

Why Do Accountability? A Business Case From Sri Lanka

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Appendix 1: Humanitarian Accountability Team (HAT) Department Overview

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Acknowledgment

In March 2007, a series of interviews were held with staff from WV Sri Lanka's Tsunami Response Programme (LTRT) to assess the value that having a separate Humanitarian Accountability Team (HAT) contributes to a large emergency response. Julian Srodecki from H-Account interviewed key LTRT staff and compiled this report based upon their views and perspectives of the HAT. Special thanks are due to Joshua Pepall, Alexandra Levaditidis and Perry Mansfield for their support in hosting my visit and contributions to this document. For a full list of contributors please refer to appendix 3.

Executive Summary

The need for increased NGO Accountability to disaster survivors has been noted repeatedly in major evaluations and momentum is growing for NGOs to be more accountable. For World Vision, the major reason to be accountable is to help disaster survivors achieve their rights and to improve the quality of services provided to them. However in order to stimulate organizational change and to better understand what accountability can look on the ground, a business case was developed on why we should have empowered humanitarian accountability teams in the field and what is needed to make them work. This focussed on what was beneficial for World Vision's operations and was based upon a series of staff interviews that formed a case study of the (Sri) Lanka Tsunami Response Team (LTRT). These advantages and enabling factors can easily be replicated into other programs.

Selected Advantages of a Humanitarian Accountability Function

- Accountability works as a community based warning system that can help to significantly reduce organizational risk and flag issues early
- Through good community engagement and liaison with stakeholders, HAT was able to save LTRT over USD 5 million in construction costs by preventing either unsuitable or unneeded construction in the south.
- Having a department with a mandate to represent community perspectives helps staff to reconnect with their original reasons for working for WV and to strengthen commitment to organizational values around valuing people.
- Separating technical and community engagement roles at field level enables job descriptions to focus on technical skills rather than a rare mix of skills so that staff are easier to hire and more likely to succeed.
- Having a HAT function helps to ensure that projects are "fit for (communities) purpose" as well as meeting technical standards. This increases the sustainability of projects and leads to greater beneficiary satisfaction.
- Implementation of shelter programming can be done more quickly as a HAT team can prepare communities while technical preparations are ongoing. There is also greater scope for community construction methodologies to remove bottlenecks and having a team dedicated to complaints and community engagement frees technical specialists to focus on implementation.

Key Enabling Factors for a Humanitarian Accountability Function

- Senior management need to prioritise quality and be prepared to empower the accountability function to hold others to account.
- Accountability should be a separate function reporting to the Programme Director so that it can focus on community engagement and be independent from Operations and DME pressures.
- The function needs to be led by a manager with strong influencing and coalition building skills who can build good relations with other departments while encouraging staff to raise difficult issues with out fear of reprimand.
- Representation on the SMT is key for an accountability function to have the necessary authority and build the inter-departmental relationships necessary to hold others to account with minimal conflict.
- A clear focussed definition of what accountability function can and cannot do is important to avoid unnecessary tensions with other departments.
- HAT in Sri Lanka required approximately 250,000 USD in set up costs and then 1.3 million USD per year to run – about 3% of the budget.

Structure of this Document

Both the advantages and enabling factors sections of this document have been structured in way to make them easier to skim read for busy field practitioners. Each of these sections are broken down by field function so that busy field staff only have to skim the section or sections that apply to their roles. (A full list of these roles can be found on the contents page). This will give the reader an understanding of the advantages to their work of increased accountability and what enabling factors would help to implement accountability in their part of the organization. While this does mean that some parts of the document are repeat others, it is hoped that this approach will enable field staff to gather the information relevant to them after reading only a few short pages.

Introduction

The need for NGOs to be more accountable in their operations to those that have been impacted by disaster has been noted repeatedly in major evaluations – most notably in the Evaluation of the response to the 1994 Rwanda genocide¹ and the report from the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition of the response to the Asian Tsunami of 2004². For World Vision in Sri Lanka, the tsunami response provided an opportunity to implement an emergency programme in a more accountable manner and to work with the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership on a trial of their certification procedures. The overall results, particularly for the people we work with, were very positive and generated a great deal of learning, which is gradually being applied to other programmes. This document describes what was new, how World Vision's work benefited, and some of the key factors in making this happen.

For World Vision, the major reason for greater accountability is to help those affected by disaster realise their rights and to improve the quality of the services provided to them. The general benefits of increased participation for communities have been well documented elsewhere, and a separate participatory evaluation with communities found that they valued World Vision's new approach in Sri Lanka as well³. To

¹ See Chapter 3: The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience, March 1996 Published by: Steering Committee of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda

² Joint Evaluation of the international response to the Indian Ocean tsunami: Synthesis Report, 2006, Published by London: Tsunami Evaluation Coalition

