

## **Main Report**

### **1. Introduction: objectives and methodology**

Following the immediate tsunami relief operation, it has become clear that permanent shelter is one of the main priorities for tsunami survivors. The issue has been affected by the government's decision to enforce a "no-build" coastal buffer zone of 100 metres in the south and west and 200 metres in the north and east. While there has been much debate about the buffer zone, there has been almost no systematic attempt to objectively find out the preference of tsunami affected households. Outside the buffer zone there are also major challenges of rebuilding in the same location through government grants with World Bank assistance. Little is known about the preferences of people outside the buffer zone to rebuild in the same location and the constraints they face in terms of accessing the funds, and finding labour and materials.

The objective of this assessment is to survey the views of tsunami survivors in order to inform decisions regarding housing and relocation issues by the Government of Sri Lanka, the World Bank and other interested organizations. The survey is based on detailed interviews with 622 randomly selected households – half from outside the buffer zone and half from inside the buffer zone. This presents, to our knowledge, the largest, most scientifically robust attempt to date to assess the views of tsunami survivors on these key issues.

Data was collected from 14 Grama Niladari divisions (GNDs) in 6 affected districts<sup>1</sup> during April 2005. The interviews were conducted in the weeks immediately after the government made a formal tsunami warning on the night of March 28<sup>th</sup> 2005 which led to large scale evacuation of coastal areas, although fortunately the tsunami did not occur. Household interviews were complemented by focus groups in the 14 GNDs and interviews with key informants. In addition, officers in charge of land were interviewed in the Divisional Secretary office covering each GND. A summary of the methodology is presented in chapter 6. The detailed questionnaires are available separately.

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<sup>1</sup> The original intention to include Jaffna and Malativu was prevented by delays in LTTE agreement for the survey work to proceed.