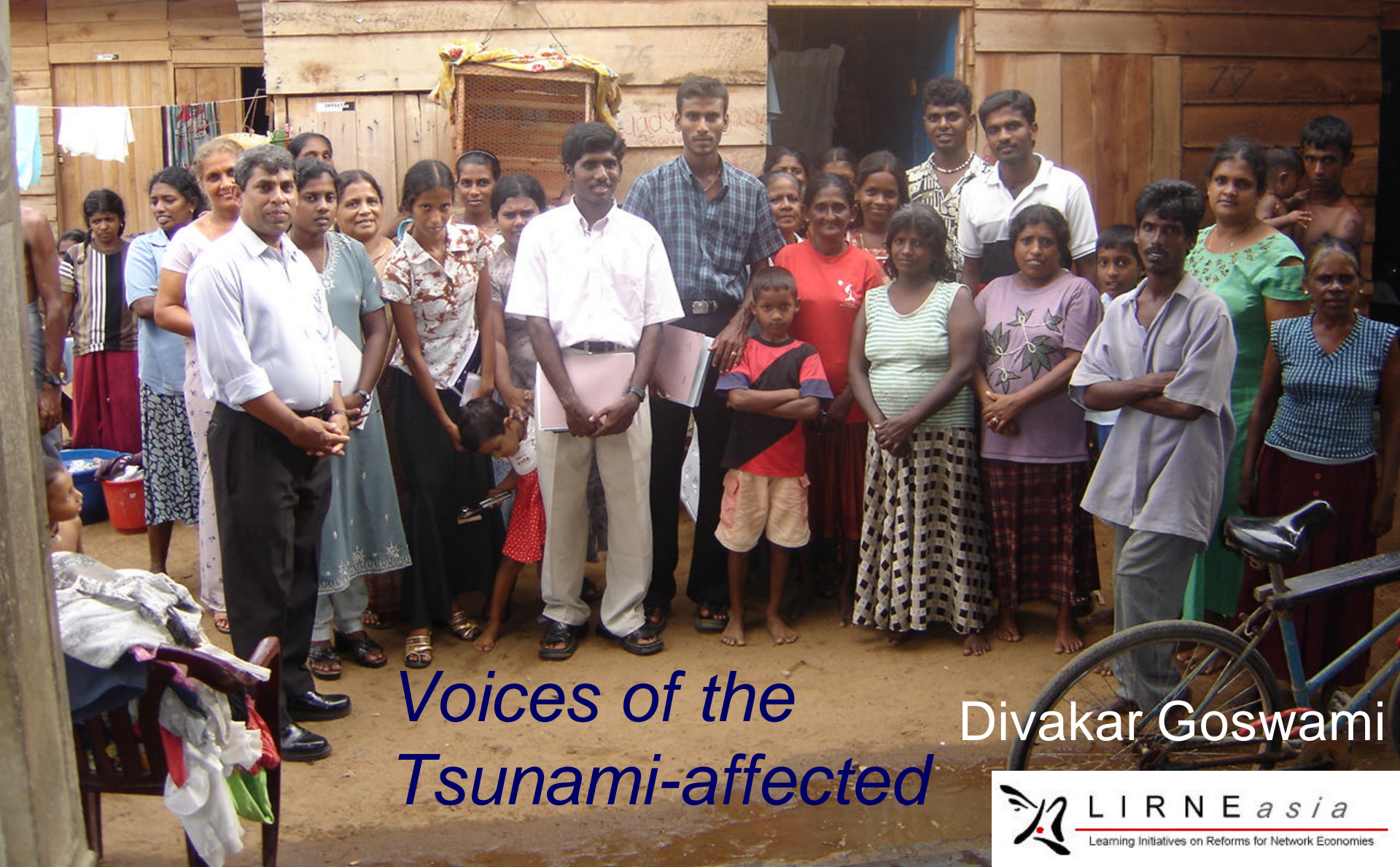




# Webhamuva.org



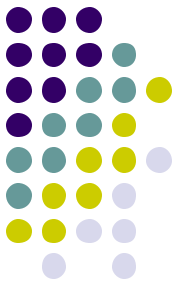
*Voices of the  
Tsunami-affected*

Divakar Goswami



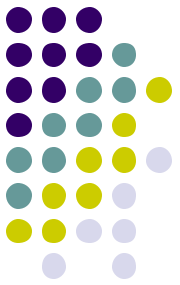
LIRNEasia

Learning Initiatives on Reforms for Network Economies



# Project Objectives

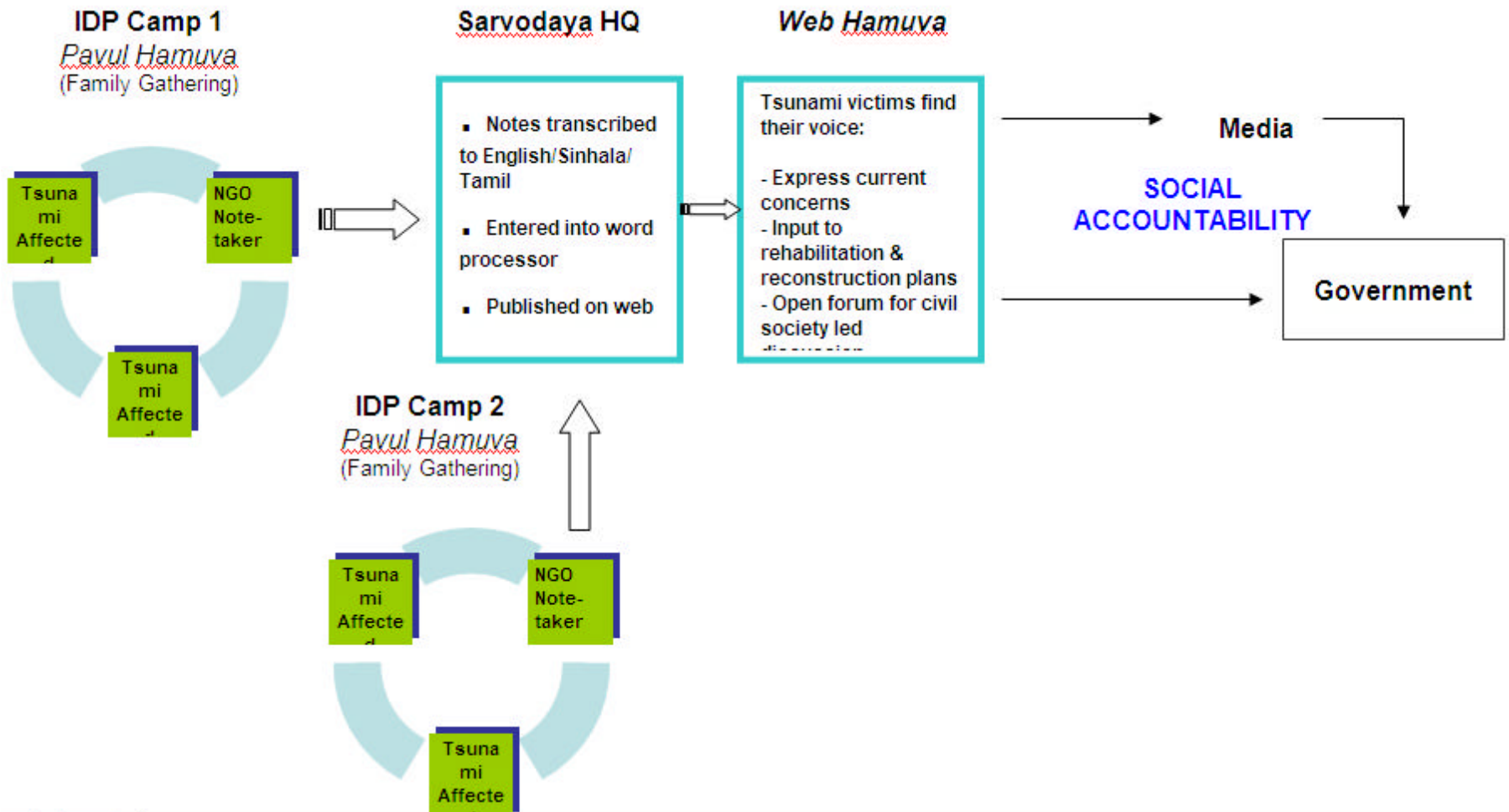
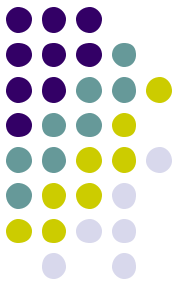
- Biggest shortcomings of post Tsunami reconstruction and rehabilitation has been that affected persons have not been duly consulted in the process.
- To ensure voices and interests of the displaced tsunami victims are heard widely.
- To get media coverage of needs and concerns of tsunami victims so (I)NGOs, government agencies can see where they are falling short.