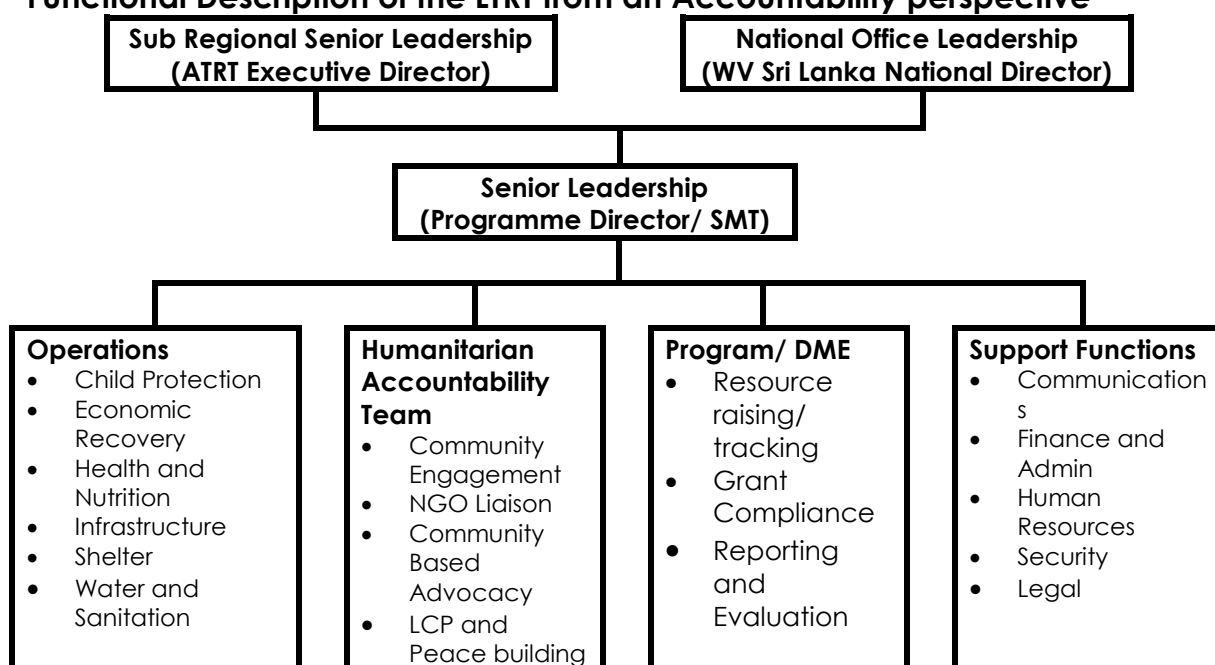
³ To learn more about the opinions of Disaster Survivors about this programme please refer to the report of a participatory evaluation of the HAT function: Humanitarian Accountability Team Lessons Learned: Perspectives from Communities and Staff, Alexandra Levaditis, World Vision Lanka Tsunami Response Team, September 2007

compliment this work, this document focuses on staff perceptions of the benefits of increased accountability to the implementing NGO and is based on two weeks of interviews with field staff on site.

Operational Context

World Vision maintains a long-term development presence in Sri Lanka through a National Office. Following the Tsunami a parallel emergency response office was set up to manage relief and reconstruction efforts, called the (Sri) Lanka Tsunami Response Team (LTRT). The programme reported to both the National Office and the Asia Tsunami Response Team, a sub regional structure that coordinated WV's tsunami work across multiple countries.

Functional Description of the LTRT from an Accountability perspective



To better promote accountability to beneficiaries in LTRT's programming, a Humanitarian Accountability Team (HAT) was set up that was separate to Operations and Programs/ DME. HAT was a separate sector, reported directly to senior management (Programme Director) and was empowered to represent stakeholder (beneficiary) perspectives up to this level, including participation on the SMT⁴ (See Appendixes two and three for more details on HAT's structure). Management of technical sectors such as shelter, child protection etc was done through an operations department that focussed on implementation and technical management of projects and activities.

⁴ HAT activities were undertaken through the Civil Society sector, which was identified as the closest sector scope in compliance with LEAP.

HAT complimented this by focussing on community engagement, liaison with other parties (e.g. NGOs and Government) and monitoring the wider context within communities through tools like Local capacities for Peace (LCP). This was implemented through a network of Stakeholder Representatives that were based in each field office and that worked closely with communities. District Liaison Officers were also employed in field offices to serve as the focal points in inter-agency coordination. While the Stakeholder Representatives and District Liaison Officers reported directly to District Managers, they also had an indirect reporting line to HAT staff in the LTRT head office who could then follow up on issues with managers, department heads and the senior management team (SMT) as appropriate. For more resources on the HAT approach and accountability in general, please see Appendix 4.

Advantages of the HAT

Establishing a Humanitarian Accountability Team (HAT) independent of Operations or Programming functions and empowering it to represent community perspectives internally has had the following benefits for LTRT.

