A study of support-based housing and community participation in the Million Houses Programme

Sri Lanka 1977-1989

RESEARCH REPORT

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"If you give a man a decent home, you have laid the sure foundation of making him a decent and useful member of the community. … The benefits of providing a home is not only material but also moral and spiritual."[1]

In the years leading up to Premadasa's Prime Ministership, Sri Lanka faced a growing population and an overwhelming housing shortage. During the 1970s, Sri Lanka lacked the financial stability that many first world countries would otherwise rely upon to remedy poor housing standards. At the time, approximately 11.5 million Sri Lankans lived in slum or shanty settlements.

What ensued over the following twelve years was an evolutionary journey from welfare orientated, centrally administered public housing, to a decentralised, devolved community housing programme culminating in the Million Houses Programme (MHP).

The MHP represented a paradigm shift from hegemonic paternalism to a 'people centred' empowerment. The simplicity and sensibility of this philosophy is represented in the MHP slogan: "***Minimal intervention, Maximal support by the State, Maximal involvement of builder families***".

Through the MHP, the common dweller took on the role of 'builder' and 'decider' to inevitably "create, deliver and take responsibility for their [own] self-improvement."[2] The community acted as the 'deciders' and 'doers', and the State supported them through technical, managerial and financial means. The two sides worked together towards the common goal of national housing development for the alleviation of poverty.

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[1] Address by Hon. R. Premadasa, M.P. at the 4th Session of the UN Convention on Housing Settlements in Manila (27 April 1981) "Housing and Shelter – People's Birthright".

[2] Sirivardana, Susil. 1998, 'Housing Mainstreams: A case study in learning', Ministry of Local Government, Housing and Construction, National Housing Development Authority, paper presented at the Washington Senior Level Shelter Policy Seminary, Washington at 23.

The programme's open and willing participatory focus, trusting relationship between community and State officers, reduced cost to the State, dweller construction and decision making, together with user satisfaction and security of tenure made this housing initiative a success.

The MHP endeavoured to achieve mass shelter for the lower socio-economic brackets, and proved that mass housing could be achieve sustainably through support-based or enabling–based housing methodology. This was achieved through community participation and micro-loans.

Despite earnest strides toward permanently alleviating poor housing standards, political and social conflicts of the nation continue to plague any opportunity for civilian stability. It is a disappointment that the momentum of the MHP has largely been lost to pressing civil conflicts. After the Premadasa government's election loss in 1988, housing has not regained the status of national priority.

Now, almost twenty years on, the MHP houses embody the pride and enthusiasm of supported and enabled participants who realised their housing dreams. The many thriving MHP communities remain proof that considered government assistance to low socio-economic communities can be powerfully instrumental towards self determination and the alleviation of poor living standards.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

The country has been colonised by several powers since the 16th century. It gained Independence on the 4th February 1948 from Britain. Throughout its history it has been plagued with civil unrest and insurgency. Fluid development of all sectors of the country had little opportunity to form. Amidst these historical vicissitudes, Sri Lanka evolved an exceptional housing policy. Like most third world nations, the new Republic of Sri Lanka faced increasing population and decreasing standards of living. The Million Houses Programme (MHP) was established to address the most basic of human rights – shelter, access to drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities.

The central premise of the programme was to enable a million low income people to build their own houses, and for the government to participate in the 'people's process' by taking on a supportive role in regard to technical expertise, facilitative skills and financing.

A general overview of Sri Lankan housing policy is tabulated below.

Phase	Period	Programme	Policy Perception (A)	Paradigm (B)
I	Pre 1977	-	Housing as Welfare	Provider-based
II	1978-1983	Hundred Thousand Houses Programme (HTHP)	Housing as Development	Provider-based
III	1984-1989	Million Houses Programme (MHP)	Housing as Development	Support-based

Figure 1 The evolution of Sri Lankan housing policy[3]

I will now discuss the policy perception and housing paradigm of the phases detailed above.

