

An Exploration of the Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka



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4. Abstract

Since the 1970s, International Humanitarian and Development Organisations¹ (IHDO) have increasingly become part of the global network of aid actors implementing programmes in Sri Lanka. The strategic and prominent roles of the host government and other local organisations, whilst acknowledged as imperative, have sometimes been sidelined, or loose asymmetric 'partnerships' formed to offer the impression of 'local ownership'.

IHDO programmes (emergency relief through rehabilitation towards longer-term development), are based on the provision of donor financing. These sometimes perpetual funding cycles unquestionably provide assistance to a vulnerable and needy population that has suffered from a 26-year internal armed conflict, terrible human rights violations, and numerous natural disasters including the tsunami of 2004. However, they simultaneously and decidedly support the prolonged residence and subsistence of IHDO's in Sri Lanka.

Additionally, whilst IHDO's Sri Lankan staff are empowered with knowledge and experience, there is further potential for them taking on new roles that enable IHDO's withdrawal and enhance the sustainability of these externally-driven interventions.

It is generally accepted that IHDO withdrawal and leaving sustainable mechanisms and structures in place, are overarching objectives of international aid. Yet at institutional and personnel levels in Sri Lanka, IHDO's may not be adequately considering nor implementing effective disengagement, leading to [local] dependence longer term.

This research report explores and challenges this situation, proposing alternative measures and recommendations for more effective IHDO disengagement strategies in and from Sri Lanka.

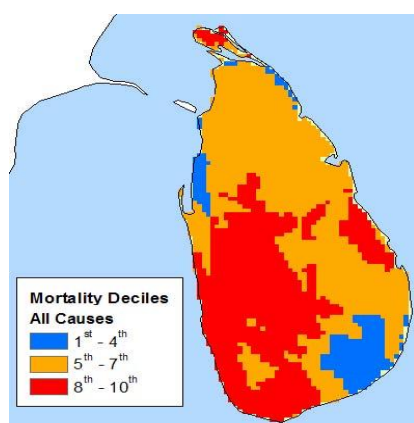
¹ The term IHDO better presents the work that these organisations actually undertake, rather than the commonly acknowledged INGO, which excludes multi and bi-lateral agencies, some of which are actually governmental organisations (GOs), and which rather presents what the organisation are not, than what they are.

5. Introduction

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is an island in the India Ocean off the southern tip of India, with a population of 20 million. Its main languages – Sinhalese, Tamil, and English (the link language), its four main religions – Buddhism, Hindu, Muslim and Christian, and a rich history, provide a complex backdrop to this little island. With historic sites, beautiful beaches and hill country, and a diversity of flora and fauna, Sri Lanka has long been on the international tourist circuit for good reasons.

Tragically, behind the façade, Sri Lanka has suffered from various natural disasters, including floods, droughts and landslides, of which 27 droughts were recorded between 1947 and 2003 (Sri Lankan Ministry of Social Welfare 2004). Flooding occurs regularly, with over 100 water basins and poor irrigation systems creating widespread damage to livelihoods and destruction of houses². Adding to this maelstrom, the tsunami of December 2004 caused the death of 38,900 people and additionally displaced 457,000³.

Map 1: Sri Lanka multi-risk mortality hazards



Multi-risk Hazard Map - Mortality⁴

Table 1: Sri Lanka Disaster Statistics

Disaster	Date	Affected
Drought	1987	2,200,000
Drought	1982	2,000,000
Flood	1983	1,250,000
Tsunami	2004	1,019,306
Drought	2001	1,000,000
Drought	1988	806,000
Flood	2003	695,000
Flood	1989	501,000
Flood	2002	500,000
Flood	1994	478,150

Disaster Statistics – Sri Lanka⁵

With over 45% of the population living on less than 2\$ per day, Sri Lanka's Human Poverty Index (HPI) ranks it 67th among 135 countries for which the index has been calculated (UNDP 2009)⁶. Its Human Development Index (HDI) ranks it as 102nd from 182 countries with relevant data⁷. Renowned for its apparent lack of willing to arrest or penalise people responsible for human trafficking, Sri Lanka is on the United Nations Tier 2 Watch list since 2008 for not providing evidence of increased efforts in combating these crimes (CIA 2009). Additionally, with several

² Flooding in May 2003 affected 137,000 families and destroyed 9,500 homes

³ [http://www.internaldisplacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/\(httpInfoFiles\)/FFBDF012F17ADEC1257227004203D7/\\$file/Sri%20Lanka%20November%202006.pdf](http://www.internaldisplacement.org/8025708F004BE3B1/(httpInfoFiles)/FFBDF012F17ADEC1257227004203D7/$file/Sri%20Lanka%20November%202006.pdf), p. 37.

⁴ http://www.ldeo.columbia.edu/chrr/images/country_profiles/sri_lanka/sr_mort.gif

⁵ <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/countries/statistics/?cid=162>

⁶ http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/country_fact_sheets/cty_fs_LKA.html

⁷ UNDP-defined measurement, calculated using the following criteria: life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate, GDP per capita and combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio

potentially fatal illnesses, including bronchitis most likely caused by indoor wood fires (Eddleston, Pierini, Wilkinson and Davidson 2005), Sri Lanka's situation provokes the need for assistance to a beleaguered population.

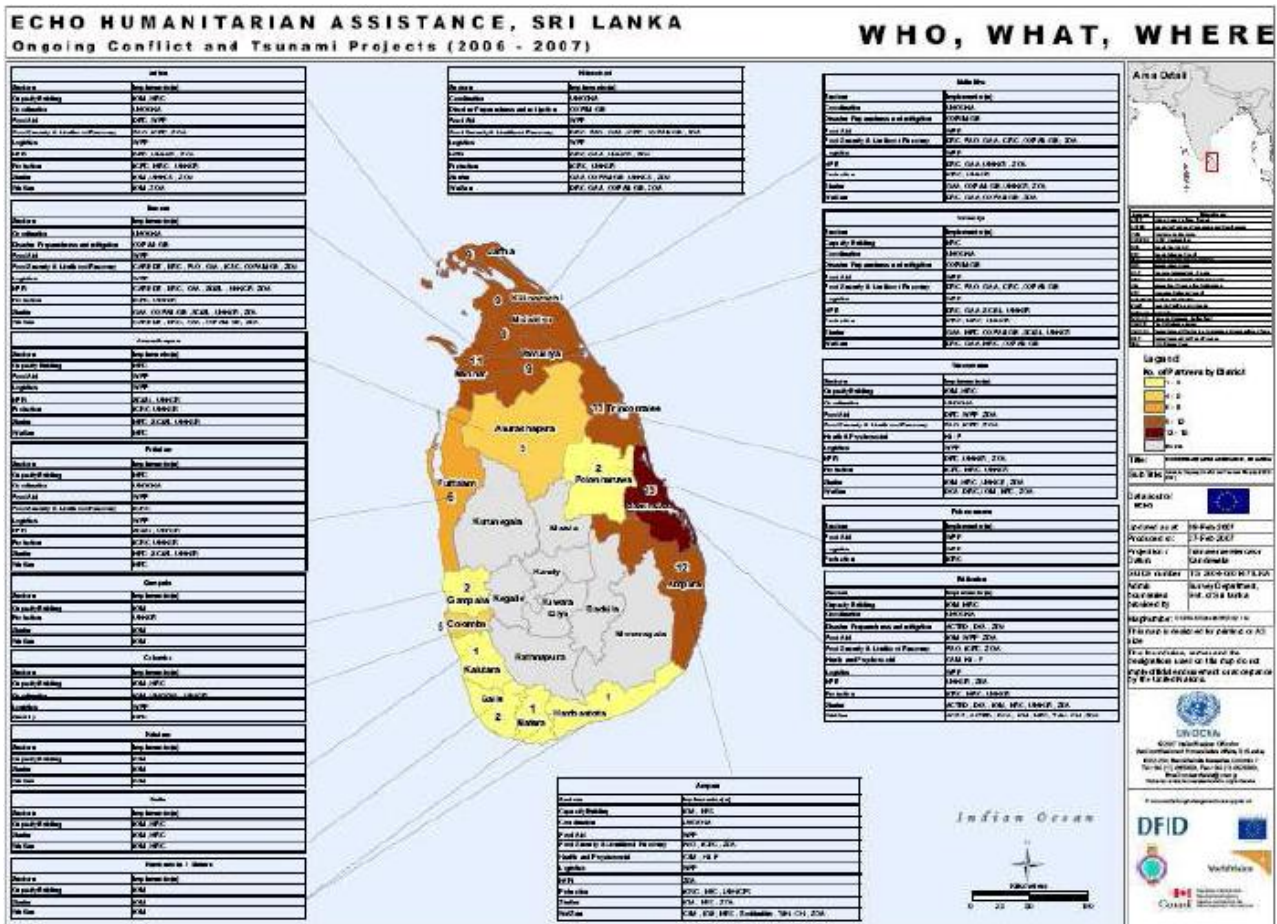
Overarching this fragile background, a 26-year internal armed conflict resulted in the death of over 70,000 people, and created over 700,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) (European Commission 2007). Brutal methods utilised by the Sri Lankan Security Forces (SLSF) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam (LTTE) included assassinations, multi-barrel bombing, suicide bombing (uniquely by the LTTE) and landmines⁸. This internal conflict has impacted substantially on society as a whole, and the country's economy.

Since the 1970s IHDOs have been increasingly supporting the Government and people of Sri Lanka (see IHDO engagement map of Sri Lanka below). IHDO's often work in extremely difficult and complex circumstances, during and post conflict, and in the aftermath of natural catastrophes, such as the tsunami of December 2004.

However, many IHDO's have been operational in Sri Lanka for more than 25 years (see section 8.1.2 page 24). Two widely-acknowledged yet sometimes missing developmental objectives of IHDO's are local self-sufficiency and sustainability. These value-driven assumptions suggest expatriate staff and internationally-funded organisations should initiate measures for their own withdrawal, and local capacities established that take over. This purports to the need for individual and organisational behavioural change, not just the accomplishment of predominantly externally-defined and driven objectives. The commonly-presented adage "Don't give a man a fish; provide him with a fishing rod and teach him how to fish" has to manifest itself further within IHDOs in Sri Lanka.

⁸ <http://maic.jmu.edu/journal/13.3/feature/rush/rush.htm>

Map 2: Project locations and interventions of ECHO-funded IHDO's



Project locations of IHDO's funded by the European Commission - Humanitarian Aid Department⁹

During the past 40 years, IHDO's have come to and left from Sri Lanka, yet there still remains a large number of internationally-funded projects implemented by IHDO's that could be capably managed by local entities. The role of the many Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) ministries¹⁰, authorities and departments in the design and management of these interventions appears sidelined.

Since the mushroom-like growth of international funds and organisations in Sri Lanka post-tsunami, the GoSL took measures to increase their ownership of the aid operations. The GoSL set up 'minimum financial input' levels to alleviate more difficult to handle emergency funds. Following this stricter measures were instigated regarding renewal of visas for foreign aid workers, expelling several IHDO expatriate personnel from the country¹¹. These initiatives were based on a belief that Sri Lankans can address their own problems and development challenges. However, even with these initiatives, over 90 IHDO's remain in Sri Lanka. Their existence and established structures do not promote an enabling environment for local and international donors to support local entities.

⁹ http://www.delika.ec.europa.eu/en/echo/maps/Echo_dec2004.pdf
¹⁰ 74 GoSL ministries and Authorities are currently functioning, compared to the UK with 19
¹¹ <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/asia/article6418015.ece>

Intrinsically involved are Sri Lankan personnel employed by IHDO's. In most cases, leadership and representative roles are played by expatriates with, occasionally, less senior posts held by local staff. The scope for national staff to take on more responsibility in preparation for, and contribution to the sustainable disengagement of the IHDO's is plentiful, yet under-utilised.

There is also a wealth of indigenous knowledge and capacity existing in Sri Lanka, with 83 local non-governmental organisations (LNGO) registered at national level, excluding regional or district NGOs, and micro-level community-based organisations (CBO). Many have no association with international actors, internationally or State-provided funds, though they could provide the services that enable IHDOs to exit.

Research Objectives

This study addresses the above aspects and concerns, and explores the following:

1. Which factors affect the decisions that define IHDO disengagement or transition to alternative ways of working?
2. What measures could be put into place to ensure sustainable outcomes of IHDO interventions, without and beyond their own presence in Sri Lanka?
3. What initiatives are taken by IHDOs for their national staff to hold more senior management positions, or support their potential for enhanced contribution to a more sustainable post-IHDO future in Sri Lanka?

For this study, the term 'disengagement' signifies a reduction in or withdrawal from an intervention or geographic area, and the different methodologies by which this can be carried out (see section 6.2 page 12). The study proposes a 'disengagement model' that could be adopted by IHDOs considering, planning or implementing their withdrawal from Sri Lanka. This includes the potential for incorporating local entity take-over, and facilitates IHDO interventions being truly sustainable.

6. Literature review

6.1 International Humanitarian and Development Organisations: roles and positions

IHDO's have evolved since the 1970s as key players in the international aid system (ODI 1995). However with global decline in aid funding (Tandon 2000), and increased capacity of southern non-governmental organisations (SNGO), IHDO roles must evolve to humanitarian agents, economic policy watchers, north-south brokers, or corporate responsibility advocates; initiatives endorsing IHDOs' disengagement from directly implementing projects (Van Rooy 2000; Senior 2002).

6.2 Disengagement Strategies: unpackaged

Disengagement Strategies, commonly known as 'exit or withdrawal strategies', had origins in the corporate sector and the military. With no commonly accepted definition (SFCG 2005), they should be part of IHDO interventions facilitating responsible departure and sustainable achievements (NMSS 2009; Shaw, Gupta and Sarma 2003).