Senior Leadership/ Organizational

"I would not want to manage another response of this size again without a HAT team. They really are essential to what we do"
Programme Director, LTRT

- Having a dedicated humanitarian accountability function enabled staff to retain a focus on the beneficiary that they would otherwise lose in their day-to-day work.
- HAT was the conscience of the programme that worked as a community based warning system to help to significantly reduce organizational risk and flag issues early. This helped to protect the World Vision brand, for example as of February 2007 despite a large operation with over 700 staff at its peak and a budget of \$112 million over three years, LTRT had no court cases from community members in progress, pending or even on the horizon.
- Having a community engagement function that is field based and empowered to represent community perspectives meant that rather than only flagging problems, solutions could also be

tabled to senior management at the same time. This greatly facilitated the speed and effectiveness of decision-making.

- Representation of community perspectives up to SMT level helped to empower senior staff in their dealings with Government and other stakeholders by equipping them with information to be prepared to deal with sensitive issues rather than being surprised by them in external meetings.
- Government and inter-agency coordination benefited from having a department focussing on liaison as it helped to avoid burning bridges in the hectic early stages of a relief programme. It also increased World Vision's ability to effectively engage with the huge number of NGOs and other stakeholders that start working after a large-scale disaster.
- Having a clearly identified robust community engagement and liaison function reduced the potential for embarrassing mistakes in coordination during the hectic start up period of an emergency and throughout its duration. E.g. In the early days of the emergency (before HAT) WV LTRT took the lead in advocating to not distribute tents in a coordination meeting and then distributed tents locally with another department.
- Greater analysis and consideration of community perspectives have helped to educate WV national staff on the need to have field staff who are reflective of the communities that they work in. For example in some field locations with a high Muslim population, the cultural requirements of Muslim women needed to be considered when designing new houses for them to live in. As a result of better community engagement many national District Managers have recognised such needs and hired more staff from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. This meant that their teams now better reflected the areas where they worked and they could be more effective in meeting the needs of the community.
- When programme redesign was needed unexpectedly (e.g. following a substantial unexpected budget cut) the HAT can help by explaining the situation to communities and negotiating the best way forward. This helped to maintain WV's credibility and ensure that work focused on priority issues.

"I would not hit the ground in future without some kind of HAT function"
Operations Director, LTRT

Communications

- When visiting the field to collect stories, negative as well as positive stories can be discovered. Having a HAT team provided

an empowered channel for these stories to be communicated back to management so that necessary action could be taken.

- Having a HAT function provided a central point for information and community perspectives about the programme that can be used to gather stories. These stories were used by the Communications Department for partnership offices and the wider INGO community.

"Without HAT we are just a company building houses" Communications Manager, LTRT

Field Leadership

- Having a dedicated humanitarian accountability function in field offices through Stakeholder Representatives helped to reduce/deter corruption as community complaints may uncover this.
- Strong community engagement helped to avoid incidences of beneficiaries over claiming Programme benefits. For example in one area, a beneficiary was due to receive several fishing boats from different agencies until community members complained to the local HAT team Stakeholder Representatives. During the rehabilitation phase, HAT was able to work alongside other sectors to determine that between 40 and 60% of people on government lists of proposed beneficiaries were not eligible for assistance. HAT Liaison with other I/NGO's also reduced duplication of services and ensured World Vision beneficiary lists were circulated.
- Being able to capture community perspectives on operational and technical issues can strengthen WV's case when negotiating with the Government. E.g. In one area, the local Health officials insisted on a model of sanitation for newly built houses that was inappropriate for the local geography and that would pollute the local water table. Having access to community perspectives strengthened the case that WV LTRT staff could make to local government to promote a more appropriate technical solution.
- Community information provision laid the foundation for community participation in project activities. HAT ensured communities were informed throughout the project management cycle. This improved participation across sectors and contributed to the empowerment of people over the decisions that affected their lives.
- By having a primary and consistent point of contact with communities, trust was built between communities and the organization, improving information exchange and therefore the

quality of the services provided. This also helped to reduce community consultation fatigue.

- HAT acted as a bridge between the community and other sectors. Stakeholder Representatives served as problem-solvers, working through solutions with communities and coordinating with community mediators, such as local authorities and leaders.
- Through the coordination function of the District Liaison Officer, community needs outside the scope, resources or mandate of the organization could be referred to other sources.

“HAT should have a free rein across all sectors – it would have been beneficial for everyone” Zonal Construction Manager

Programmes/ DME

- Creating a function to listen to and communicate with communities helped to build trust, improve information exchange and increase understanding of core problems—leading to better project designs.
- HAT developed community liaison and consultation skills and had the time to do it. Programming/ DME tends to be focussed on resource raising, DME around grant outcomes and grant compliance. During emergency responses this frequently pushes out other quality or community considerations. Splitting these functions helps to ensure that community consultation can take place at a much deeper level and enables greater consideration of the needs of vulnerable groups such as women, children and people with disabilities.
- Liaison staff developed different tools for sharing project information with interested stakeholders, facilitating coordination and assisting with the identification of community needs or gaps in aid.
- A HAT type function complimented Programs/ DME's output monitoring with wider contextual monitoring⁵. This can help clarify outputs as well as inform programme evaluations.
- Having community consultations led by one team helped to ensure that all sector assessments were done together so that they had a greater coherency and are less time consuming for communities to contribute towards/ host.
- HAT was operational because it maintained a capacity in the field and played a role in implementation. (E.g. assistance with beneficiary selection, community mobilization and community

⁵ LTRT Programming Staff described the difference as follows: Output monitoring measures the outputs of projects such as the number of houses constructed, participation in programmes/ training etc. Context monitoring looks more at how the wider environment is changing and how this impacts communities.

relations during implementation). This when coupled with their representation on the SMT gave them a strong capability to follow up on beneficiary and other quality issues – stronger than other output monitoring functions would normally have.