Policy Perception (A)

Figure 1 shows that during the periods between Phase I and Phase II the government's 'Policy Perception' (A) on housing changed from housing as **welfare** to housing as **development**.

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[3] Sirivardana, S. 1988. p. 2.

Welfare housing is public housing for low income dwellers provided by the government without community participation

Development housing is housing for low income dwellers with community participation and decision making.

Debate over which was the best policy to adopt was fiercely argued in parliament. From the two politically antithetical perceptions of how housing should be administered came the Hundred Thousand Houses Programme (HTHP) – a combination of both welfare and development policy was employed. The HTHP later evolved into a completely development based approach in the MHP.

Paradigm (B)

Figure 1 shows at Phases I and II the paradigmatic framework (B) remains the same – 'Provider based'. A '**provider-based**' paradigm refers to housing that is financed and delivered by the government to low socio-economic communitites as public housing.

At Phase III a '**support-based**' housing paradigm was employed and this meant that government provided access to land, technical construction support and micro loans to low socio-economic citizens whom designed, financed and delivered their own houses.

This paper will first discuss the historical and political background of Sri Lankan housing policy before discussing the HTHP and finally the MHP.

Phase I: Pre –1977

Historical Background

Classical Period

Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, the classical period capitals of Sri Lanka, boast the country's most splendid ruins. However, there is not much known about the housing at that time. The reason for this is quite simple: the use of permanent building materials such as stone, burnt brick and tile was forbidden except for public, royal or religious buildings. Village houses were constructed from mud and wattles, and roofed with straw or palm leaf. These structures quickly disintegrated.

Figure 2 Polonnaruwa ruin[4]

Figure 3 Polonnaruwa ruin[5]

Medieval Period

This period spanned from the fall of Polonnaruwa, which marked the shift of population from the dry to the wet-zone in the 13th Century, to the final domination of the Kandyan Kingdom by the British at the beginning of the 19th Century. Temples and palaces continued to be built, though at a much smaller scale than earlier times. Reliance was increasingly on brick and timber rather than stone. This was perhaps due to the mountainous and timber-rich forest of the Kandyan countryside.

An English sailor held prisoner by the Kandyan Kingdom mid 17th century noted the houses to be "small, low thatched cottages, built with sticks, daubed with clay, the walls made very smooth. Houses were not permitted above one storey, nor could they use tiles or cover walls with lime … The great people had two buildings opposite to the other, joined together on each side with a wall which makes a square

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[4] Photo by Sonya Redman 2006.
[5] Photo by Sonya Redman 2006.

Courtyard in the middle."[6] The materials used for nobleman were the same for the poor. The only difference was the complexity of plan and size.

Medieval House Plan
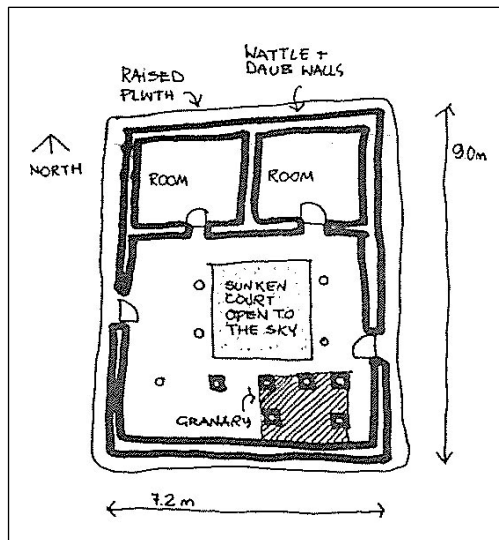
Figure 4 Yeoman's house[7] (note the open courtyard and its surrounding verandah)

The shift to the wet-zone necessitated greater attention to rooves, and these became the dominant element of Kandyan architecture. The Kandyan roof is hipped with two distinct angles of pitch and is clad in flat clay tile laid in geometric patterns. The roof structure is usually post and cross beam. The Kandyans developed hipped corners supported by elaborately carved fan rafters[8] which remains their archetypal style today.