Many factors influence disengagement, including political, social, economic and environmental contexts; IHDO mandates; available funds; programme objectives; time; stakeholders' interest, local capacities and beneficiaries circumstances (SFCG 2005; Batchelor, McKemey and Scott 2000). Gardner, Greedblott and Joubert (2005), Truelove (2008), and Levinger and McLeod (2002) present four categories of disengagement:

1. Programme Transition - changing the type of assistance provided
2. Phasing Down (or scaling down) - gradual reduction of programme activities
3. Phasing Over – gradual hand over of programme responsibility to a local entity
4. Phasing Out - complete withdrawal from the programme or country

NMSS (2009) and Rogers and Macias (2004), add 'programme graduation'; resources are withdrawn from selected target groups or programme activities. Levinger and McLeod (2002) propose six well-grounded steps for effective disengagement:

1. Plan for exit from earliest programme design stages
2. Develop local partnerships and linkages
3. Build local organisational and human capacity
4. Mobilise local and external resources
5. Stagger withdrawal of programme activities and resources
6. Allow roles and responsibilities to emerge

International Recovery Platform (2009) link exit strategies to programme objectives, though Batchelor *et al.* (2000) pertinently suggest linking exit strategies to local institutional and human

capacity; focusing on sustainability post-IHDO intervention. Walker (2002) adds establishing milestones indicating levels of local capacity and self-reliance for the withdrawal of external aid.

'Triggers' are key elements of disengagement, defining when phase down, over or out will occur. As in 2009 when the Sudanese President expelled IHDOs, or when several international donors were 'relieved of their responsibility for bilateral assistance' by the Indian Government in 2003, this can sometimes be determined by the recipient (De Groot, Ramachandran, Slob, Willemsen, and Morten Jerve 2008). Disengagement strategies are sometimes criticised for not considering the quality of what is left behind: as predicting the future is impossible they risk being invalid (SFCG 2005). CDAI (2003) rightfully criticises commercial disengagement: often the strategy is just 'the government will take over'; budgets for community services decrease with programme closure, whilst needs for these services remain, causing supply-demand disparity. APF, CCR, CHA, FEWER, IA and SW (2003) appropriately state, *"In some cases, the most negative impacts from interventions come not from their implementation, but rather from a poorly designed exit strategy"*.

Disengagement strategies avoid:

- False expectations and hopes of communities (and programme staff)
- Conflicts between stakeholders post-IHDO departure
- Dumping of assets
- Inappropriately prolonged financing
- Dependency

Truelove (2008) astutely portrays local stakeholders as feeling 'left in charge' rather than 'left behind' if communication strategies accompany disengagement. Cost benefits are improved, and ownership transferred to stakeholders primarily responsible for continually supporting interventions (Hattotuwa 2005). SDC (1991) shrewdly state 'whoever creates dependencies are responsible for them', whilst Harvey and Lind (2005) claim 'support should not be withdrawn before needs end'. Exit strategies must be flexible, regularly reviewed, and adapted should circumstances change (APF *et. al.* 2003).

However, *"most development assistance programmes lack a clearly defined and adhered-to exit strategy"* (Bonnard and Remancus 2002). Incredibly, the World Food Programme (WFP) has been implementing projects in Uganda for 60 years; their 'draft school feeding policy' does not mention 'exit strategy' (WFP 2008). Levinger and McLeod (2002) propose 'donors have begun requesting phase out plans at design stage', but this has not manifested itself widely in Sri Lanka.

6.3 Sustainability: feasible?

Sustainability is defined for this research as 'capacity to maintain service and benefits at both community and agency levels after external agencies 'special assistance' has been phased out' (Batchelor *et al.* 2000). Gardner *et al.* (2005) accurately stipulate exit strategies or 'sustainability plans' are rarely appraised as funding for post-intervention evaluation is uncommon; donors' interests are '*results achieved within the programme timeframe*' (Zellweger 2005). Kenall and Knapp (1999), Riddell (1999), and Roche (1999) suggest NGO's exaggerate impacts to donors to maintain funding, although global focus on transparency and accountability during the past ten years suggests otherwise. Can IHDO's predict disengagement at a specific time is appropriate and what is left behind sustainable?

6.4 Global level: discrepancies

At global levels exit strategies are stipulated essential within IHDO programmes, yet the term is often missing, or mentioned without impetus or obligation. 'Project Cycle Management' (PCM) (identification, planning, appraisal, funding, implementation and evaluation) TorqAid (2008) and Blackburn (2003), neglect exit strategies completely; the cyclic aspect of PCM implies continued intervention rather than withdrawal. Key principles for IHDO assistance (WANGO 2006; OCHA 1991; International Donor Charter for Sri Lanka - date unknown), do not mention IHDOs 'doing themselves out of work', surely a development objective? In NGO codes of ethics and conduct (People in Aid 2003; WANGO 2005), '*responsibility to leave*' is not mentioned. The Paris Declaration (2005), and the widely read Humanitarian Charter (The Sphere Project 2004), neglect IHDO disengagement. Even the Millennium Development Goals omit the [what should be] transience of IHDO roles in their achievement.

However, some IHDOs elaborate internal disengagement strategies, dependent on organisational mandates. In Sri Lanka, a Consortium of IHDO's produces operation manuals (CHA 2006); exit strategies are mentioned, but no guidance provided on elaborating one. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) has an excellent exit strategy (NRC 2007). Their criteria include staff security, safe access to beneficiaries, and whether other organisation's can continue their work.

6.5 Partnership and capacity building: lacking depth and direction

In Sri Lanka north-south partnerships are becoming common, allowing IHDOs to 'phase over' responsibilities to existing SNGOs, or to newly established entities: 'localisation' (Cordell 2005; Payton 2001). Partnerships are often asymmetric however, established for credibility only. James (2004) rightly states many IHDO's do not know what capacity-building means. Mistrust sometimes occurs between local and international actors: the former claim IHDOs 'provide for their own interests and continued presence' (Eade 2007; Hashim 2006); the latter are concerned about lack

of SNGO impartiality when working with certain target groups (McCourt 2007; Culbert 2005). Blagescu and Young (2005) highlight the real problem of IHDOs inability to share decision-making power with partners. IHDOs recruiting local staff reduce SNGOs chances to maintain adequate levels of staff competence, further exacerbating relations (Harris 2006).

6.6 Tsunami and conflict: threat and opportunity

Post-tsunami in Sri Lanka, IHDOs increased from 60 to over 140, collectively receiving more funds than the four main international banks (Khasalamwa 2009; Thiyagarajah 2005). The tsunami and the conflict between the GoSL and the LTTE produced a highly complex situation; exit strategies were sometimes not conceived (Perera 2005). One poorly planned exit strategy led an IHDO to deliver emergency water supply for 18 months post-tsunami (Keba 2006). Contrarily, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) diverted overwhelming tsunami-related funds to other priority areas of the world, and assisted their local staff in establishing an SNGO, facilitating MSFs' withdrawal once a ceasefire was established (Mulhern 2004; Culbert 2005). MedAir, the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), and the International Federation of the Red Crescent (IFRC) publicised their disengagement creating potential for other organisations to 'gap-fill'. Communicating organisational priorities facilitated linkages to local partners (Lee 2005; SDC 2007 and IFRC 2008).

IHDO disengagement is hindered, Sørensen (2008) correctly states, because many have become a great influence on the political, cultural, moral and social elements of rebuilding Sri Lanka; *'foreign donors entrust [international] NGOs with critical and transformative capacity...undermining the authority of the State regarding humanitarian and conflict issues.*

6.7 Sidelined: stakeholders and alternative approaches

Donor's choice in funding IHDOs or SNGOs is vital (ODI 2006); IHDO roles must evolve if funds are channeled through SNGOs (ODI 1995). The Humanitarian Charter (The Sphere Project 2004) acknowledges the States' primary role in providing assistance when [its] people's capacity to cope has been exceeded; IHDO's should provide 'complimentary support'. The States' role should not be overlooked.

Sri Lanka has a Poverty Reduction Strategy to which donors and international actors should align support. This promotes using local resources, but depends on external contributions (Rogerson and De Renzio 2005). Without complete local leadership, ownership and resourcing, externally-supported development surely lacks sustainability potential once this support is removed? OECD (2007) aptly declares *'International actors can affect [development] outcomes in fragile states, in both positive and negative ways'*.

The private sector is under-utilised for assuring continued services as IHDOs leave (CDAI 2003; World Bank 2009). Hanlon (2004) provokingly suggests the development aid ‘business’ could be replaced by distributing fifty billion dollars of annual aid to the one billion poor. Without knowledge transfer and behavioural change however, this cannot be termed ‘sustainable’. IHDO’s success in ‘complimentary’ intervention demands *‘fostering autonomous grassroots institutions and linking them with markets and political structures at higher levels’* (Edwards 1998).

6.8 Local human resources: unexploited potential

Human Resource Management (HRM) has origins in the commercial world with ‘staff retention’ the ultimate measure in achieving organisational objectives (Mullins 2005; Cole 2002). This contravenes IHDO’s projects with defined lifecycles; staff should be prepared for ‘moving on and out’ of the projects or organisation. Prominent documentation on aid worker management (People in Aid 2003) neglects this. IHDOs can enable disengagement by promoting key personnel to leadership positions; knowledge and experience remains in-country; and local staff provided necessary competences for prominent posts with local actors. Britton (1998) rightly supports empowerment and acknowledgement of local experience, still rare among IHDOs.

IHDOs use ‘northern management models’, focusing on organisational and cultural aspects alien to local personnel perceptions and practices. Hofstede (1980) proposes four influential cultural elements: power relations, uncertainty avoidance, individualism–collectivism, and masculinity–femininity. Northern management practices, and southern cultures and staff hold opposing approaches; apparently local staff do not fit the characteristics required by IHDO’s headquarters (Naoki 1996). Could local staff, experienced with northern IHDOs, yet coming from southern cultures, actually offer *higher* leadership potential than expatriates?

Hall (1960) adds values of space, time, things, people, and agreements as factors that could influence IHDOs against promoting local personnel, yet IHDO’s could adapt management practice to ‘fit’ local environments. Leadership is integral to programme success; by not developing this competence in local personnel IHDO’s cannot proclaim sustainable interventions.

6.9 Additions from case study organisations

Médecins Sans Frontières Holland (MSFH) had been in Sri Lanka for 17 years. Their exit strategy was based on setting up a local NGO – SHADE - to carry on when MSFH left, particularly given that their psychosocial programmes were not run by the GoSL Ministry of Health (Mulhern 2004). Six years later SHADE is still operational, but due to the current demanding context, MSF has returned to Sri Lanka.

The German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) assisted Performance Improvement Project (PIP) was operational for nine years in the north and east of Sri Lanka. Within project planning, review, progress and completion reports, exiting, withdrawing or disengaging were not mentioned, until 2009, when an excellent definition of sustainability was presented (GTZ 2009):

'Sustainability involves on-going, self-reliant and self-financed inputs from the community and the provincial government departments, after the structural withdrawal of the implementing agency/funders.'

However GTZ's departure would leave bi-lateral cooperation with Sri Lanka limited, from three programmes and 15 projects in 2005 post-tsunami, to currently only four projects. The GTZ country portfolio, without bilateral agreements over the previous five years due to a breakdown in the peace negotiations, presented a reduced visibility and presence. Thus a global political decision was taken, and with co-financing from the Australian government (AUSAID) and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the PIP will be extended for 3-5 years (GTZ 2010).

6.10 Conclusions

Whilst global literature indicates relevance and advantages of IHDO disengagement strategies, little guidance or obligation is delivered. Capacity development of local entities does not regularly appear as part of IHDO withdrawal. IHDOs that use this exit strategy are brought back into action with new disasters and available funds. Donors, focused on their own agendas, do not provide withdrawal funding alongside programmes and finance IHDOs where local entities could assume responsibility for their own country's sustainable development. IHDO's could disengage effectively, establishing milestones and incorporating local capacity development in their interventions to adapt from direct implementation. The relationship between the GoSL, international donors and IHDOs, previously fraught with tension and misunderstanding (Harris 2010), must be improved.

7. Methods

7.1 Preview

This study was initiated whilst based in France between October 2009 and February 2010, and intended for Sri Lanka from March 2010. A different work-contract and repositioning to Haiti (responding to the January 12th earthquake) imposed several constraints on the research methodology planned. These included a lack of well-functioning communication systems, the high intensity of demands that emergency-aid work imposes, and a 10.5 hour time difference. A change in strategy and approach was necessarily adopted.

7.2 Literature review

The literature review was undertaken between October 2009 and February 2010 using UK University research engines, EBSCO Publishing Service, the Harvard System of Referencing, the Imperial College Library, Athens, Google scholar, and the Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Other development websites included ELDIS, ReliefWeb, and Global Focus Aotearoa. Key words and terms were utilised and advanced search mechanisms (Boolean and others) engaged. Access to all diverse secondary data was facilitated by internet. Dialog was established with professional colleagues engaged in the IHDO sector, and with professionally-affiliated associations, namely DevNet, DGroups, People in Aid, European Association of Development Initiatives, International Association of Development Professionals, International Professional Development Association, the London International Development Centre, Networklearning, and the NGO Management School in Geneva. MSFH and GTZ willingly provided their internal documentation.

7.3 Online survey

An electronic questionnaire was undertaken with IHDO's in Sri Lanka. Three main online survey providers – Questionform, E-Surveypro, and SurveyMonkey were explored; based on analysis of their potential, SurveyMonkey was selected as the platform. The 'Contacts Directory of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) March 2010' was identified as a suitable source of the IHDO survey recipients.

The survey consisted of multiple choice questions requiring quantitative and qualitative answers. Completion was designed to take 25 minutes allowing respondents to leave questions unanswered. The introduction email promoted the value of the respondent's contribution to the research, and to their IHDO's providing practical feedback for elaborating, improving, or implementing disengagement strategies.

A pilot on-line survey was circulated in April to thirteen professional colleagues who had worked or were still in Sri Lanka, requesting feedback on the layout, content and structure of the survey and

email introduction. Comments from seven recipients prompted minor modification to the email. The final survey was circulated to IHDOs Country Representatives and Directors in Sri Lanka in May, indicating the deadline as the end of June. Ninety-one IHDOs were the intended recipients of the email. Several email responses presented changes in responsibility or position of the recipients, providing new contact details, and included several 'failure delivery status' messages.

A reminder was circulated on 10th June, and on the deadline date a plea was circulated, further promoting the value of the research and the contributions. The deadline was extended to the 15th July; at this time it was felt pertinent to inform recipients of the low response rate. This initiative facilitated several organisations reactions, and produced 22 responses in total. By triangulating data from the source (OCHA Directory), email responses, and extensive notes taken throughout the process, it was concluded only 82 of the 91 IHDO's ultimately received the questionnaire.