- Documentation of key quality processes (such as community and inter-agency meeting minutes) provided important evidence for programme evaluation.

Humanitarian Accountability Team

- Engineers and technical specialists tend to consult with communities less well than those with specific skills and HAT provided a mechanism for staff to develop and use a specialisation in working with communities.
- Community stakeholder staff were less expensive to employ than technical professionals such as engineers and medical staff and so helped to reduce organizational costs to deliver a quality product/ service to beneficiaries.
- Having a separate HAT team provided a means to implement the findings of community level LCP/ Do no Harm analysis rather than simply identifying conflicts or problems. LCP was used as a lens to articulate common issues and these were used in Sri Lanka to develop community action plans that helped to address root causes of conflicts in communities.
- A separate HAT supported strong team cohesion and peer learning, essential in addressing diverse community issues and addressing accountability, a relatively new discipline in the relief/development sector with few accepted tools and frameworks.

*“HAT is the conscience of the Programme – conscience with clout”
Stakeholder Capacity Building Advisor, HAT*

Finance/ Resources

- Good engagement with communities can help to avoid expensive mistakes and future problems. For example in Hambantota, WV was asked to build 400 apartments that were unsuitable for the target population to live in. HAT was able to work with communities to prevent the construction of 360 of these apartments on the grounds that people were not used to living in apartments and they were unsuited to local cultural needs. This prevented over USD 3.6 million being spent on unsuitable construction in which families were unwilling to live and avoided the need to implement specialized programmes to teach people how to live in apartments.

- Through good coordination and community engagement HAT and Shelter staff were able to prevent money being spent where it was not needed and redirect this to other sites. This prevented the construction and over supply of 175 houses in the south where there were no eligible beneficiaries, saving USD 1.4 million in construction costs alone. These resources were then redirected to other areas of the country where there was an undersupply of housing. In the South of Sri Lanka, the international reconstruction effort has built 3,000 houses more than required and LTRT was able to avoid increasing this total.
- World Vision found that having HAT work with communities to refine beneficiary lists reduced them by 40% on average. Having credible and fair mechanisms to do this, helped to increase World Vision's standing in communities, justify decisions to other stakeholders and save resources.

Human Resources

- Having a separate function that gathered community perspectives and represented them within the organization helped to remind staff about the people at the centre of WV's work. This contributed to increased morale and productivity by helping staff to reconnect with their original reasons for wanting to work with World Vision and strengthen commitment to organizational values around valuing people.
- Having HAT take the lead in community engagement at the field level and technical staff focus on technical issues enabled staff to be better matched to their skill sets. This led to more content and more effective staff that were set up for success rather than be asked to do things outside of their skills sets and experience.
- Sourcing technical staff (e.g. Water or Shelter engineers) that have technical skills and community engagement and liaison skills can be difficult as only a proportion of technical staff have both. Having a distinction between technical and community engagement skills makes it easier and quicker to hire candidates as a larger pool is available.
- Where expat engineers/ technical specialists are needed, having a separate HAT function can enable them to adapt their work (technical solutions and management styles) to the local context more effectively.
- Accountability to beneficiaries could provide a way to measure how well staff interact with communities and this could be useful information to use in appraisals as an indicator of the values that staff show in their day to day work.

Technical Specialists

HAT focussed primarily on supporting the shelter sector where the potential for success with communities and potential organizational risks were highest. However, these advantages could work equally well with other technical sectors.

- Having a HAT focus on work with beneficiaries enabled engineers to focus on technical areas where their skills are strongest. It also ensured that technical staff could not disregard or discourage community perspectives in their work.
- HAT trained shelter and other sector staff to build on Local Capacities for Peace, Community Engagement and other skills to increase their capacity and understanding of accountability so that they were more effective when working in communities.
- Line management of technical staff is simplified if community engagement is dealt with by a function like HAT. This frees technical staff from dealing with beneficiaries and provides a mechanism to channel requests/ complaints to staff better equipped to handle them. This enables technical staff, who are often in short supply, to focus on technical issues more in line with their skill sets.
- Having a function like HAT to identify problems early helped to minimise conflict and facilitate early problem solving. This reduced the time that technical staff spend responding to complaints enabling them to focus on implementation.
- HAT work with communities helped engineers to get the pre construction preparations right – so that buildings were constructed in appropriate locations and met community requirements. This boosted the sustainability of completed projects by ensuring that they are more “fit for purpose”.
- HAT collection of community perspectives helped to identify constraints early leading to better planning, more manageable requests and more viable jobs for construction engineers. This will have saved significant staff time as the Institute of Professional Engineers in New Zealand have found that 1 hour of not planning leads to up to 72 hours of problem fixing.
- Implementation of shelter programming can be done faster as division of labour means that engineers can focus on systems development and technical preparations while communities are being consulted, their needs assessed and beneficiary selection processes are being undertaken by HAT. This has saved up to six weeks in some construction projects.
- Having a HAT function in each site and enabling beneficiaries to access Stakeholder Representatives provided a credible check on the work that external contractors do, saving time and money. This can help to deter corruption and helps to avoid some of the serious technical and design suitability (fit for

purpose) issues faced by non-community focussed large contractor models used in other Tsunami reconstruction programmes.