# Project activities

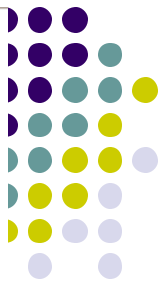
- Expansion of Sarvodaya's *pavul hamuva* or “family gathering” tradition to a global, online audience.
- Sarvodaya staff visit tsunami-affected villages and participate in *pavul hamuvas* and take notes in Sinhala or Tamil.
- Statements are translated and transcribed into English and sent by email to LIRNEasia.
- Posted on blog site: [www.webhamuva.org](http://www.webhamuva.org)

# Webhamuva Project Schematically

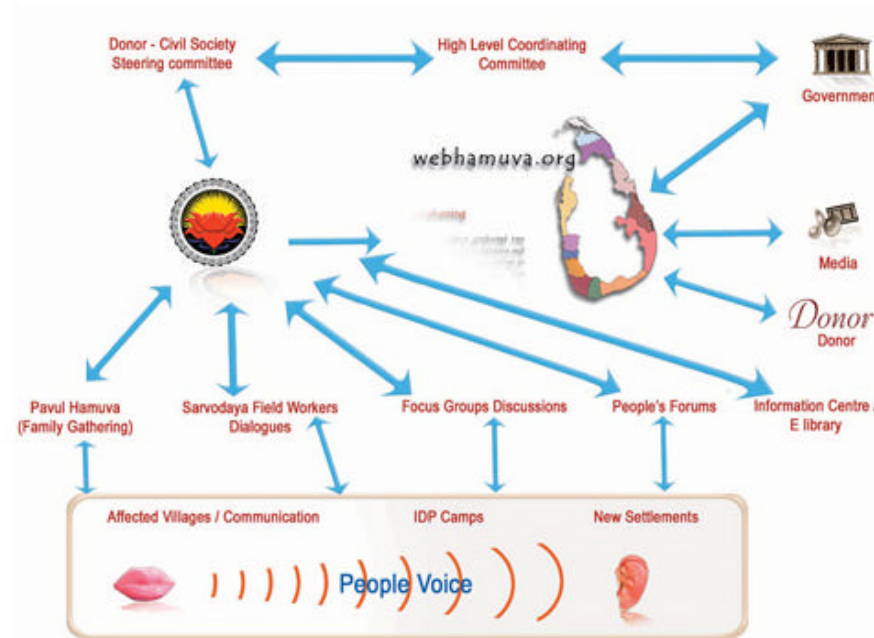




# webhamuva.org



## About Us

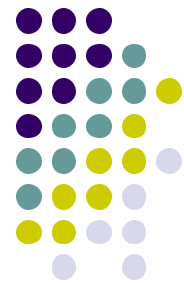
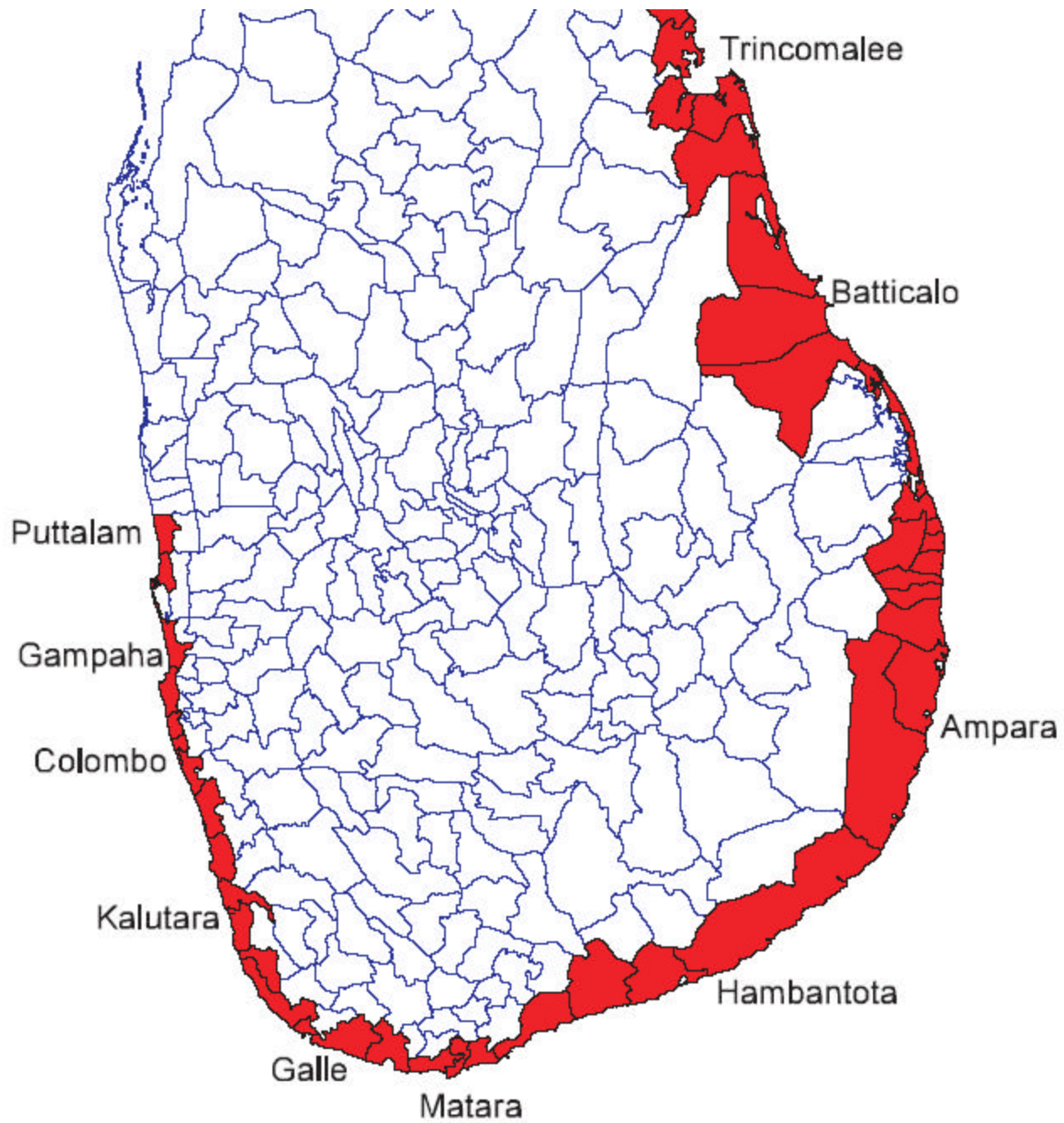