This response rate was cross-checked with tutors managing the college on-line discussion forum, with other students, and with colleagues in the field of research, and found to be acceptable. Analysis was made of the possible reasons why the balance recipients had not responded¹²

The IHDO survey, correlating to the research questions, was structured under four sections. The first section covered the type of organisation: objectives and interventions, duration of Sri Lankan operations, main donors, and roles and relationships established with local institutions.

The second section addressed disengagement strategies: actors involved in planning and implementation, how/when strategies were established, factors considered, to which aspects or context the disengagement was aligned, and the value placed on disengagement strategies.

The third section looked at roles and responsibilities of IHDO Sri Lankan staff: the proportion of national-expatriate senior staff positions, national staff engagement in design and implementation of disengagement, whether IHDOs' established local entities, and IHDO perceptions of capacity development of national staff.

The final section covered IHDO definitions of sustainability; how interventions contributed, measures taken to ensure sustainability, constraints and risks involved, and what changes in the context and actors would be necessary to ensure sustainability. The complete IHDO survey features in section 11 page 50.

¹² Conditions and aspects considered are elaborated in Section 8 – Analysis and Results, page 23

7.4 Case studies

To provide qualitative analysis of IHDO disengagement in Sri Lanka, two organisations were selected as case studies. MSFH established a national entity (SHADE) as its strategy for disengagement. GTZ implemented long-term capacity development of their GoSL counterparts and other local partners to take on responsibilities post their own departure.

Within both IHDOs, a two-fold qualitative approach was planned to obtain primary data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with local and expatriate key informants from the IHDO's and partner institutions (see section 11.3 page 62). Focal-group discussions were planned with national staff from both organisations to discuss sustainability and national staff positions related to this (see section 11.4 page 64). The IHDOs also provided access to their internal documentation. These qualitative approaches use triangulation as a means to validate the data collected, and add pertinent information on aspects such as mandates, modes of delivery, and organisational culture related to disengagement. All participants provided their consent to contribute, and were suitably sensitised to the research aims and scope.

7.4.1 *Médicins Sans Frontières Holland (MSFH)*

Three key informant interviews were held between May and July. The first interview was with the Director of MSFH, in-charge at the time of their disengagement. The second was held with the Consultant who oversaw the transition to SHADE. The final interview was held with the MSFH national staff representative who took over the chairmanship of SHADE.

The interviews attempted to use teleconferencing but were thwarted by poor connectivity between Haiti and the key informants now based in Czech Republic, Scotland and Uzbekistan. Telephone connection from Haiti did not work. An alternative strategy was necessarily adopted, and the interview questions sent by email; outstanding issues were addressed in follow-up emails.

Approval was sought and granted by the University to use a 'research assistant' in-country; contact was established with a professional collaborator in Sri Lanka to contact the participants for the focal-group discussion. Between June and July objectives and logistics were clarified by email. All documentation, the framework and contents for the discussion, and sufficient finances to cover all arrangements were provided. Regrettably only one SHADE member ultimately participated in the discussion, recorded with his consent. The audio cassette was transcribed by the researcher.

7.4.2 German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)

Dialog was established in January 2010 with the Principal Advisor of the GTZ-assisted Performance Improvement Project (PIP) in Sri Lanka, planned for closure in December 2010. The key informant interview commenced using Skype in May but due to poor connectivity the balance questions were addressed via email. In June GTZ obtained additional co-funding from another international donor¹³, prolonging the project for three to five years. This presented a dilemma related to the now-changed circumstances of GTZ's disengagement, but added another interesting perspective, so research was continued.

The second key informant interviews were planned in August with the GTZ's GoSL partner organisations. The Head of the Public Administration Unit of the Northern Provincial Council participated, but several attempts to interview the Secretary to the Governor of the Northern Province failed. Interview questions were adapted according to PIP's extension, and the now-postponed disengagement. Again, oral communication proved impossible, and email adopted as an alternative.

Contact was attempted with two ex-colleagues in Sri Lanka to organise the focal-group discussion with GTZ Sri Lankan personnel. However, after four months of efforts without progress it became clear this was not possible, and on 22nd August this research method was abandoned.

7.5 Documentation

A detailed journal of research activity and information was regularly maintained, including:

- Websites/search engines used for the literature review
- Bibliographies and references
- Emails and addresses (pilot and final/non survey recipients and responses)
- Contact details of interview/focal-group participants
- Transcriptions of interviews (Skype and Email)
- Focal-group discussion audio cassettes
- SOAS college on-line discussions with students/module tutors
- Advice on research processes from Dr. Bryan Walker and Mr. Charles Lor
- Data from the SurveyMonkey programme

¹³ GTZ as a government-owned company is predominantly funded by the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of the Federal Republic of Germany. However, in Sri Lanka basket funding has become part of GTZs strategy, and the Australian Government (AUSAID) agreed to provide follow on co-financing, together with the BMZ for the GTZ-assisted PIP from 2011 for a further 3-5 years

Given the diversity of data collected for this research, individual electronic folders and sub-folders were established to track development of the literature review, IHDO survey, case study interviews and focal-group discussions, and to store responses and results. This system and the research journal enabled efficient progress monitoring against the workplan (see section 11.7 page 67), and facilitated completion of as much of the research as possible given the geographical constraint. As the final report evolved, older versions were backed-up for cross-referencing and security. Paper copies were also saved.

8. Results and analysis

“Your research is timely for our organization as we are in the process ... of developing our disengagement strategy from Sri Lanka. I have completed the survey and look forward to reading your paper when it is made available as I am sure we can learn from your research.”¹⁴

“I will respond to the survey, I simply wanted to check in about where the information was going to. I am sure you can understand the sensitivity of sharing information in this country.”¹⁵

“The response rate for the type of research you are doing would be pretty low, actually (5 to 10 per cent) for a variety of reasons - general online survey fatigue, development practitioners being pretty busy people and perhaps the sensitivity of the topic and Sri Lanka being a place where insecurity has been a problem”¹⁶

8.1 IHDO on-line survey

8.1.1 Section 1- IHDO background and context

82 IHDOs received the survey, 22 responded, and 19 completed all 38 questions producing an overall response rate of 26.8%. Backstopped by the above comments above are four main reasons for this response rate. (1) An excess of on-line surveys, some from dubious sources; some cleverly ‘identifying’ with the recipients common email subjects, induce mistrust of mails from unknown sources. (2) The complex and demanding roles of the IHDO recipients – Country Directors and Representatives operating in a post-conflict/disaster environment, allows little time for ‘extra-curricular’ activities. (3) IHDO withdrawal *is* sensitive, with political and financial implications and implicit messages created, that in the wrong hands could be misused. (4) With a history of conflict that established a sub-culture of mistrust, sensitivity to ‘what information is provided to whom’ is raised. Additionally, research based from Haiti prohibited local follow-up; personal contact with the recipients could have built confidence and facilitated more responses.

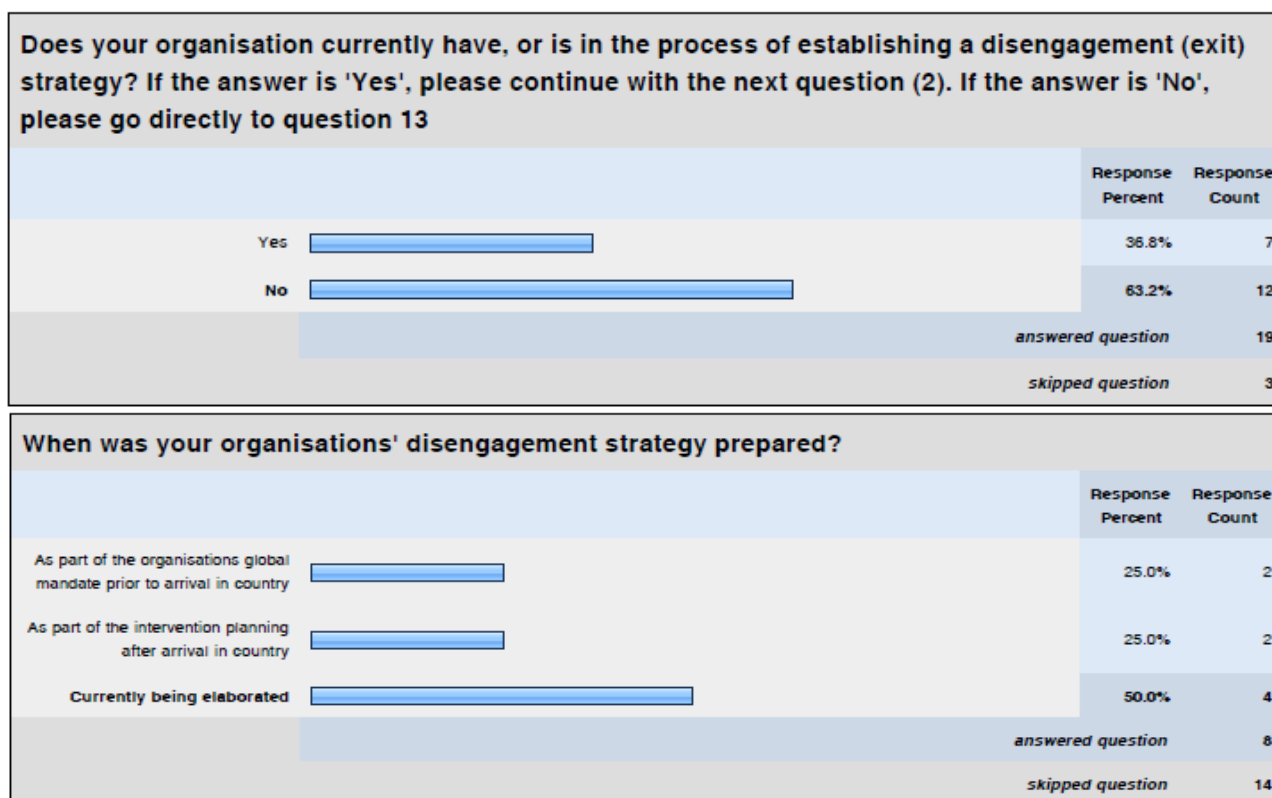
¹⁴ Email response from Tiffany Easthom, Country Director – Non Violent Peace force; her visa renewal was revoked by GoSL in 2010 as many other expatriates in Sri Lanka and she had to leave the country

¹⁵ Email response from an anonymous expatriate aid worker operating at national level within an IHDO in Sri Lanka

¹⁶ Online college module discussion – feedback from one of the SOAS research course tutors

Table 2: IHDO's with disengagement strategies, and their elaboration

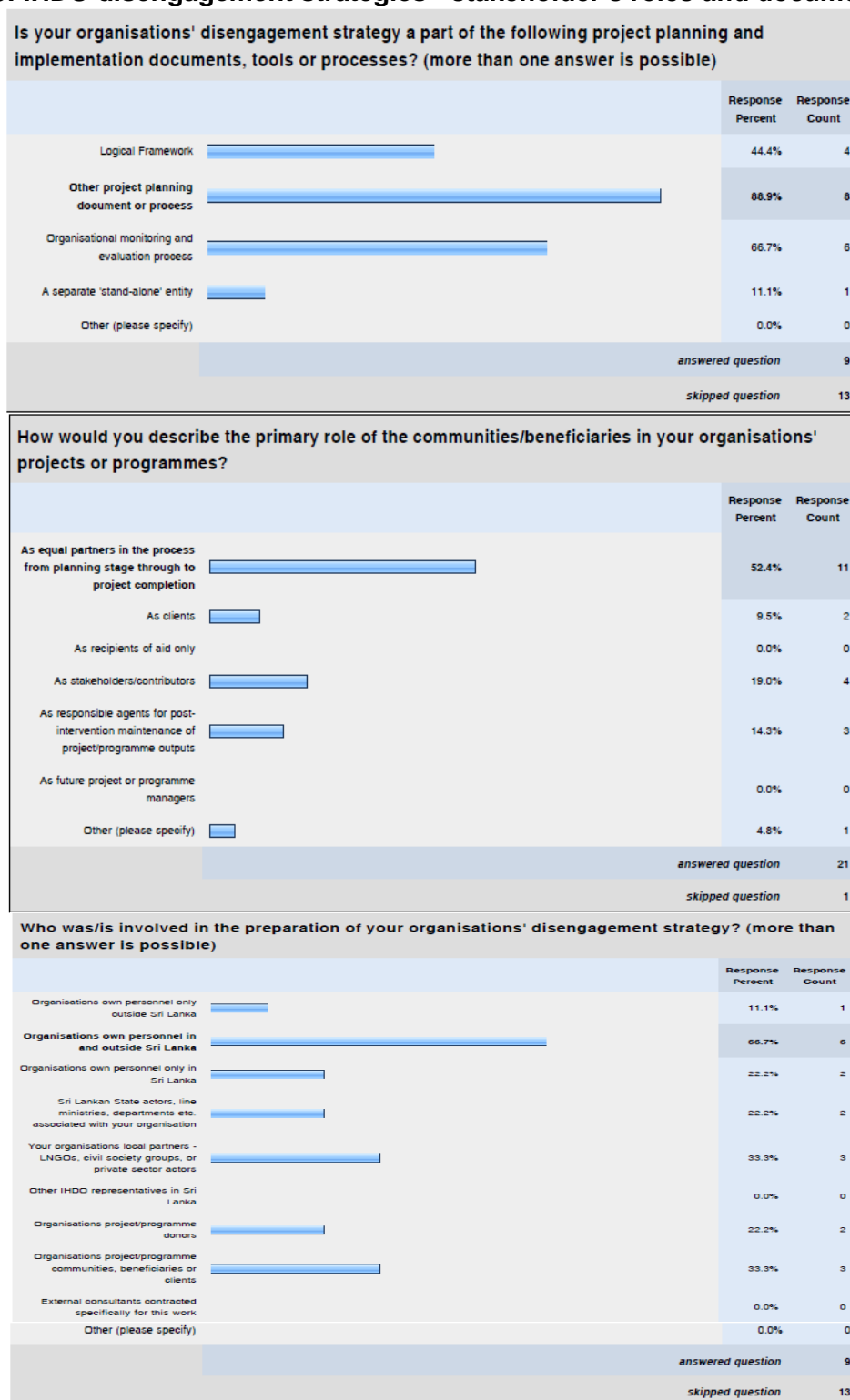
Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka



Sixty-three% of IHDO on-line survey respondents (IHDO-R) declared they do not have disengagement strategies, and 50% of the balance IHDO-R stated they are currently in the process of elaborating them; the identified research area is highly pertinent.