- In environments where contractors were overloaded, community led construction implemented with Shelter and HAT staff was able to remove bottlenecks. LTRT found that latrines were taking up to six months to complete through contractors, but after providing materials and training, beneficiaries were able to build their own latrines in four weeks only. This also freed up scarce construction contractor capacity to focus on shelter provision.
- Through training community members in basic construction monitoring, HAT and Shelter staff were able to speed up construction to meet programme targets and overcome a national shortage of suitably qualified engineers. Although the final quality of house construction was not as high as if more engineers were available, community approaches provides a valuable option to complete projects to a reasonable standard when there are pressing humanitarian needs to do so.
- Where communities were active in the construction of their homes through monitoring or community-led construction, this engendered greater ownership on their part and generally fewer complaints with the final product.

"HAT helps my engineers to be focussed on building and to do things faster....otherwise we would be ripping beneficiaries off because we are not effective." LTRT Construction Advisor

Transition processes

- A dedicated community engagement and accountability function like HAT provides a mechanism to inform communities and other stakeholders (such as government agencies and other parties) about the process of transition and make the process smoother by giving them a voice in the process.
- A functioning community engagement and complaints mechanism can help to ensure that there are fewer unresolved issues remain after programme transition.
- When issues/ problems arise post transition and are attributed to the previous emergency response, a beneficiary accountability system can provide evidence of due diligence and a supporting rationale for many decisions that are made.
- Through relationships established with government and other agencies, HAT staff can create important linkages between these groups and communities that will enhance the sustainability of projects.

Enabling Factors

Having the following enabling factors in place were important elements in making the Humanitarian Accountability Team (HAT) successful in World Vision's LTRT programme. For smaller or less well-resourced programs it may not be possible to meet all of these factors but careful consideration should be made on which factors should be prioritized according to the context and programme when developing a new system in a new place.

Senior Leadership/ Organizational

- Senior Leadership buy in and commitment to quality as well as quantity.
- The Senior Management Team needs to build a collaborative organizational culture between departments where complaints and raising of issues/ problems is viewed as a positive opportunity to improve. This is essential if one department (HAT) is to be able to chase up difficult issues and raise problems with other departments.
- Internally HAT staff need to report to staff who are insulated from internal pressures that would make them avoid raising or pursuing legitimate community complaints. Having an expatriate team leader can help to empower more junior staff and encourage them to raise issues in non-confrontational or highly relational cultures where talking about problems is not the norm or where there is fear of reprimand.
- Focus resources by identifying areas of highest risk – in LTRT this meant choosing shelter rather than trying to cover the whole program.
- Keep HAT as a separate department so that it can remain independent of operational pressures and programming targets.
- Having a separate budget for HAT, like a sector budget is essential in keeping independence and ensuring that other managers cannot chip away at HAT independence.
- A separate Accountability Team will also be able to remain focussed on accountability – if it is combined with other teams and functions their work on quality and community representation can easily get crowded out.
- Senior management needs to be prepared to empower an accountability function right up to Program/ National Director level if it is to be truly able to address beneficiary concerns.
- Representation of HAT on the SMT is an important part of empowering the function and building structures and

relationships that help to facilitate collaborative approaches to problem solving.

- When addressing concerns an effort has to be made by HAT staff to resolve them at the field level, then have a graduated response first to the line manager, then Operations Director and then finally to the SMT/ Programme Director.

Field Leadership

- All staff working in a field office need to be sensitized to the need for accountability to beneficiaries otherwise the first point of contact for community members such as guards, drivers or reception staff may prevent complainants from being heard. E.g. a guard may turn someone with a letter or issue away from the gate before they can get into the office.
- Stakeholder Representatives need to be protected from the negative consequences of sharing bad or unwelcome news at field level, particularly where there are strong cultural or political factors that discourage this.
- Field managers need to be flexible in looking at the roles of HAT and other staff in dealing with communities. While many staff will appreciate having HAT staff to deal with community members, some will want a greater role and see this as a reason for joining an organization like World Vision. HAT staff should be responsible for community engagement but be open to involving other staff, particularly in areas relating to their specialized roles and responsibilities or where other staff have capacity.
- HAT staff in the field need to maintain excellent relationships with all other field staff so that they will be open to community feedback and communication flows well between sectors at field level.