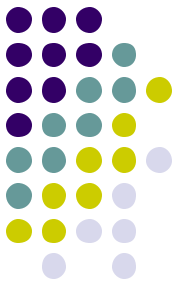
- Colombo (2)
- Kalutara (11)
- Matara (4)
- Hambantota (1)
- Ampara (1)
- Trincomalee (5)
- Sinhala (3)

Expanding the Pavul Hamuva  
(family gathering) online



Sarvodaya, the largest non governmental organization in Sri Lanka, is active all along the affected coast. They have a presence in villages in nearly all the tsunami affected districts, including Colombo, Kalutara, Matara, Hambantota, Jaffna, Ampara, Kalmunai Batticaloa Trincomalee and Gannaha. One of the key



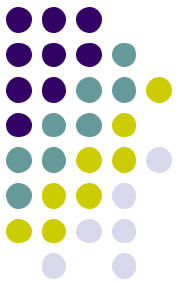


# People's voices on livelihoods

From statements made in different districts, **overriding concern is how to get back their livelihoods.**

- **Moratuwella** (Colombo dist): *All assistance we have received consist of victuals and clothing. We not wish to get any more of these. What we yearn for is assistance to strengthen our capacities to re-start a normal life.*
- **Payagala** (Kalutara dist): *I asked for a three-wheeler that I could drive easily. However, I'm not getting one. It is difficult for me to do a job with outsiders. What we really need is a way to earn.*
- **Gandara** (Matara dist): *We don't need any aid. Now at least give us a loan at an easy interest rate. We shall show the ocean that beat us down how we can get up by raising an income from that ocean itself. Now we want only that.*
- **Weligama** (Matara dist): *If you are going to help us now, give us a loan at a concessionary rate. We would like to once again live without being a burden to anyone.*

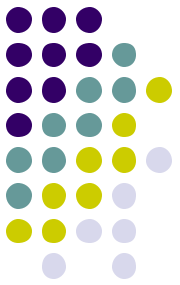
# People's voices on housing



Number of concerns with housing:

## 1. “flat” or apartment style housing that doesn’t suit their way of life

- **Athagama** (Kalutara): *There are about five to seven houses in a row. They are in Parangiwatta. Oh, we can’t stay in flats, no. What’s the point of housing like that? They’re giving for free, that’s true. But they’re useless for us.*
- *Because they’re apparently making flats about seven connected to each other. The two floors are for two families. So there’ll be fighting about everything. We are losing all our independence because of this. We don’t know what kind of people we’ll fall next to. Also, we’ll be unable to leave a girl child in house by herself even in an emergency. We feel that we’ll fall into a great difficulty.*
- **Weligama** (Matara): *The people did not like the government houses because those houses will be flats.*

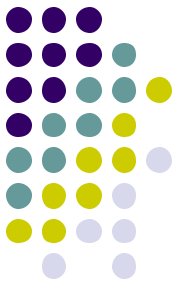


# People's voices on housing

## 2. Houses relocated far from livelihood

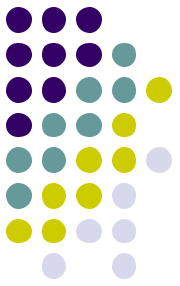
- **Wadduwa** (Kalutara): *We're getting houses from Weragama. Next month, the people in the two front houses are going. We'll have to go to Weragama. But even then, we're going to have to come back here. We raise pigs and chicken. We make jardi. So we have to come back here to do the fishing work. Otherwise, what are we to stay home and do? If we don't earn something to buy that day's food, how are we to live?*
- **Thalpitiya** (Kalutara): *"We're getting houses permanently from Weragama. However we can't tell when we'll be given them. It is very far from here to there. We have to go by bus to the area they call the Weragama Housing Scheme. There is only one bus on that road, that also only at some times. Weragama is on a side road off the Galle Road. So we have to go by three-wheeler. Even for the bus, a lot of money goes. We do fishing work. There they are building houses on ten perches for each. That's good for us. I'm thinking of doing a self-employment activity when I go there. It'll be too much trouble to come here for the fishing work."*

# *Housing issues*



- Issues surrounding land, resettlement and housing appear to be the most pressing issues.
- Resettlement in permanent housing has been slow and people are frustrated.
- Many people have suggested that they be given land and they will build their own houses
- Some housing schemes with 80+ houses have only 5 toilets, creating unsanitary and unsafe condition especially for women.