Forty-five% of the IHDOs have been in Sri Lanka for more than 25 years, of which 77% are international non-governmental organisations (INGO). Of these, 85% have apparently officially-established relations with the GoSL likely due to the more stringent controls of international assistance instigated since the tsunami, and Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) established with individual Line Ministries. However, the term 'officially-established partnership' may be misleading given these are usually established based on government to government negotiations, uncommon for INGOs.

Table 3: IHDO disengagement strategies - stakeholder's roles and documentation



Over 50% of the IHDO-R see local communities and target populations as equal partners in planning and implementing programmes. Whilst this is possibly the case for the interventions, only 33% of the IHDO-R include these partners in planning disengagement. As nearly 90% of IHDO-R include disengagement strategies *within* their programmes, discrepancy appears in the actual role of communities and target populations.

Over 76% IHDO-R have official partnerships with local institutions, providing potential for their eventual disengagement. The IHDO-R primary donors are predominantly from Europe (European Union (EU) 35%; UK 10%) and the United States (10%), with Canada and the EU equating to 37.5% of the IHDO-R secondary donors. Interestingly, 16% of IHDO-R stated that between 7-10% of donor funding was related to their disengagement process. This suggests different levels of comprehension, with achievement of programme targets being more the objective than funding for withdrawal. Lacking mention were the World and Asian Development Banks; yet both have provided Sri Lanka with substantial funding. Additionally missing were other Asian donor countries, and perhaps this 'western donor influence' influenced the strategies adopted by their implementing IHDOs, specifically focus on results achieved within programme [funding] cycles?

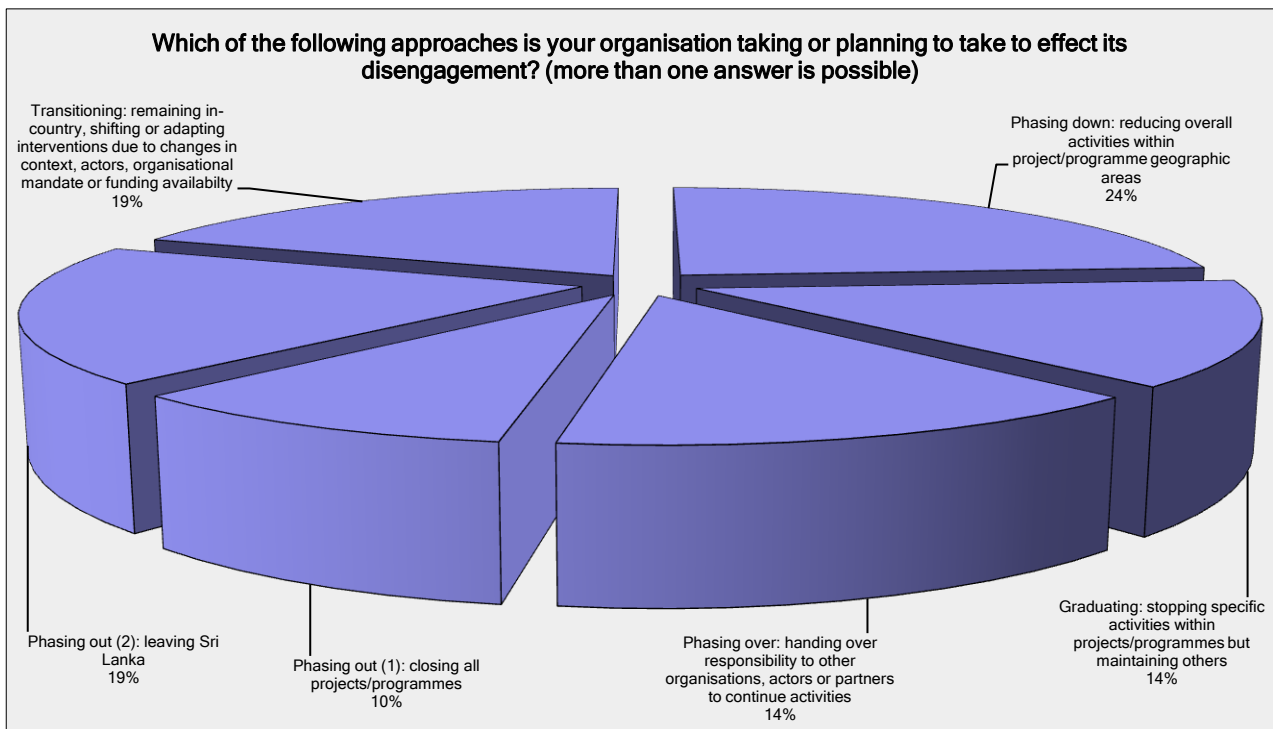
8.1.2 Section 2 - Disengagement: strategies, factors and measures

Table 4: IHDO disengagement – main factors

No.	Factor for disengagement	Responses
1	Local capacities of partners and actors, including GoSL	19%
2	Availability of funds/donors responsibilities	14.5%
3	Beneficiary needs: diminishing, changing or continuing	14.5%
4	Level of self-sufficiency within Sri Lanka	12%
5	Organisational mandate	12%
6	Food security: GoSL providing this; alternative support	12%
7	Time (allocated or required to complete mission)	4%
8	Partners future plans	4%
9	IHDO staff capacities	4%
10	Acceptance/continued welcome from the GoSL	4%

Factors 1, 4 and 6 relate to Sri Lanka's capacity to manage its own problems and resources (43%). This is considered as a precondition for IHDO departure, given IHDO capacity development of local actors stated as a priority. Equal weight is placed on supply (donor funds) and demand (beneficiary needs), indicating the important positions of these stakeholders in disengagement. Other factors related to the organisations structures and strategies (mandate, staff and timing) interestingly show rather a more introspective perception, less related to the context and conditions in which they are working. Finally, relations with the GoSL are highlighted, perhaps due to the higher levels of scrutiny of international assistance, and its accountability demanded by the GoSL (see section 11 page 52).

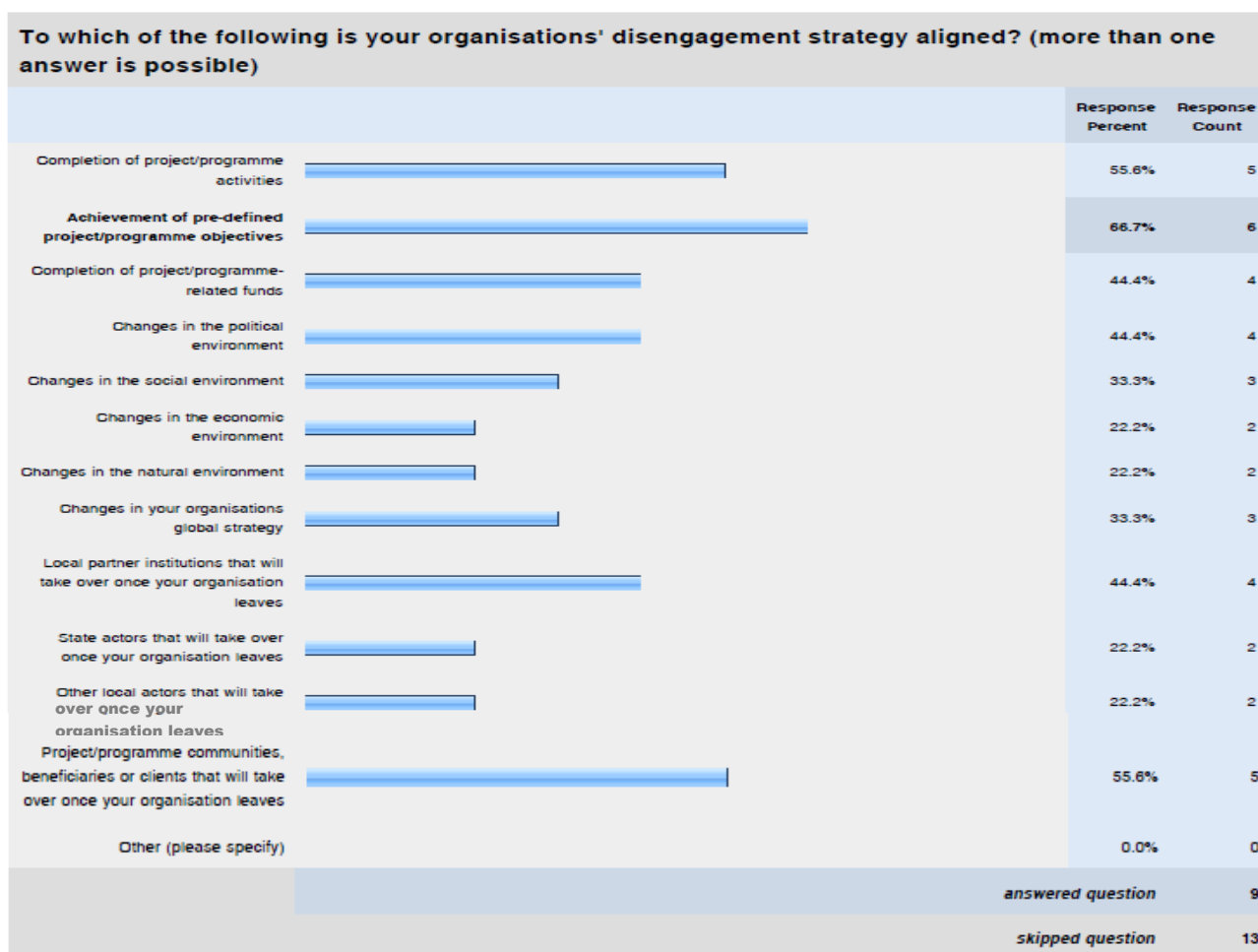
Chart 1: IHDO approaches to disengagement



There is approximately even distribution of different disengagement approaches presented, with slight emphasis placed rather on phasing down, than actual departure. With only 19% of the IHDO-R indicating intention to phase out and 14% handing over to local entities, there is space for increased local capacity development to facilitate IHDO withdrawal.

Below are IHDO-R catalysts for their disengagement; equal value being placed on completion of project activities, and communities/beneficiaries taking over. The IHDO's own objectives featured most prominently, with results and impacts of their interventions better placed above completion of project activities.

Table 5: IHDO disengagement strategy alignment

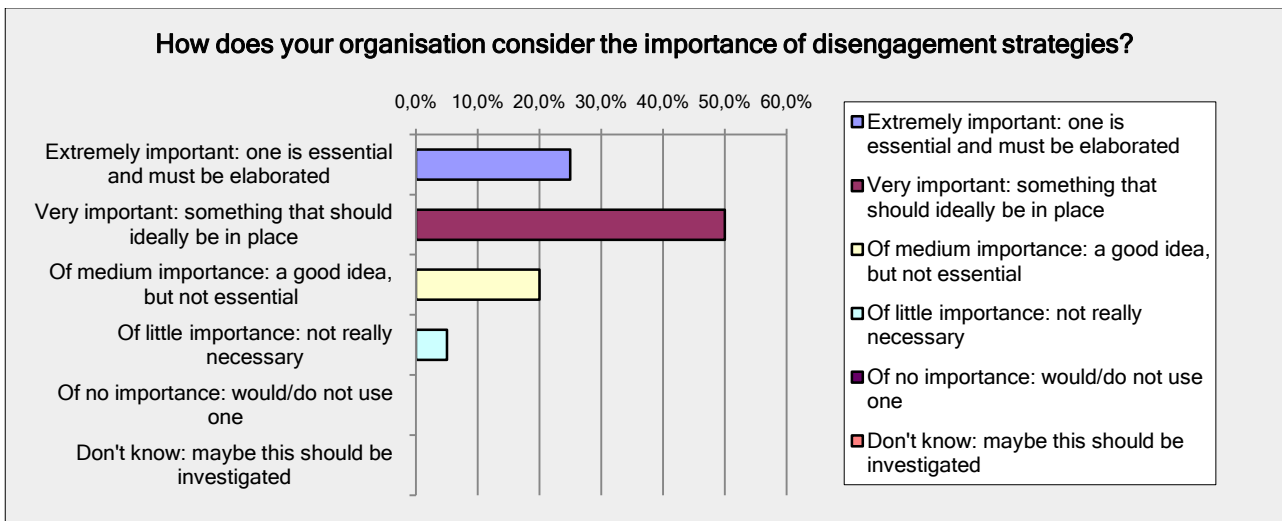


Striking is the low response for GoSL and other local actors taking over post-IHDO withdrawal. For society to function acceptably, its public, private sector and civil society need to operate harmoniously. With programmes managed at grass-roots level without necessary micro-macro and cross-sector linkages established, societal imbalance is risked. Perhaps confidence is limited in the GoSL fulfilling its primary functions – the wellbeing and protection of its citizens?

Only four IHDO-R provided inputs on disengagement milestones and benchmarks, including reducing staff or increasing their capacities, project completion, numbers of staff and vehicles required, selected key performance indicators, partner policies being updated, and income and fund disbursement rates. These vague responses present uncertainty about the types and importance of indicators to use, potentially leading to inefficiently-executed disengagement.

Nearly 45% of IHDO-R stated they planned to remain in Sri Lanka 3-5 years more, with 33% proposing three years to operationalise disengagement. Most IHDO-R saw disengagement as very or extremely important (see chart below); hopefully the 63% of IHDO's without disengagement strategies will elaborate them soon...