Programmes/ DME

- For WV to be accountable, communities and other stakeholders need to be able to draw upon project planning and reporting systems that can inform people of what has been planned and on progress against those plans.
- A clear vision of quality is needed between HAT, Programs and DME to avoid gaps and ensure that each team operates smoothly with each other. For example, who is responsible for standards implementation and how does this relate to communities.
- Implementation, DME and HAT staff need to have an agreed understanding about the difference between output monitoring

for grant compliance (conducted by the DME Team) and monitoring that the HAT team does to monitor community concerns⁶. This will ensure that HAT and DME can share field level information and work together in a complimentary manner.

Humanitarian Accountability Team

- HAT needs to have a clearly defined mandate and focus from senior management to establish clear relationships with the other sectors. Having a clear definition of accountability for the programme helps to do this. In LTRT this was about representing community perspectives, liaison and advocacy. A future organization wide accountability framework could help other responses to come to their own contextualised definition.
- The accountability function needs to be focussed on specific areas, goals or outputs so that it can have a visible impact on the programme rather than being spread too thinly across a number of areas. In Sri Lanka the HAT focussed on the Shelter sector because this was identified by senior management as having the highest risk and the highest opportunities for accountability activities.
- HAT has found that changing staff values to see communities as a resource rather than a burden was perhaps the greatest challenge. Attitudes take time to change. -This requires strong senior management commitment at the head office and field levels.
- A strategic rather than responsive approach needs to be taken to accountability so that staff values can be changed. In Sri Lanka this was done through launching a highly effective internal marketing campaign about what accountability is and then complementing this with demonstrated operational value in application⁷.
- For accountability to work in the field the focus needs to be on practicalities rather than principles. A key factor in getting the accountability function accepted was that HAT had operational capacity that works closely along side the sectors to add value. Activities like facilitating assessments, refining beneficiary lists, managing community complaints and dealing with many government liaison and coordination issues enabled HAT to be seen as a useful part of the team rather than an external threat.

⁶ For example, DME Team monitoring is often based around ensuring that projects deliver the results promised in grant and other project planning documents. HAT/ context monitoring is more about following up on community concerns that can be around gaps or implementation issues.

⁷ For more information on the HAT internal marketing campaign please contact either Joshua Pepall of LTRT, Julian Srodecki of H-Account or mail H-Account@wvi.org

- HAT had a separate structure from Operations, right up to the Programme Director. Where field based HAT staff reported to District Managers in Operations, they also maintained an indirect reporting line to the HAT team in Colombo and this enabled the internal advocacy of community perspectives in a reasonably independent manner.
- HAT needs to be led by a manager with strong influencing and coalition building skills so that relations with other departments remain strong and productive.
- HAT needs to come to other sectors/ departments in a manner that helps to solve problems rather than just raise them – a collaborative joint problem solving rather than finger pointing model. It is important to know where there is room for compromise and where one must maintain a firm stand.
- Having a role on the SMT strengthened HAT's ability to resolve issues with sectors at field level and provided a forum for emerging themes to be considered by senior management. It also helped the HAT Manager to maintain the overview and perspective needed to manage a team that is working cross functionally with all operational sectors.
- The success of a HAT approach is highly dependent on inter staff relationships rather than systems. Stakeholder Representatives have to be of a sufficient calibre able to manage difficult situations, strong influencing skills and be good at coalition building while still retaining their independence.
- See appendix 2 for more details of a possible HAT structure

Finance/ Resources

- The HAT team should be led by an expatriate who can represent communities at SMT level and protect local staff from internal and external pressures to not raise difficult issues.
- To support a HAT team in the LTRT response (on average approx USD 40 million per year) running costs of USD 1.3 million (Colombo and field costs) per year were needed - about 3% of the budget.
- Having a separate budget for HAT helped to ensure the function's independence and protect more vulnerable line items, such as community liaison staff from budget cuts.
- HAT costs are mainly in staffing, transportation, information provision and external technical expertise. These should be viewed as operational rather than administrative costs as they have a direct role in implementation and the programming of other sector resources.
- HAT is providing essential targeting and community liaison skills for other sectors (e.g. Shelter and Water and Sanitation) and so it is a legitimate and justifiable charge to grants for these sector

activities. For example, field level community liaison and advocacy costs can be built into shelter or water and sanitation grants.

- The opportunity to operationalise Local Capacities for Peace through community liaison and advocacy staff in the HAT team is something that has been attractive to donors.
- HAT was initially funded from unrestricted funding for Colombo (Head Office) and field costs but was ultimately included in grants from Aktion Deutschland Hilf of Germany and the Disasters and Emergencies Committee of the UK because it was viewed as a valued and attractive intervention, including the funding of Head Office staff costs. (Both donors programme private funding from public appeals through highly flexible interagency grant formats).

Human Resources

- Staff need to be aware of the differences between programmatic complaints that can be worked through HAT and staff grievance issues/ malpractice that need to go through HR. Some types of complaints such as child abuse, criminal behaviour or incompetence of staff need to be addressed by HR either with HAT or the Programme Director as appropriate.
- Accountability needs to be written into Job Descriptions so that staff will take the role of HAT seriously.