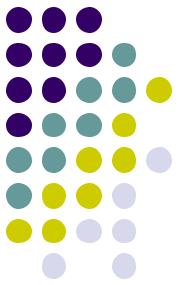
# *Summary of findings from Kalutara & Hambantota*



- **Kalutara**

- Fear of living.
- Homelessness and inclusion of existing houses within 100 meters.
- Unemployment.
- Insufficient of community health facilities.
- Health Problems of the people who especially live in tents.
- Interruption of child mental situation and problems concerning personality.
- Lack of facilities for child education.
- Unsatisfactory implementation of relief services which do not always go to the needy individuals.

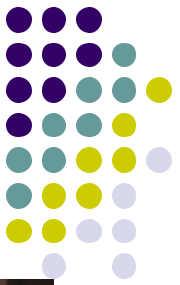
# *Summary of findings from Kalutara & Hambantota*



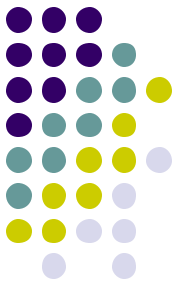
- **Hambantota**

- Problems of sustaining children's education.
- Problems of loss of jobs – self employment like masonry, fishing and carpentry etc.
- Loss of houses within 100 meters and beyond following tsunami and lack of suitable land to construct houses.
- Issues of mental stress and mental pressure.
- Insufficient supply of drinking water and problems of sanitation.
- Difficulty of paying credit obtained for private businesses.
- Problems of life security.
- Problems of sustaining education and ensure the security of children who lost their parents

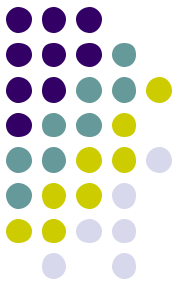
# Training of interviewers



# Interviewing the tsunami affected



# Interviewing the tsunami affected





# Media coverage of tsunami voices



## MAIN SECTION

Front Page  
News  
Editorial  
Opinion  
Financial Times  
Sports  
Features  
**Mirror Life**  
Obituaries

## GROUP SITES

The Sunday Times  
Hi!! Magazine  
Wijeya Pariganaka

Archives

Mirror Life

## Survivors and their GRIEVANCES



Construction of a pre-school at Kalmunai

*In Kinniya, Trincomalee, S. Shafique, a fisherman by vocation and the head of a six-member household, says that his family is housed at a school camp. Hot on the heels of the Tsunami, his latest catastrophe is the floods and his house is currently under two feet of water. To add to these woes, the mosquito menace is also perennial.*

**By Ravi Ladduwahetty**

A year has passed since the most devastating experience. Dozens of governmental, non-governmental, and private organizations have spent the past 12 months engaged in projects to rebuild the lives of those who survived the giant waves, but lost their loved ones, homes, or livelihoods to the catastrophe. While these programs have been initiated and run with excellent intentions, there have been many allegations levelled at them. Foremost among these has been that most of them have ignored the suggestions, ideas, and wishes of the affected community. Individuals have expressed that organizations have often come into their villages and distributed items or set up programs according to their own beliefs rather than by making a needs-assessment among the affected people.