Chart 2: The importance of IHDO disengagement strategies



8.1.3 Disengagement: roles and positions of Sri Lankan personnel

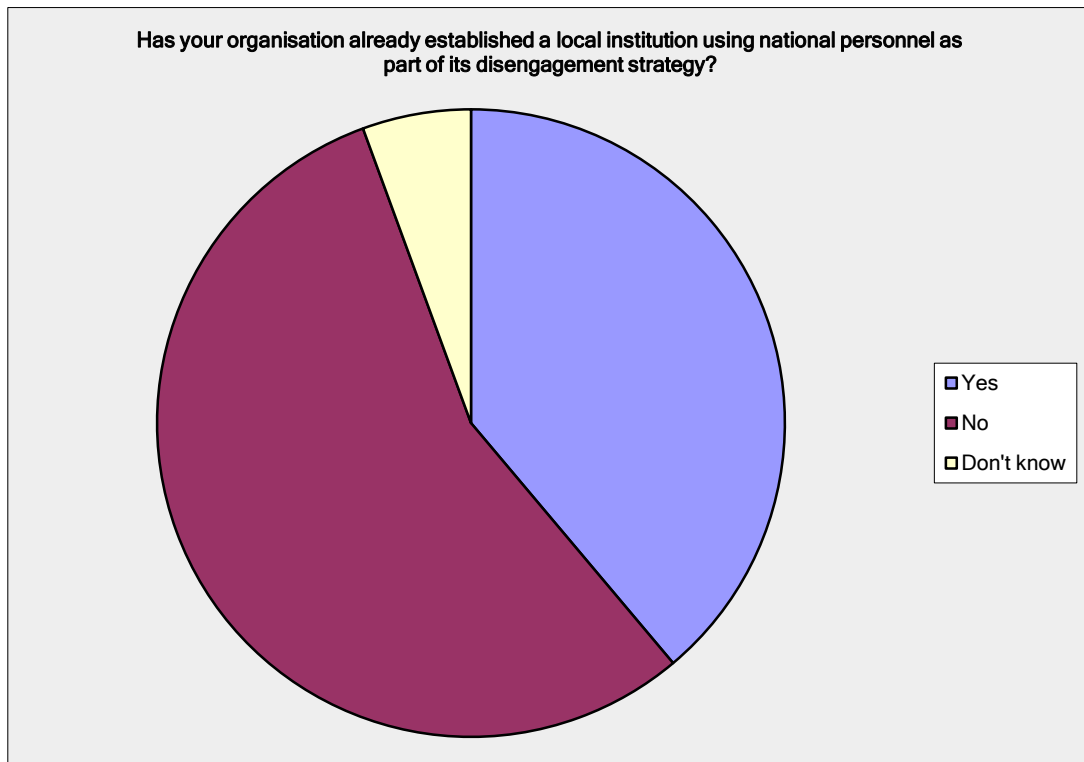
With 35% of IHDO-R indicating seven senior positions existing, it was encouraging to see four of these held by national personnel. However, 45% stated this proportion was not planned for increase, conflicting with importance placed on local staff capacity development. Regrettably, 33% of IHDO-R claimed no importance placed on national staff development to establish their own organisations, again indicating IHDO’s introspective perceptions (see section 11 page 55).

National staff are indicated as participating in disengagement strategy elaboration, and encouraged to ‘think about’ their own employment post-IHDO engagement. But 72% of IHDO-R state that national staff have not been seconded to other local institutions, state, private or civil society. Whilst dependent on national expertise and knowledge, IHDO’s are unwilling to support the establishment of this capacity outside their structure, maintaining and reinforcing their own presence. Contrarily, nearly 39% of IHDO-R state that they have in fact established local institutions utilising their national staff?

Table 6: IHDO national staff secondment

30. Has your organisation already seconded its own senior national personnel to Sri Lankan institutions as part of a disengagement strategy?		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		11.1%	2
No		72.2%	13
Don't know		16.7%	3
answered question			18
skipped question			4

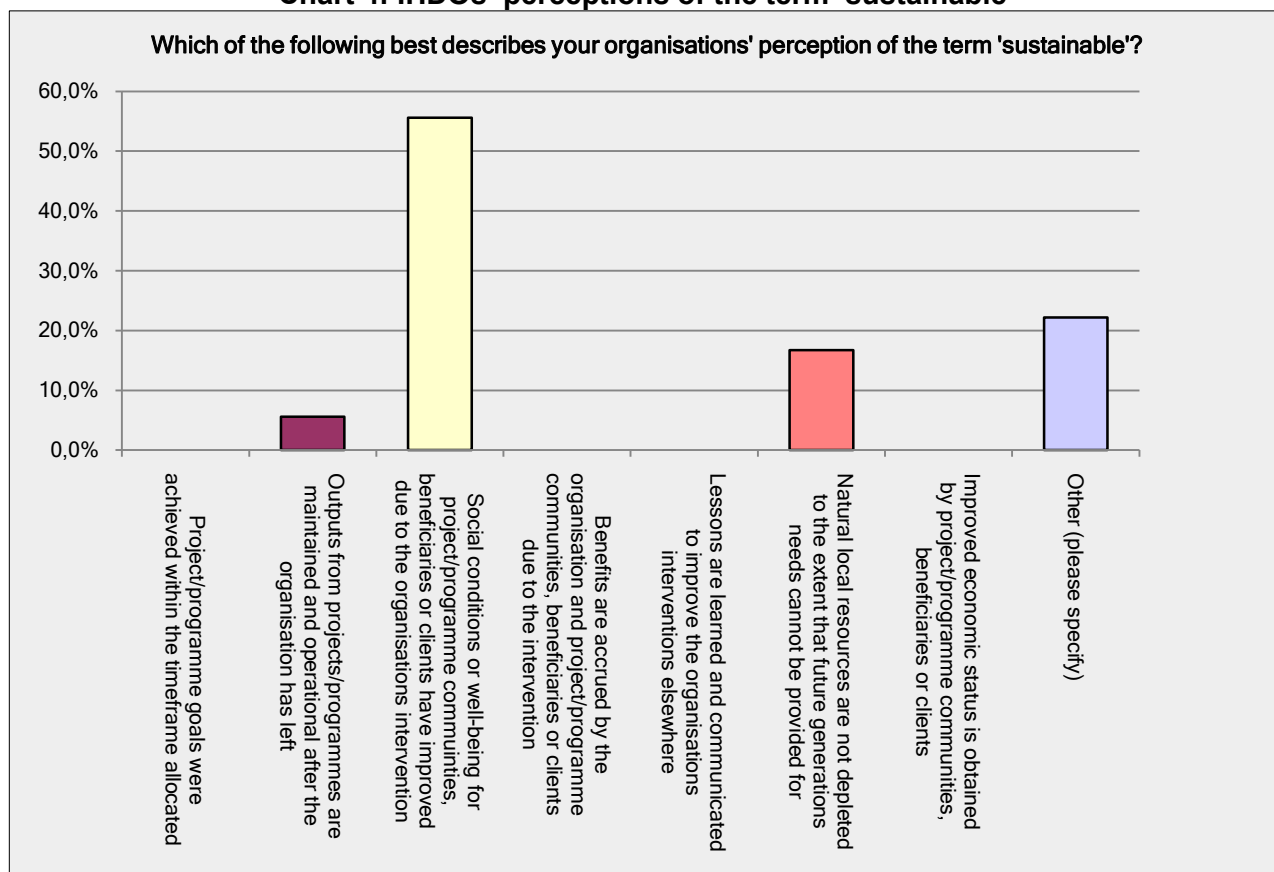
Chart 3: IHDOs' establishment of local institutions with their own national staff



8.1.4 Disengagement: factors for sustainability

'Sustainability' was presented by the majority of IHDO-R focusing on achievements made *during* interventions (See Chart 4 below). Whilst these achievements *might* impact on the future of Sri Lanka post-IHDO disengagement, questions can be raised as to their duration. Other pertinent elements (economic, environmental, structural, governance etc.) were predominantly neglected.

Chart 4: IHDOs' perceptions of the term 'sustainable'



Some alternatives were offered (below), encompassing other elements of sustainability, particularly the States' role:

- *Networking with other I/NGOs; participation of stakeholders in programme cycle; local capacity building; and diversifying funding strategy*
- *The poorest men and women are able to voice and become active citizens holding duty bearers accountable*
- *Tested models are being implemented through local partnerships, where government and community play their roles for sustainability*
- *That it is an environmentally-friendly intervention and has been scaled up by state and others*

The last two statements suggest that certain IHDO-R understand the importance of local ownership (leadership, decision-making and organisation; financing; planning, implementing and monitoring of interventions; value systems) for sustainability. Overall the dominant findings again point to an introspective approach taken by IHDOs. The measures taken to achieve the above-mentioned sustainability are laid out in Table 7 below:

Table 7: Proportions of IHDO's sustainability measures

Principle measure area	Secondary measure area	Response rate
Capacity building and development	Of beneficiaries, clients, CBOs and rural development societies, women's groups, partners	58%
	Of structures	5%
	Of livelihoods	5%
	Of the local population	5%
Partnerships	With local and national NGOs	26%
	With the State	
	On governance	
	In-situ	5%
Projects or programmes	Formulation, monitoring and evaluation	10%
	Goals being realistic	5%
	Provide development of appropriate technology	5%
	Support rights-based approaches	5%
	Have in-built exit strategies	5%
	Build constituencies	5%
	Ensure environmental sustainability	5%
Training and skill development	Of national staff	16%
	Of students	5%
	Of clients	10%
Beneficiaries	Inclusion and inputs	10%
	Correct selection	5%
	Confidence building	5%
Roles and responsibilities	Allocated in a participatory manner	5%
	Clearly defined among stakeholders	10%
Funding	Reduced for staff salaries	5%
	Scaled down for administrative costs	5%
	Alternative sources sought	5%
Government of Sri Lanka	Policies support the interventions	5%
	Are kept aware of the interventions	10%
Networks	Established at regional and international levels	5%
	Provide community linkages	5%
Systems	Established for community maintenance	5%

(See section 11 page 57)

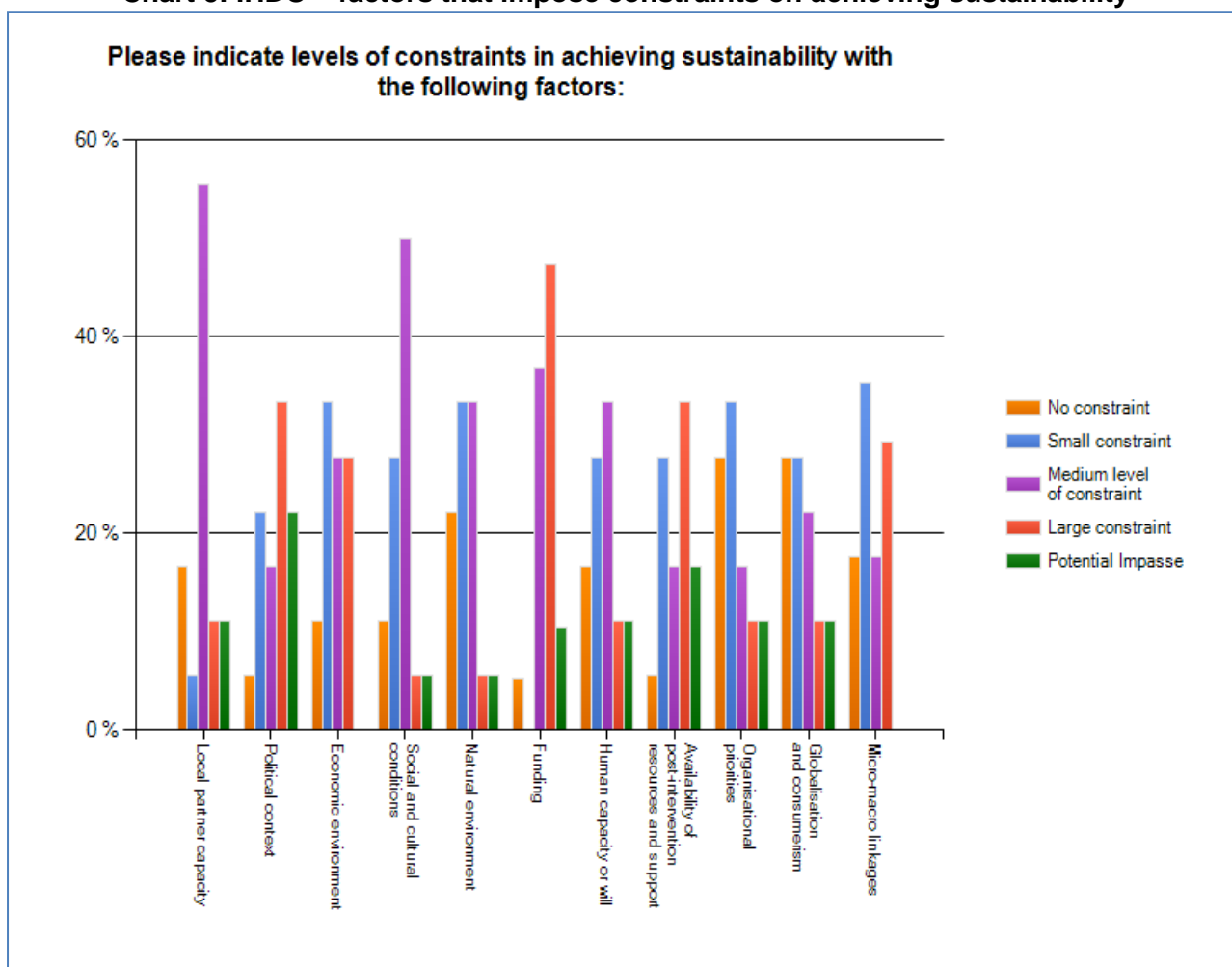
Firstly, there is a clear understanding that capacity development is essential for sustainability. However, whilst 'structures' are mentioned, with 85% of IHDO-R claiming official partnership arrangements with the GoSL, very low efforts are made to develop capacities of State actors, ultimately responsible for Sri Lanka's future.

Secondly, partnerships are proposed to ensure IHDO interventions continue post-departure, including to a lesser degree, the State. 5% of IHDO-R mentioned the need for partnership to be close (in-situ) perhaps for confidence building, or 'controlling'?

40% of IHDO-R mentioned diverse aspects of their programmes, reflecting individual organisations mandates or objectives. However, the first two elements related to establishment and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of project goals are often associated with ‘western-driven’ interventions.

With only 16% of IHDO-R proposing training of national staff as a disengagement measure, further increases are necessary, particularly where IHDO’s state national staff capacity as a concern influencing the sustainability of their interventions/withdrawal.

Chart 5: IHDO – factors that impose constraints on achieving sustainability



The GoSL’s tightening of restrictions on the international community, on-going post-conflict humanitarian issues and existing undercurrent of ethnic tension, present the political context as a potential impasse to sustainability. Other actors influencing IHDO intervention-sustainability are the international (and local) resource providers, without whom a vacuum would be created.