Figure 5 Kandyan style rafters[9]

Figure 6 Elaborate decoration[10]

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[6] Robson, D.G. 1984, Aided-Self-Help Housing in Sri Lanka 1977 to 1982, Report prepared for the Overseas Development Administration of the United Kingdom, London, p. 17.
[7] Robson, D.G. 1984, p. 19.
[8] Robson, D.G. 1984, p. 18.
[9] Rafters from the Tooth Temple in Kandy. Photo by Sonya Redman 2006.
[10] Rafters from the Tooth Temple in Kandy. Photo by Sonya Redman 2006.

<u>Colonial Period</u>

The Portuguese established themselves in Sri Lanka from the beginning of the 16th century. Their half-round clay roof tiles and chunky stuccoed columns influenced domestic architecture.

The Dutch displaced the Portuguese during the 17th century. They brought town planning and left many extremely beautiful houses decorated in the style of Dutch baroque. They influenced domestic spatial elements such as front and rear verandahs and high ceiling central halls.

The British inturn displaced the Dutch at the end of the 18th century. The government built line houses[11] for plantation workers and civil servants.

Figure 7 Portuguese built church[12]

Figure 8 Colonial reminder in Colombo[13]
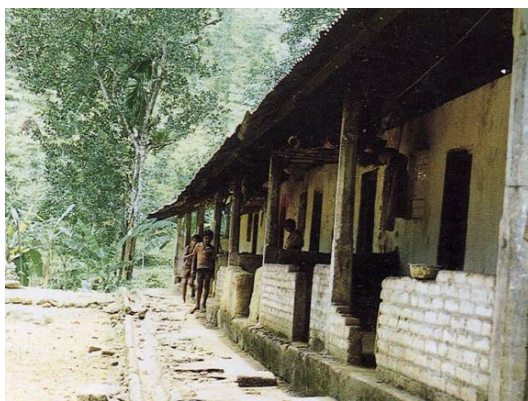
Figure 9 Older line houses on tea plantations[14]

Figure 10 Newer line houses[15]

[11] Line Buildings were single room units run back to back under a common roof with 16 'rooms' to a block and generally consist of a room and a veranda with a total are of less than 16 square meters.
[12] Photo by Sonya Redman 2006.
[13] Photo by Sonya Redman 2006.
[14] Photo by Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[15] Photo by Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

<u>Second World War 1939</u>

The Second World War diverted British funds and building materials to support the war effort. The consequent cessation of residential construction left a war time scarcity of housing. The population in the years preceding independence grew apace. British-owned estates were expanding for trade and poor rural folk were pushed towards the city.[16] With a government that refused to provide more housing for the working classes, low income earners were forced to expand their squatter settlements within the cities, especially Colombo. The growing discontentment of the urban population to increases in house rents compelled the colonial government of Sri Lanka to introduce legislation to regulate rents.

The *Rent Restriction Act* of 1941 thus became the first piece of housing legislation introduced in the history of Sri Lanka with a purpose of regulating rent. Following this, social legislation introduced to regulate landlord-tenant relationships became the dominant feature of housing policy in Sri Lanka until 1977.[17] However, this was abolished in the 1980's because of its serious disincentive to landlords to upkeep housing to a habitable standard.

<u>Independence 1948</u>

Post Independence Sri Lanka faced continuing economic crises. Relying heavily on aid and facing increasing civil unrest, the population of 7 million[18] suffered with limited health, education and agricultural support. Housing was not a priority. Housing was constrained by a number of factors inhibiting progression, for example: the paucity of public sector resources available for investment, the limited capacity of the public sector delivery system, and the inability of the beneficiaries to pay for housing solutions provided by the government.[19]

<u>An increase in slum and shanty settlements during the 1970s</u>

Slum and shanty dwellings exponentially increased as a means of accommodating the sharp increase in population.[20] This was concomitant with concerning levels of sanitation and education. At this point the 'informal' settlements were considered

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[16] Robson, D. G. 1984, p. 23.