Technical Specialists

- Technical specialists need to be sensitised about the need to respect the community and about the value of accountability. This is particularly the case where technical specialists are used to working for empowered clients in commercial projects. Project beneficiaries are much more disempowered and less likely to raise important issues.
- Both HAT and technical sector staff need to appreciate each other's skills and be prepared to work together on problems – both community and technical angles need to be brought together.
- Separation of roles in the field is easier when HAT and technical sector staff have a joint understanding on the difference between meeting technical standards (e.g. the building is structurally sound) and the HAT role in ensuring that it is "fit for purpose" (that it can meet the needs of users).

Transition processes

- The programme needs to have a clear plan for transition that can be communicated to communities and local partners.
- Transition processes need to be flexible to incorporate community and other stakeholder concerns and feedback.

Appendix 1: HUMANITARIAN ACCOUNTABILITY TEAM (HAT)
DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW
Alexandra Levaditis

The unprecedented humanitarian response to the tsunami in Sri Lanka required a high degree of coordination with other agencies, government and most importantly recipient communities. This posed a challenge to many agencies that was highlighted in a wide-scale evaluation of the Sri Lanka tsunami response conducted by the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition.

“The lack of accountability to aid recipients is an acknowledged weakness of the international relief system. The recipients surveyed for the TEC studies reported that they were not adequately consulted. Furthermore, the studies found that there were large information gaps between agencies and the communities they were serving”

- Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC): Initial Findings, p.10

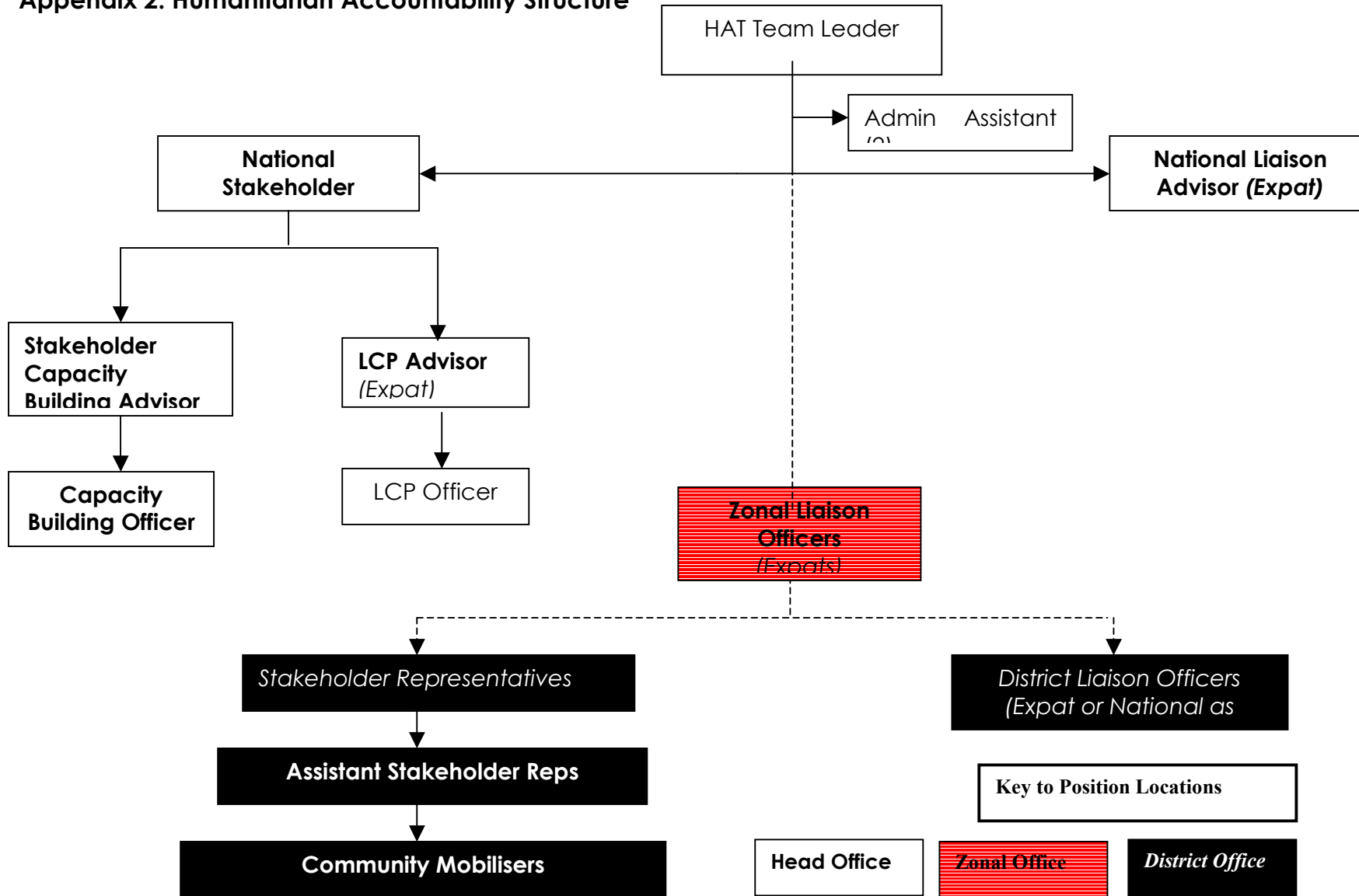
The Humanitarian Accountability Team was established by the Lanka Tsunami Response Team (LTRT) to promote programme accountability and integrate Do No Harm principles by providing the human resources and tools for effective community engagement and coordination with I/NGOs and government. The team was initially established to support the permanent shelter programme where it was determined there was the greatest need for ongoing consultation with communities and inter-agency coordination. A team of Stakeholder Representatives and District Liaison Officers were recruited for district field offices to directly undertake these functions and advise district staff. Significant human resources were invested in verification of project beneficiaries and coordination of beneficiary selection with other agencies, recognizing that inappropriate allocation of assistance (particularly housing) was a primary catalyst for conflict within and between communities. Consultation with beneficiary communities and community participation have been essential elements of the permanent housing programme resulting in modified housing designs, especially for people with disabilities, training of beneficiaries as construction monitors and strengthening of community cohesion in resettlement sites through CBO development or other community activities.

