the Vavuniya-based diploma course, and may also function as an interactive forum of community people, NGOs and local officers for participatory development in the North-East, if combined with other experienced field workers such as those on the Mannar-based Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies. Then the MANRECAP focal villages could serve as deposit of local resources for experience-sharing, not as specimen preserved in alcohol, but as ever-developing, living case materials, probably to be monitored by CAPLANE.

55. CAPLANE may serve as a “human resource bank” by sending resource persons to various projects and groups, organizing CAP workshops, providing technical training on CMR, advising on Women’s Bank operations, and assisting in income-generation activities. Appropriate levels of remuneration could be worked out, so that it can gradually become self-financed. A core group of CAPLANE may work as a secretariat, or a Resource Unit, that could be registered as a “company”. This Resource Unit may be engaged in community business activities and commercially look after livelihood projects in Mannar.

56. People in Vaddupiththanmadhu referred to the great impact of study tours and exchange visits to the South (on community contracts, Farmers Organization management, Women’s Bank, etc.). Similarly, Vavuniya-based diploma course may also have meaningful exchanges with its counterpart course in Peradeniya. Mannar groups of Women’s Bank are desired to have exchange visits on Tsunami-affected areas in Galle where new groups, containing Tamil-speaking fishing families, have been viably developing under the WB’s special relief programmes. It is hoped that situations soon improve to allow people to freely interact between North and South. Then experience-sharing will become a major mode of follow-up actions in Mannar. An above-suggested type of Resource Unit will function as a catalyst organizing exchanges and sharing, playing not the role of a service provider but that of a resource centre for technical advice and networking.

### **Funding community initiatives**

57. Overseas aid by Japanese citizens tends to end up with unilateral, one-shot donations. Moreover, it often creates psychologically unequal relations since donors tend to think they give charities to the poor. But if Japanese citizens contribute funds to a revolving fund in the Northeast, and observe and learn how it is revolved for housing and livelihood betterment in the resettlement areas, while retaining “shares” with accruing dividends, it would open a new opportunity for Japanese citizens to join development cooperation, with a human face, as business partners. Some donor agencies may be interested to join the revolving fund.

58. Such a fund may be called North-East Peace and Development Fund (NEPDEP) and may independently be managed by *either or both of* Women’s Bank groups in the Northeast *and* CAPLANE Resource Unit. As a revolving fund facility, NEPDEP may provide such financial support as boosting funds to local Women’s Bank, initial capital for new business by the

**Appendix 1**  
**Report of Prof. Hosaka, a short-term expert**

Resource Unit, and subsidies for training activities by CAPLANE. In fact, Sri Lankan citizens should also be motivated to “invest” in NEPDEP. This could lead to such activities as collective monitoring of fund management, study tours to the North from the South in the Island, and development communication and education in Japan, so that peace process and new understanding at the grassroots will be facilitated.

**Acknowledgement**

59. Last, I would like to put on record my fullest appreciation to Chief Advisor and all his staff of MANRECAP, former and present, M&Y Consultant Inc., JICA Sri Lanka Office, and people and the authorities in Mannar, for their assistance and guidance during my missions in last four years. It has been a rare experience to closely look at minute project management dealing with extremely difficult circumstances. One now observes trust between staff and people, as a woman in Vaddupiththanmadhu said “We are like a family. Mr. Saisho is our father”. Sincere and lively work style by staff and people with MANRECAP, while enduring hardship, gave me a great learning opportunity and encouragement.