Funding is seen as a constraint at all levels. This suggests linkages between funding agencies and local organisations were not well established (supported below in the responses on risks).

Following this, micro-macro institutional/system linkages, and the availability of post-IHDO resources and support are indicated as medium constraints for IHDO departure.

At a medium level, but exceeding all other factors, local partner capacity, combined with the lesser-ranked human capacity and will, and the social and cultural environment dominant in Sri Lanka, are seen as the key concerns by the IHDO-R. Again the need for local capacity development is presented, contradicting previous responses indicating IHDO's as intervening introspectively.

The natural environment, almost completely sidelined in the IHDO-R responses, is now mentioned. This suggests that only when 'forced' to consider withdrawal and its consequences, are concerns raised. With rice as part of the staple diet, and agricultural exports making up a high proportion of external revenue, this should feature in all disengagement strategies.

Potential risks involved with IHDO departure [in order of importance] are presented below:

1. Funding: lack of availability; LNGOs being donor-driven (not enough consideration of local context); negative perspective of Sri Lanka by international donors
2. Capacity: lacking in local partners and at national level; limited time to build capacity during IHDO interventions
3. Political: non-protection of citizens and their rights and well-being; security of staff and project beneficiaries missing due to continued conflict
4. Gaps: in supporting children's rights; in on-going humanitarian programmes; in potential to continue assistance; in institutional memory and history; in continued learning and sharing
5. Perceptions: of new actors by the population; of the departing IHDO's who may not have achieved sustainable results

The final question addressed the changes necessary in the factors, actors and conditions in Sri Lanka, for successful IHDO intervention sustainability (see section 11 page 58).

Table 8: changes for sustainability – actors, factors and conditions

Actors	Factors	Conditions
GoSL; military; police: more focus on civilian protection; improved support provided to their partners; better links to the private sector; improved administration	Improved political situation with removal of restrictions on humanitarian and development programmes and work; recognition of roles of CBOs	Political pressures and influence must be reduced; need for more political impartiality
IHDO's: better knowledge on how to disengage efficiently	More equitable resource distribution; funding channels	Provision of a stable economy and political environment
Partners: increased capacities and management of post-tsunami funds	Increased advocacy for better linkages between state and non-state actors	Better planning with partners: mutual trust, respect, participation, negotiated decision-making
Local and national NGO: increased capacities	Removal of reliance on the dominant crop of rice	Enhanced diversity of agricultural outputs; expansion of markets and infrastructure
Increase in local fund raisers and fund-raising initiatives	Improve economic situation and links to international markets	

8.1.5 Summary of IHDO survey findings

IHDOs understand the need for local capacity development (staff, local partners and the state) to enable disengagement, but rather focus on their own programme objectives and achievement of results *inside* funding timeframes. Few elaborate relevant milestones as effective means for disengagement. The role of the state – capacity, relations with international actors, and its own people, is questioned. Donor funds are seen as crucial for sustainability, yet raised as a concern and a gap to support this. Many IHDO's have been in Sri Lanka for years, but not enough are considering, establishing or implementing efficient disengagement strategies.

8.2 Médecins Sans Frontières Holland – key informant interviews/focal-group discussion

8.2.1 Overview

(The responses of key informants and the focal group discussion are combined with the following prefixes: MSFH representative – M; Transition consultant – C; SHADE chairperson – S; Focal group respondents – F. Where responses are consistent the prefixes are not mentioned).

Between 2000 and 2004 MSFH ran a psychosocial programme based in GoSL-controlled territory in ‘Government Welfare Centres’ (transitional IDP camps). They also ran programmes in the LTTE-controlled area ‘Vanni’ in hospitals for mother and child health care, outlying health clinics, and trained health staff and volunteers. With the armed conflict on-going, and a high number of suicides in the area (Stolk 2008), psychosocial services were essential. MSFH provided a ‘gap-filling’ role, when provision of basic health care was not possible due to conflict/natural disaster weakening local structures and capacities.

MSFH’s exit strategy included establishing a local NGO, though uncommon for MSF (Mulhern 2004). The proposed trigger for their disengagement was a stabilised peace-process between the GoSL and the LTTE, and local staff capacity. The exit plan featured in the project proposal, the country policy and annual plan documents. After two years of a seemingly-sustainable peace process from February 2002, assessment was made of the Ministry of Health (MoH) capacity to take over the MSFH programmes:

Advantages in phasing over to MoH:

- The programme would be well recognised
- Sustainability would be high, with the GoSL providing funds
- Wider geographic coverage would be possible through existing infrastructure
- Networking with other Ministries (e.g. the Social Services Ministry) could be facilitated

Disadvantages envisaged:

- No psychosocial department existed
- Specific qualifications demanded from accredited institutions/universities not met by staff
- Less efficient delivery and M&E mechanisms
- Limited financial resources compared with focused international funding
- Less commitment to the process given lack of initial ownership

8.2.2 Process

A three-month timeframe was set up due to a positive change in the political landscape¹⁷. The transition was undertaken in one move, including transfer of all legal responsibility, staff contracts, and premises. The local management and consultant worked with key national staff, developing capacities in budget administration, programme and HRM, proposal formulation, security management, legal and constitutional aspects, and establishing a name, mandate, and objectives. The key national staff member of MSFH was sent to study NGO Development and Management in Bangladesh in preparation for his role as Director of SHADE.

The MSFH Director's contract was extended to oversee the transitional process, and to provide 2-3 support visits per year for a three year period, including technical advice, counselling and M&E. All MSFH assets were handed over including funds for initial running costs. The motivation of the national staff played a fundamental role in the success of this process.

A SHADE Governance Board of Directors was established using renowned and respected professionals from the area, providing technical support, donor/other network connections, and security linkages; no political actors were included. The Board took on fund-raising with UNICEF and CordAid among other organisations. The SLSF and LTTE were introduced to SHADE to show MSFHs approach and commitment, and to hint at their continued oversight.

Additional initiatives to support the transition included awareness campaigns among the target population and lobbying at local and national level. By 2004 SHADE was functioning autonomously, and was the sole organisation in Vavuniya with a psychosocial programme.

8.2.3 Challenges, concerns and risks:

- Lack of national staff management practice and skill (M/C/S)
- National staffs limited 'power' to stand up to external influences (M/C/S)
- SHADE internal common direction and programme objectives (C/M/S)
- Exhaustion and trauma of staff operating in post-conflict/conflict environment (M/S)
- Whether staff salaries reduced to Sri Lankan standards induce high staff turnover, particularly with opportunities within other IHDO's (C/S)
- Whether national staff maintain high motivation/productivity without expatriate superiors (S)
- Working with under-developed systems and procedures (M/C)
- Insufficient and sustained inputs for training and staff development (M/C/S/F)
- External jealousies that manipulated staff insecurity (M/C/S)

¹⁷ The signing of a cease-fire agreement between the GoSL and the LTTE in February 2002

- Understanding and acceptance of MoH (predominantly Sinhalese) that the Tamil patients and target group of the programmes were not 'dangerous rebels' (M/S)
- The language barrier (Sinhalese-Tamil) (M/S)
- Convincing existing/new donors that SHADE was capable of operating autonomously (M/C/S/F)
- Cultural differences apparent when approaching donors: the Consultant recommended a hard negotiating position, against the grain of the personalities and preference of the SHADE management team (M)
- Donors agendas often hindered SHADE from growing in directions essential to the services demanded (M/S)
- Whether the ceasefire and peace process would hold (M/C/S/F)
- Political insecurity: the geographical focus took SHADE into LTTE-controlled areas, more open to pressures for whom they should support (i.e. priority to help and recruit LTTE cadres and families) (M/C)
- Lack of international presence (protection, access to the population and neutrality) (S/F)

8.2.4 Outcome

To raise funds a pool of trainer of trainers was established, providing services to other organisations in the area. Only partly undertaken, this initiative could have provided far greater potential. (C/S/F)

Other initiatives not followed up due to limited time included establishing promotional platforms to share positive stories from ex-beneficiaries, and lobby funds (S)

With the high pressures of working in a post-conflict, conflict and disaster environment, staff well-being was sidelined to provide assistance to war/tsunami victims, creating internal problems (M/S)

During the support visits it became clear political influences were reorienting SHADE programmes, induced by conflicts between some Board members (Mulhern 2007) (M/C/S). These conflicts and external pressures had dire consequences for SHADE's sustainability, causing the Chairperson (a tri-lingual Muslim who enabled SHADE to remain neutral and impartial in a highly sensitive context) to leave and re-join MSF in Uzbekistan (M/C/F)

The demand for SHADE's services is still high, even with the conflict ending; many people are still traumatised (Stolk 2008). The culture of mutual support within communities had broken down; previously neighbours and family provided support in times of need. However, in a new environment of peace, two things may happen. Firstly, the MoH may take a higher interest in

psychosocial support, and also have funds available to support this. Secondly, the culture of self-sufficient care may return. In this situation, the demand for SHADE's services will reduce, and its existence solely be maintained for training other organisations. But funding requirements remain, whether from GoSL or other sources (F).

8.2.5 Summary of MSF interviews/focal-group discussion findings

The MSFH initiative enabled their disengagement from Sri Lanka, leaving in place a locally-owned entity maintaining essential services to a needy population. However, the transition was too fast, not allowing time for adequate staff capacity development. It did not provide adequate support in fund-raising capability, and neglected the pertinent element of external pressures on impartiality in an environment rife with these dangerous influences. Further efforts were necessary brokering and establishing official partnerships with relevant GoSL/MoH departments, other IHDO's and international donors. In disengaging, did MSFH consider the extreme levels of risk and insecurity placed on the heads of their ex-colleagues?

"In such an ethnic conflict context any LNGO is subject to external pressures and stresses... and impartiality and neutrality highly difficult to achieve. It is nearly impossible to guarantee the sustainability of such a transition process within this type of context without closer and continuing engagement and support from the exiting agency.... This doesn't then become a real exit." (C)

"I believe that it was the right course of action, though if I had known how much pain this was to give individual staff members I would have thought twice. Without the national staff there was no programme and their courage and commitment despite traumas deserve far more credit than they will ever be given." (M)

"I have had very emotional times in my life; while I was working a very good friend who was working very closely with me was shot dead... there were anonymous phone calls with threats to my staff, sometimes to me...we may be about to close the office for a day or so..." (S)

On the process of transition from MSFH to SHADE, the following comment was made:

"I was able to hear the satisfactory involvement of the staff of MSF and ex-MSF. They felt they are the owners of the organization. It was very interesting that all the staff felt they are part of this whole intervention... I think it was the way it was initiated and it worked well." (S)

8.3 German Technical Cooperation – key informant interviews

8.3.1 Overview

(The responses of the key informants are combined with the following prefixes: GTZ representative – G; Head of Public Administration Unit - H. Where responses are consistent the prefixes are not mentioned).

The GTZ-assisted PIP is implemented in the north and east of Sri Lanka over three project cycles: 2001-2003, 2003-2008, and 2009-2010. Its mandate is to work collaboratively with provincial, central, and local administrative structures, communities and other partners. Specifically, PIP works in partnership with the Northern and Eastern Provincial Councils (NPC; EPC). Each project phase was intended to strengthen and develop local capacities and skills, enabling takeover of the initiatives by Sri Lankan institutions. Flagship interventions included a performance-based STEPS Programme (Skills Through English for Public Servants), whereby public servants improved skills in the link language in Sri Lanka. A dedicated training unit was established in Jaffna District in the Ministry of Education, with cost-sharing between stakeholders part of the ownership strategy. Additionally, Spatial and Integrated Local Planning capacities were developed via PIP training courses, bringing together previously separate entities of the Central and Provincial GoSL structures. All PIP interventions are based on the needs of the host government counterpart institutions.

8.3.2 Challenges, concerns and risks:

The following concerns were discussed regarding GTZs' 2010 disengagement:

- Institutionalisation – traditional practices and values were deep-rooted; PIP used new methods that demanded longer-term guidance (G/H)
- Individual staff capacities – whilst services were to be provided by institutions, mechanisms were needed to ensure continuity, demanding specialised training for specific individuals (H)
- Allocation of maintenance financing from a central budget could be complicated, particularly where the NPC had no council to lobby and lever. Currently the NPC has only minimal funds available (G/H)
- Release of specific staff for continued management of the initiatives may be problematic (H)
- With provincial elections for the NPC upcoming, bureaucrats may find it difficult to explain its efforts towards sustainability to newly-elected councillors (H)
- Bureaucrats may give up on initiatives which need additional work, in the absence of a Council (NPC only) (H)
- Difficulty in maintaining new systems by widely-dispersed provincial personnel without approval from the Chief Secretary, who is transferable by the central government (H)

8.3.3 Successes to date

Much has been achieved over the past nine years, including the numerous GoSL personnel trained through the STEPS programmes. Officers have gained abilities in conflict resolution, multi-cultural understanding, administrative and management systems etc. Additionally PIP has been highly instrumental in facilitating cross-structural linkages between central and provincial institutions, and supported micro-macro linkages, local governance and community development.

8.3.4 Change in strategy

Although PIP was planned for completion at the end of 2010 and had made good progress in achieving project goals, changes in the local political landscape and in global political will influenced the decision to withdraw.

With a small number of four projects remaining in Sri Lanka, and two of them planned for closure in 2010, BMZ and GTZ believed extending PIP to be advantageous:

1. The project made good impacts in its focal areas: STEPS, HR development, capacity development of Local Government and Community Development; why not continue? (G/H)
2. Financial problems for the GoSL of operating costs of existing infrastructure and personnel at a national level, normally undertaken by the project, could be mitigated (G/H)
3. Reaping the harvests of work undertaken, and increasing result-indicators achievements for existing goals, as well as larger presence in the northern province, would be possible (G)
4. A period of consolidation would provide enhanced chances of sustainability; there were fears there may not be longer-term positive impacts provided in and for a post-project environment (G/H)

Three other factors were considered. Firstly the North East Provincial Council – initially the main GoSL counterpart institution of the project, had faced a rapid and almost overnight demerger in 2006 to two separate entities – the NPC and EPC. This required continued support to younger, leaner staffing structures, for which PIP was well positioned. Secondly, at a national level, funding through the World and Asian Development Banks became centralised in Colombo in the South, with potential for political bias against north-east programmes; PIPs esteem and existing relations with these actors would facilitate these south-northeast linkages. Thirdly, in post-tsunami interventions GTZ had moved away from a standard single-donor company to co-financing arrangements. In this light AUSAID expressed interest to co-finance a new phase from 2011 to 2015 together with the BMZ, approved in June.