Sarvodaya has initiated and activated its development programs at the grassroots level, taking the ideas and suggestions of benefiting people as the foundation of the schemes and their active participation as the main component of the projects. However, the movement recognized that this might not be the way that all organizations conducting post-Tsunami work coordinate their activities. So in a bid to give voices

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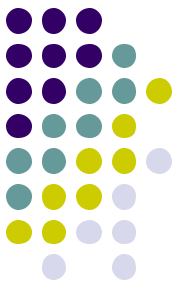
Sarvodaya activated the Webhamuva program in 50 Sarvodaya Service villages located in all Tsunami-affected districts. Funded by the World Bank and run by LIRNEasia, this program is essentially an expansion of Sarvodaya's pavul hamuva or "family gathering" tradition to an online-scale. The 'avul hamuva' is a regular gathering of people in Sarvodaya villages at group discussions, where the participants converse about their lives, their village, and its development. Under the Webhamuva program, staff of LIRNEasia visit Tsunami-affected areas and question people about the effects of the tidal wave on their families and the village and the current status of their lives. They record these answers, transcribe and translate them, and publish the text on the regularly-updated website, [www.webhamuva.org](http://www.webhamuva.org), which can be accessed by anyone from around the world. This article was written based on some of the ideas expressed on the website by people in the Eastern and Northern provinces.



Prelude to a housing scheme opening at Samudragama

People from the Eastern Province, especially Trincomalee district, were the most voluble about their experiences after the devastation. The cornerstone of the issues at hand is the lack of self employment opportunities, the delay on the part of the government to provide fishing equipment, the stoppage of food stamps, and the lack of bicycles for school children who have to trek vast distances to get to school. The same problems were manifest in the Northern Province as well. Individuals housed in the transit camps made the same observations. They are also disappointed that they did not get funding to replace their lost fishing equipment.

# Global Voices Online hosted by the Harvard Law School



- Global Voices Online is a blog aggregator for South Asia that displays Webhamuva content when new material is posted.
- Kottu.org is a Sri Lankan Blog aggregator that subscribes to Webhamuva feed

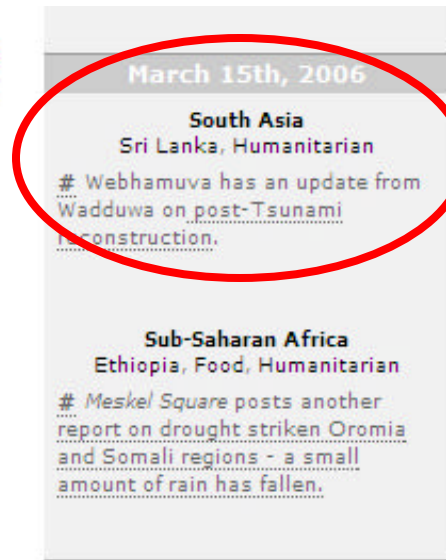
Saddam ruled Iraq.” and “we have hope and I see this hope even in the words of those that are cynical about the outcome of the political process”. He ends defiantly: “And yes...Iraq will be the model.”

*Riverbend sees things differently:*

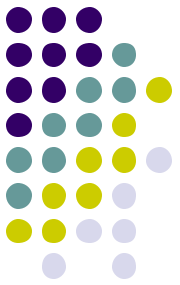
“It has been three years since the beginning of the war that marked the end of Iraq’s independence. Three years of occupation and bloodshed.

She fears the present:

“The real fear is the mentality of so many people lately- the rift that seems to have worked it’s way through the very heart of the country, dividing people. It’s disheartening to talk to acquaintances- sophisticated, civilized people-



# LIRNEasia: [www.lirneasia.net](http://www.lirneasia.net)



- Mission: *To improve the lives the people of Asia by making it easier to make use of the information and communication technologies they need; by facilitating the reform of the laws, policies and regulations to enable those uses; by building Asia-based human capacity through research, training, consulting and advocacy.*
- Contact: Divakar Goswami, *Director of Organizational Development & Projects*  
E-mail: [goswami@lirne.net](mailto:goswami@lirne.net)