The objectives of the team have since expanded beyond permanent housing to promote accountability throughout the programme using the following strategies.

1. *Community Engagement.* Tsunami-affected communities should be active in determining their own future through engagement and local community institution. HAT activities that support this strategy include:

- Community Engagement training and ongoing coaching for district staff
 - Resource material development to facilitate better consultations with communities and information sharing
 - Development and strengthening of local community institutions
 - Supporting programme transition and community self-reliance
2. *Conflict Sensitivity (through Do No Harm/ LCP and Targeted Peace-Building)*. Conflict sensitivity in project implementation can enhance peaceful relationships within and between communities. HAT activities that promote peace include:
- Conflict sensitivity assessments in all districts
 - Training staff on Local Capacities for Peace principles and analysis
 - Development of action plans with district staff based on assessments to support connectors within communities and reduce tensions
 - Targeted peace-building projects in areas at the highest risk for community conflict (according to assessments)
3. *Liaison and Advocacy*. Accountability to communities can be fostered through advocacy and alliances with inter-agency and government stakeholders. The following liaison and advocacy activities are part of this strategy.
- Inter-agency coordination and establishment of partnerships for programme efficiency and transition
 - Liaison and networking with government partners
 - Selected advocacy issues and campaigns, such as joint titling of deeds (in both spouses names) for new World Vision constructed houses in resettlement sites
 - Building capacity of communities to undertake advocacy as a means of transition and self-reliance

Appendix 2: Humanitarian Accountability Structure



Appendix 3: SOURCES FOR THE BUSINESS CASE

This document is based upon interviews with the following WV LTRT staff during a short two-week visit in March 2007 by Julian Srodecki of H-Account. My thanks for their time and support in putting this document together.

Alexandra Levaditis - HAT Team Leader
Andrew Lanyon – Operations Director
Aruna Liyanage – District Manager, Kalutara
Chandara Khem – Senior Programme Officer
Joshua Pepall –Stakeholder Capacity Building Advisor
Mike Low – Deputy Director for Operations
Mike Wiggins – Water and Sanitation Manager
Murray Burt – Zonal Construction Manager, South
Pascal Bimenyimana – Programme Officer
Perry Mansfield – Programme Director
Romesh Fernando –Stakeholder Capacity Building Officer
Tom McGill – National Construction Advisor
Viraj Wahalatantri – Stakeholder Representative, Kalutara

Appendix 4: MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Further information about the HAT, its structure and the tools that were used to make this approach a success in Sri Lanka can be found in the following documents which are available either from H-Account or WV LTRT's HAT Team.

HAT resources

- A tool kit to implement the HAT approach is being developed by Alexandra Levaditis and will be available by Autumn 2008.
- HAT Template to set up a Humanitarian Accountability Team
- HAT Job Descriptions of Key Staff
- HAT community engagement tools:

Transitions Programming Calendar
Community Engagement Best Practice Awards
Community Feedback: Community Complaints Cards
Effective Community Complaints Agency Audit
Community Complaints Policy and Procedures Guide
An Introduction to Community Engagement: 1 Day Workshop
3D Animation for Community Information Provision
Community Engagement Technical Guidance Notes
The Community Accountability Toolkit
An Introduction To Community Information Provision
Stop, Look, Listen A Learn, Community Engagement Poster and Education Campaign

Other resources that could assist in the development of a Humanitarian Accountability Function

World Vision Global Resources

H-Account is a unit that works to promote increased accountability in World Vision's emergency programmes and to help build the capacity to do it. Key documents include:

- H-Account Detailed Implementation Plan
- H-Account Operations Plan
- H-Account Review of Strategy November 2007

External Resources

- The Good Enough Guide to Impact Measurement and Accountability in Emergencies
- The HAP Standard for Certification
- HAP Implementation Guide

Most of the above should be available on World Vision's internal Relief Forum database, the ECB Project's share point or the HAP Website, but for more information please contact either

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