8.3.5 Summary of GTZ and partner interviews

Whilst PIP documentation does not elaborate on any kind of 'phasing down, over or out' strategies, the project approach, focusing on developing capacities of key actors in the north and east, *is* providing for sustainable outcomes in terms of strengthened and empowered governance and administrative structures *and* individuals. With improved State capacity and ownership, and links facilitated and enhanced between the numerous actors, GTZ-PIP targets appropriate intervention.

However, whilst an exit strategy is well documented for the period 2011-2015, it remains to be seen if it is actually operationalised.

9. Overall conclusions and proposals

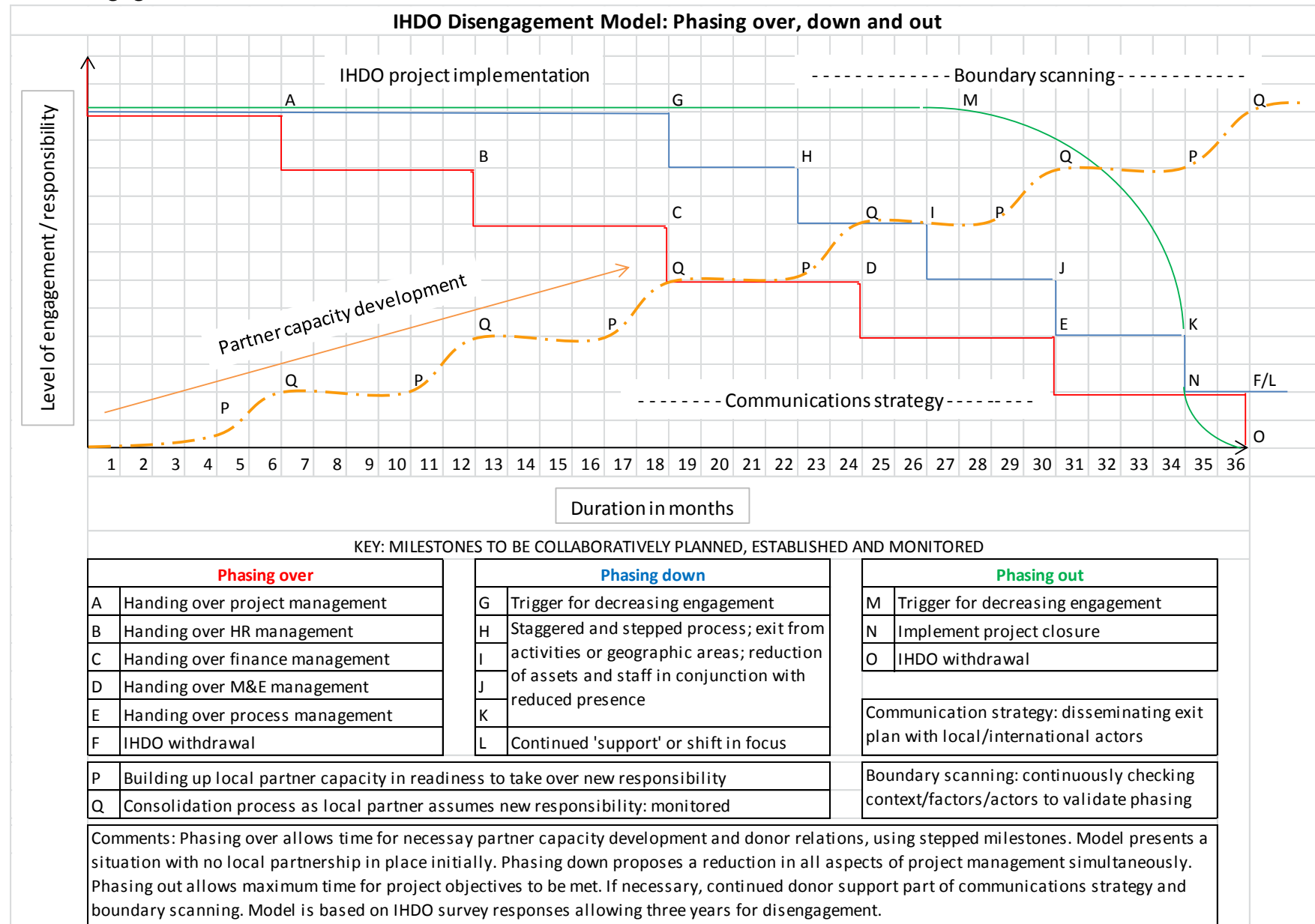
9.1 Conclusions

The unstable Sri Lankan context (post-conflict; post-disaster) is a main factor influencing the sustainability of IHDO interventions. Clear guidelines are not provided or enforced for IHDO's to disengage effectively. IHDOs predominantly focus introspectively on their own agendas and less on the longer-term demands of the situation. Uncertainty about the political context affects IHDOs consideration of their disengagement. Financing is key: donors do not provide enough funds for capacity building and partner development, nor for post-intervention evaluation, nor for IHDO disengagement. Donors could further channel finances through southern actors rather than IHDO's, and focus less on their own objectives.

Local partnerships from the outset of interventions are sometimes established, but should be prerequisite. Capacity building of local entities and individuals including national staff is seen as an extremely important disengagement measure by IHDOs, yet is far from adequately implemented. This should be more prevalent and in-line with activities enabling potential for take-over of key responsibilities. Promoting, outsourcing and establishing local organisations with national staff are options under-utilised for contributing to sustainable interventions. Adequate time, sensitivity to local context, and collaboratively-structured milestones are means for IHDO's to withdraw. Political, social and economic constraints placed on local staff and entities left behind should be mitigated.

Even with numerous and continued risks of hazards demanding assistance to a needy population [with an apparent increase in global disasters this year], more efforts should necessarily be taken by IHDOs to enable and support Sri Lanka to self-sufficiently manage its own resources, problems and development.

9.2 Disengagement model



9.3 Recommendations for further work

From this study, several areas for further research activities have become apparent, either through the process, or due to lack of possibility to address them in detail:

- Deeper understanding of the changes necessary within IHDO's to facilitate national staff potential for sustainability
- Further efforts to obtain a higher response rate to the survey questions in-country
- Further efforts to elicit the 'local perspective on IHDO withdrawal' from GOSL representatives, SNGOs and Sri Lankan civil society organisations
- Testing of the disengagement model in Sri Lanka and other countries
- More in-depth analysis of disengagement strategies related to different types of interventions (emergency, rehabilitation and development) and different contexts (conflict, post-conflict/disaster, and stability)
- Deeper understanding of the cultural aspects of northern IHDOs operating in Southern environments
- Further analysis of donors: how mandates, priorities and perspectives are formulated
- Re-evaluation of PCM as a 'standard' for project identification, planning, implementation and M&E; current exclusion of 'disengagement'?
- Re-evaluation of 'standard HRM practices' (planning, recruitment, selection, training and development, and finally retention), not fitting the time and fund-bound lives of IHDO projects, where termination, outsourcing, or self-sustaining options are ultimately necessary

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11. Annexes

11.1 The IHDO survey

Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka

Section 1: Disengagement - IHDO background and context:

1. How long has your organisation been operational in Sri Lanka?

- Less than one year
- One to three years
- Four to seven years
- Eight to fifteen years
- Sixteen to twenty five years
- More than twenty five years

2. What was the main reason for your organisations' arrival in Sri Lanka?

- Bi-lateral agreement between governments
- Organisations strategic decision at global level
- Organisational mandate related to working environment or region
- Expertise in conflict/post conflict situations
- The tsunami of December 2004
- Other (please specify)

Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka

3. How would you describe your organisation?

- Bi-lateral or government organisation
- INGO
- UN or multi-lateral agency
- Civil society organisation
- Other (please specify)

4. What type of intervention is your organisation providing? (more than one answer is possible)

- Relief/emergency aid
- Rehabilitation and reconstruction
- Economic development
- Social development
- Human rights/advocacy
- Other (please specify)

5. What relationship (if any) does your organisation have with the Sri Lankan state actors?

- Officially established partnership, collaboration or agreement
- Close but unofficially established cooperation
- Informal information-sharing arrangement
- Not close relations
- No relationship - acting independently

Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka

6. What relationship (if any) does your organisation have with Sri Lankan private sector actors?

- Officially established partnership, agreement or contract
- Close but unofficially established cooperation
- Informal information-sharing arrangement
- Not close relations
- No relationship

7. What relationship (if any) does your organisation have with Sri Lankan organisations - LNGOs or civil society groups?

- Officially established partnership, collaboration or agreement
- Close but unofficially established cooperation
- Informal information-sharing arrangement
- Not close relations
- No relationship - working independently

8. What relationship (if any) does your organisation have with other IHDOs in Sri Lanka?

- Officially established partnership or consortium agreement
- Close and regular unofficial collaboration, cooperation or coordination
- Informal level of information-sharing
- Taken over project/programme or other interventions from an IHDO that has now left the country
- No close relations
- No relations - acting independently and autonomously

Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka

9. Which are currently your organisations' primary, secondary and tertiary donors, or donor country's?

Primary Donor or donor country Secondary Donor or donor country Tertiary Donor or donor country

(please select from drop down menus)

Other (please specify primary donor)

10. How would you describe the primary role of the communities/beneficiaries in your organisations' projects or programmes?

- As equal partners in the process from planning stage through to project completion
- As clients
- As recipients of aid only
- As stakeholders/contributors
- As responsible agents for post-intervention maintenance of project/programme outputs
- As future project or programme managers
- Other (please specify)

Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka

Section 2: Disengagement - strategies, factors and measures:

1. Does your organisation currently have, or is in the process of establishing a disengagement (exit) strategy? If the answer is 'Yes', please continue with the next question (2). If the answer is 'No', please go directly to question 13

- Yes
 No

2. When was your organisations' disengagement strategy prepared?

- As part of the organisations global mandate prior to arrival in country
 As part of the intervention planning after arrival in country
 Currently being elaborated

Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka

3. Who was/is involved in the preparation of your organisations' disengagement strategy? (more than one answer is possible)

- Organisations own personnel only outside Sri Lanka
 Organisations own personnel in and outside Sri Lanka
 Organisations own personnel only in Sri Lanka
 Sri Lankan State actors, line ministries, departments etc. associated with your organisation
 Your organisations local partners - LNGOs, civil society groups, or private sector actors
 Other IHDO representatives in Sri Lanka
 Organisations project/programme donors
 Organisations project/programme communities, beneficiaries or clients
 External consultants contracted specifically for this work
 Other (please specify)

4. If your answer to question 3 included your organisations' personnel, who was involved directly?

- Expatriates only
 Local personnel only
 Both local and expatriate personnel

Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka

5. Is your organisations' disengagement strategy a part of the following project planning and implementation documents, tools or processes? (more than one answer is possible)

- Logical Framework
- Other project planning document or process
- Organisational monitoring and evaluation process
- A separate 'stand-alone' entity
- Other (please specify)

6. Which of the following approaches is your organisation taking or planning to take to effect its disengagement? (more than one answer is possible)

- Phasing down: reducing overall activities within project/programme geographic areas
- Graduating: stopping specific activities within projects/programmes but maintaining others
- Phasing over: handing over responsibility to other organisations, actors or partners to continue activities
- Phasing out (1): closing all projects/programmes
- Phasing out (2): leaving Sri Lanka
- Transitioning: remaining in-country, but shifting or adapting interventions due to changes in context, actors, organisational mandate or funding availability

Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka

7. Which factors were/are considered as part of your organisations' disengagement strategy?

- Factor 1: _____
- Factor 2: _____
- Factor 3: _____
- Factor 4: _____
- Factor 5: _____
- Factor 6: _____
- Factor 7: _____
- Factor 8: _____
- Factor 9: _____
- Factor 10: _____

Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka

8. To which of the following is your organisations' disengagement strategy aligned? (more than one answer is possible)

- Completion of project/programme activities
- Achievement of pre-defined project/programme objectives
- Completion of project/programme-related funds
- Changes in the political environment
- Changes in the social environment
- Changes in the economic environment
- Changes in the natural environment
- Changes in your organisations global strategy
- Local partner institutions that will take over once your organisation leaves
- State actors that will take over once your organisation leaves
- Other local actors that will take over once your organisation leaves
- Project/programme communities, beneficiaries or clients that will take over once your organisation leaves
- Other (please specify)

Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka

9. If your organisation has commenced implementing its disengagement strategy (or plan), what milestones or benchmarks have been established?

- 1: _____
- 2: _____
- 3: _____
- 4: _____
- 5: _____
- 6: _____
- 7: _____
- 8: _____
- 9: _____
- 10: _____

10. What percentage (%) of project/programme funds are allocated to your organisations' disengagement strategy?

- Less than 1%
- 1% to 3%
- 4% to 6%
- 7% to 10%
- More than 10%
- Don't know

Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka

11. How much longer does your organisation plan to be operational in Sri Lanka?

- Up to three months
- Between three and six months
- Between six months and one year
- Between one and two years
- Between two and three years
- Between three and five years
- More than five years
- Don't know

12. How long has your organisation allowed for operationalising and completing its disengagement strategy (plan)?

Years Months

(please select from drop down menus)

13. How does your organisation consider the importance of disengagement strategies?

- Extremely important: one is essential and must be elaborated
- Very important: something that should ideally be in place
- Of medium importance: a good idea, but not essential
- Of little importance: not really necessary
- Of no importance: would/do not use one
- Don't know: maybe this should be investigated

Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka

Section 3: Disengagement - roles and positions of Sri Lankan (national) per...

1. How many senior manager/director posts does your organisation have in Sri Lanka?

Senior Manager/Director posts

(please select from the drop down menu)

2. Of the senior manager/director posts, how many are held by Sri Lankan national personnel?

Nationally held senior posts

(please select from the drop down menu)

3. Is the proportion of national to expatriate personnel in senior management/director-level positions planned for increase in the future?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Disengagement Strategies of International Humanitarian and Development Organisations in Sri Lanka

4. Please indicate for the following statements the level of importance for the organisation, related to its Sri Lankan national personnel

	No importance	Low importance	Medium importance	High importance
Providing necessary skills and knowledge development training for them to carry out tasks allocated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reinforcing and refining skills, knowledge and competence for them to more effectively and efficiently carry out tasks allocated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expanding their capacity to take over broader responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhancing their capacity to take over different roles and responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing their capacity for promotion to take over more senior positions and responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing chances for them to become senior managers and directors within the organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing potential and opportunity for them to transfer knowledge and skill-sets outside the organisation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increasing potential and opportunity for them to establish their own organisations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing them incentives as part of a remuneration package	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Does your organisation include roles for its national personnel in its disengagement strategy?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

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6. Are your organisations' national personnel encouraged to think about their own employment post their current jobs and/or after your organisation has left the country?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

7. Has your organisation already seconded its own senior national personnel to Sri Lankan institutions as part of a disengagement strategy?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

8. If the answer to question 7 above is 'Yes', to which of the following Sri Lankan institutions have national staff been seconded?

- State, central or provincial government structures/partners
 LNDO partners
 civil society partners or groups
 Private sector partners or enterprises
 Other (please specify)

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9. Has your organisation already established a local institution using national personnel as part of its disengagement strategy?

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

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Section 4: Disengagement - factors for sustainability:

1. Which of the following best describes your organisations' perception of the term 'sustainable'?

- Project/programme goals were achieved within the timeframe allocated
 Outputs from projects/programmes are maintained and operational after the organisation has left
 Social conditions or well-being for project/programme communities, beneficiaries or clients have improved due to the organisations intervention
 Benefits are accrued by the organisation and project/programme communities, beneficiaries or clients due to the intervention
 Lessons are learned and communicated to improve the organisations interventions elsewhere
 Natural local resources are not depleted to the extent that future generations needs cannot be provided for
 Improved economic status is obtained by project/programme communities, beneficiaries or clients
 Other (please specify)

2. What measures does your organisation take to ensure that its interventions achieve this sustainability in Sri Lanka?

- 1:
2:
3:
4:
5:
6:
7:
8:
9:
10:

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3. Do/does your organisations' donor(s) provide funds for post-intervention evaluation, i.e. after your organisation has disengaged?

- Yes/all of them
 One or some of them
 No, none of them
 Don't know

4. Please indicate levels of constraints in achieving sustainability with the following factors:

	No constraint	Small constraint	Medium level of constraint	Large constraint	Potential Impasse
Local partner capacity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political context	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economic environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social and cultural conditions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Human capacity or will	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability of post-intervention resources and support	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Organisational priorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Globalisation and consumerism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Micro-macro linkages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="text"/>				

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5. What risks are associated with your organisations disengagement from Sri Lanka?

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

6. Which factors, actors or conditions would your organisation propose need to change (and how) to increase chances for the successful sustainability of its interventions after disengaging from Sri Lanka? Please be explicit in your response

- Factors:
 Actors:
 Conditions:

11.2 IHDO survey recipients

International NGOs

ActionAid Sri Lanka	Médicins Sans Frontières Holland
Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development	MercyCorps
Americares	MERLIN
Arbeiter-Samariter Bund	Mines Advisory Group
CARE International	Motivation
Caritas Sri Lanka	Muslim Aid Sri Lanka
CESVI – World Aid from Italy	National Democratic Institute
Child Fund Sri Lanka	Non Violent Peaceforce
Christian Aid UK	Norwegian Peoples Aid
CORDAID	Norwegian Refugee Council
Danish Demining Group	OXFAM Australia
Danish Refugee Council	OXFAM GB
FORUT International	Practical Action/ITDG
Global Action	RedR-IHE
Habitat for Humanity Sri Lanka	Relief International
HAI Asia Pacific	Samaritans Purse International Relief
Handicap International	Save the Children in Sri Lanka
HelpAge Sri Lanka	SOLIDAR (Consortium)
HEVETAS Sri Lanka	SOLIDARITES
Hilfswerk Austria	Swiss Foundation for Mine Actio
Hope for Children	SwissContact Sri Lanka
Humedica International Lanka	Terre Des Hommes – Lausanne
Impact Foundation Sri Lanka	The Asia Foundation
International Relief and Development	The Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions
JEN	The HALO Trust
Malteser International	The Salvation Army
Médicins Sans Frontières France	The World Conservation Union
	United Methodist Committee on relief
	Voluntary Services Overseas

World Concern Development Organisation

World University Services of Canada

World Vision Lanka

ZOA Refugee Care – Netherlands

International Organisations

The German Technical Cooperation

International Federation of the Red Crescent

International Committee of the Red Cross

American Red Cross

Canadian Red Cross

International Organisation for Migration

Agencies of the United Nations

Food and Agriculture Organisation International
Labour Organisation

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

UN HABITAT

United Nations Children's Fund

United Nations Department of Safety and Security

United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Commissioner for Refugees

United Nations Industrial Development
Organisation

United Nations Information Centre

United Nations Office for Project Services

United Nations Office for the Coordination of
Humanitarian Affairs

United Nations Populations Fund

United Nations Volunteer

World Food Programme

World Health Organisation

11.3 Example key informant interview questionnaire

Key informant semi-structured interview – MSF Holland

Background

1. MSF Holland was operational in Sri Lanka between 2000 and 2004. Several aspects of your work were ongoing during this period; can you outline them briefly for me?
2. Who were the main actors involved in elaborating MSFH's initial concept, design and implementation plan?
3. Who were the main partners engaged in the project?
4. What, if any, were the changes made to the structure, timeframe, and your own roles in your relationship with the project partners and communities, during the project lifecycle?
 - a. If these changes were unplanned, what were the principle reasons for them?

Disengagement

5. Was any kind of disengagement strategy conceptualised at the outset of the project and if so, can you elaborate on what issues were considered as important at that time?
6. If no strategy was envisioned at the outset, when did you start to develop a withdrawal process, and what was the catalyst for this action?
7. Which actors were involved in the preliminary discussions?
8. Which actors were involved with the disengagement process?
9. Was the MSFH disengagement plan or strategy incorporated in any project implementation documents, monitoring frameworks or other pertinent project management processes?
10. What was the actual trigger that was used to set the disengagement plan into motion?
11. What factors were considered to define that closing the MSFH intervention in Sri Lanka in 2004 was appropriate? Which actors were involved, and which one(s) 'lead' on their identification and prominence?
12. The project ran for several years; some of the project philosophy revolved around partner or stakeholder capacity building, which also contributed to the potential of making the MSFH withdrawal more effective. How was this operationalised?
13. Had a particular strategy such as establishing milestones whereby MSFH gradually reduced its role and inputs been designed? If so, can you elaborate?
 - a. Could you present some advantages and disadvantages of implementing projects through a partnership with a State department (Ministry of Health) in relation to your departure?
14. Did you envisage any potential risks involved with the exit of MSFH from Sri Lanka?

Sustainability

15. With hindsight, do you think things could have been done differently in any way regarding the way in which MSFH prepared for and implemented their departure?
16. Within the MSFH project framework, what did sustainability mean to you?
17. Regarding this sustainability, what measures were put into place that you felt ensured continued benefit streams post MSFH's departure?
18. What steps [if any] may not have been taken that, in your opinion should or could have been, to further guarantee that initiatives carried out during the project would have lasting positive impacts for yourselves, for your beneficiaries, project partners, the state, or the public generally?

Transition

19. Please ultimately answer a few of questions related to the transition of MSFH project responsibility to SHADE - established by MSFH with senior roles being taken on by MSFH national personnel.
 - a. What were the important aspects and factors considered at the time?
 - b. How did you implement this handing or phasing over process?
 - c. What support was necessary for the effective functioning of this new organisation?

- i. How was this support delivered?
- d. What have been the challenges faced by SHADE in its early days as an organisation 'following in MSFH footsteps'?
 - i. How have they faced up to these challenges?
- e. Has MSF carried out any post phasing-over evaluation of the organisation and project activities?
 - i. How often?
 - ii. By whom?
 - iii. Planned until when?
- f. In which areas (if any) do you see SHADE needing to concentrate further efforts to maintain presence and sustainability, continue or improve/increase their interventions, and/or improve management or other organisational aspects?
- g. With hindsight, would you still have followed the course for MSFH's disengagement using the establishment of a local NGO to take over project activities and responsibilities?
 - i. If yes, would you still have utilised the national personnel human resources as key players in the establishment of the organisation?
 - ii. If not, what alternative measures do you feel could or should have been taken?
- h. What dissuaded MSFH from phasing over responsibility and authority for project interventions to local state health departments?
- i. What information or feedback have senior SHADE personnel (particularly ex-MSFH staff) provided to you regarding the overall process and their roles?

Actors

- 20. Finally, could you share your opinion on the current and 'ideal' future role of the following actors in humanitarian and development interventions in Sri Lanka?
 - a. State actors
 - b. International donors
 - c. Private/commercial sector actors
 - d. Local NGOs
 - e. International Humanitarian and Development Organisations (IHDO's)
 - f. Project or programme target communities
 - g. Civil society groups
 - h. Sri Lankan national personnel affiliated to IHDO's

11.4 Focal-group discussion structure and content

RR01 – Research Report Method: Case Study

SHADE Board of Director Staff Focal Group Discussion

Participation: All SHADE Board members

Moderation: external research assistant

Location: quiet place without distraction, undisturbed; mobile phones off (!); preferably away from the workplace of participants

Conditions: full respect of all participants opinions and ideas; semi structured discussion; facilitation necessary to enable the quieter voices (encouraging inputs from all participants); representative gender balance; approval of process from Senior project representatives and line-managers of participants (sought in advance);

Documentation: flip chart notes; audio recording (requires approval of project representative and participants, and explanation of need¹⁸); digital camera to provide group photo (again with consent) and to digitally record transcript for emailing (copy of flipchart sheets)

Duration: maximum 1.5 hours

Introduction:

This discussion forms part of a research project aimed at identifying the existence and practices of the disengagement (exit) strategies of International Humanitarian and development Organisations (IHDO's) operational in Sri Lanka. The research is covering three main areas:

1. A literature review, both via internet and directly with IHDO's
2. An electronic survey (questionnaire circular) of IHDO's Sri Lanka Country Offices
3. A case study with MSFH/SHADE, broken into two main parts:
 - a. Interviews with the Senior International MSFH Project Representative, an International Consultant and their local counterpart
 - b. Group discussions with SHADE Board members

The last aspect is what will be undertaken. We will be analysing the process of transition from MSFH to SHADE, the roles of senior national personnel in the international organisations disengagement strategy, in their involvement in strategic planning for organisational withdrawal, and what measures were put into place to support this process, specifically regarding the potential current and future functions of SHADE directors.

The discussion should take no longer than 1.5 hours, and focus around the following themes:

- The MSFH disengagement strategy and the participants roles and inclusion in its elaboration or implementation
- To what extent the MSFH senior national personnel had been approached regarding their positions at the end of the project lifecycle, and post project intervention
- What future roles and functions do the participants see themselves filling – what is the future of SHADE
- What steps were taken to support continuity, sustained progress and impacts, throughout the transition and afterwards; what roles were allocated to SHADE Board members to assist in this process
- What risks did the group have to face – envisaged or not; how were they handled or mitigated; what did MSFH do to support this problem solving
- What measures have now been put into place to ensure that SHADE can continue and grow
- What is the current feeling about the role and capacity of IHDO's such as MSFH in Sri Lanka; strengths and weaknesses
- What overall challenges have SHADE faced in 'following in the footsteps' of an internationally acclaimed organisation such as MSFH? How have the Board addressed or faced up to these challenges?
- Where does the Board see needs for improvement in the future strategy and functioning of SHADE?
- What changes in political, social, economic and environmental contexts should be seen in Sri Lanka, to reduce the need for further interventions of IHDO's?

¹⁸ Based in Haiti, there was no possibility to conduct the discussions locally in Sri Lanka. To ensure a complete record of all that took place, and to minimise at all costs researcher bias, a verbal record was requested to be made of the proceedings, and sent on audio cassette for analysis and preparation of findings.

11.5 Key interview respondents and focal group participants

Médicins Sans Frontières - Holland

1. Mrs. Maureen Mulhern – ex-Programme Director MSFH Vavuniya, Sri Lanka
2. Mr. Richard Walker – External Consultant contracted to oversee the transition to SHADE
3. Mr. Abdul – Médecins Sans Frontières Uzbekistan
4. Dr. P Sathyalingam – Treasurer – Board of Directors, SHADE, Sri Lanka
5. Dr. N. W.A.N.Y. Wijeyaseka – Chief Zonal Health Coordinator/Deputy Director (Preventative Health) Directorate for IDP Healthcare, Ministry of Healthcare and Nutrition, Sri Lanka

German Technical Cooperation

1. Mr. Walter Keller – Principal Advisor GTZ Performance Improvement Project, Sri Lanka
2. Mr. P Ganeshan – Head of Public Administration Unit, Northern Provincial Council, Sri Lanka

11.6 *List of acronyms*

APF	African Peace Forum
AUSAID	Australian Government Humanitarian Aid
BMZ	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCR	Centre for Conflict Resolution
CDAI	Collaboration for Development Action Inc
CeDEP	Centre for Development, Environment and Policy
CHA	Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department
FEWER	Forum on Early Warning and Early Response
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
H&D	Humanitarian and Development
HDI	Human Development Index (UNDP)
HPI	Human Poverty Index (UNDP)
HRM	Human Resource Management
IA	International Alert
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Crescent
IHDO	International Humanitarian and Development Organisation
IHDO-R	IHDO on-line survey respondent
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
LNGO	Local Non-Government Organisation
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MoH	Sri Lankan Government Ministry of Health
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
MSFH	Médecins Sans Frontières Holland
NEPC	North East Provincial Council (Sri Lanka)
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NMSS	NGO Management School Geneva
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (United Nations)
ODI	Overseas Development Institute (UK)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSC	On-line Study Centre
PIP	Performance Improvement Project (GTZ)
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SFCG	Search For Common Ground
SLSF	Sri Lankan Security Forces
SNGO	Southern Non-Government Organisation
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SW	Safer World
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
WANGO	World Association of Non-Governmental Organisations
WFP	World Food Programme (United Nations)

11.7 Research project workplan

Research Project Workplan : IHDO disengagement in Sri Lanka
11/16/2009