[17] Weerapana, D. (date unknown) 'Evolution of a support policy of shelter- the experience of Sri Lanka', <u>Ministry of Local Government: Housing and Construction, Policy and Planning</u>, Development Planning Unit, London, p. 8.

[18] 1988, *Statistical Pocket Book of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka 1988*, Department of Census and Statistics; Ministry of Plan Implementation, Colombo, p. 9. Rural living population 85%, Urban 15% at page 21

[19] Weerapana, D. p. 4.

[20] Population increase was mainly attributable to a migration of rural people to the city.

illegal. 'Makeshift' dwellings existed on public land outside planning legislation. And so, as illegal structures, the official reaction to these settlements was (and still is in many countries) to "clear"[21] the dwellings. Upgrading was not viewed as an option.[22] Since there was no security of tenure for shanty and slum dwellers, they were constantly under threat of losing their homes.

Figure 11 Poor housing standards in shanties prevalent in urban and rural areas[23]

The population in 1977 grew to 14 million.[24] Of them, approximately 2.5 million[25] were in private housing; the residual 'unofficially' housed population of 11.5 million (unaccounted for by the census) were living in slum[26] and shanty[27] settlements or unofficial 'makeshift' housing. 22 percent of the population resided in urban areas whilst 78 percent were in rural areas.

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[21] Sirivardana, S., Gunaratna, K., Jayaratne, K., Edirisinghe, J. 1991, 'Shelter in Sri Lanka 1978-1991: An Overview of Policies & Performance', National Housing Development Authority, Colombo, p. 23. A 1963 Special Committee Housing Report.
[22] Sirivardana, S., Gunaratna, K., Jayaratne, K., Edirisinghe, J. 1991, p. 23
[23] Photo by Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[24] Sirivardana, S. 1988, p. 4; Sirivardana, S., Gunaratna, K., Jayaratne, K., Edirisinghe, J. 1991, p. 9.
[25] 1988, Statistical Pocket Book of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka 1988. An estimated valued acquired by averaging 1963 and 1971 census results and adding the percentage increase from those years to obtain the likely percentage for 1981, p. 37.
[26] A shanty settlement is a complex network of makeshift housing on council land.
[27] Slum settlements are dilapidated old mansions divided into small housing units.

Figure 12 Urban shanty settlement[28]

Figure 13 Shanty shop[29]

Figure 14 Rural Housing[30]

Figure 15 Rural Housing[31]

Despite employment, a poorer citizen's income level was not sufficient enough to acquire land lawfully. The canal banks, road and railway reservations, together with marginal State and private lands were the only locations the poor had access to. They were compelled to squat on whatever vacant land they could find.

Figure 16 Urban shanties along canal[32]

Figure 17 Urban shanties along railway line[33]

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[28] Photo by Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[29] Photo by Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[30] Photo by Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[31] Photo by Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[32] Photo by Sonya Redman 2006.

With approximately 11.5 million Sri Lankans living in slum or shanty settlements, pressure was mounting to address the abundantly inadequate quality and quantity of low income housing.

In the 1970s Peter Keunaman MP was the Housing Minister of the Centre Left coalition government.[34] Keunaman MP was influenced by the *Mutual Group Self Help* programme implemented by Fidel Castro in Cuba[35] and the ideas present in *The Housing Question* 1887 written by Minister of Housing and a leader of the Soviet communist party, Frederick Engles MP.[36] Keunaman MP introduced the precedents for the concept of 'support based' housing to Sri Lankan politics that went on to form the foundation of the MHP.

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[33] Photo by Sonya Redman 2006.
[34] Mrs Sirimavo Bandaranayake Government 1970 – 1977. It was a coalition of left parties viz. Lanka Samasamaja Party and Sri Lanka Communist Party and the Centre Left Sri Lanka Freedom Party.
[35] This information was provided by Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi
[36] Sirivardana, S. 1988, p. 5. The Engels paper also highlighted the detrimental effect of heavily regulated landlord and eviction statutes that inadvertently promoted growth in the informal sector. As slums and shanty settlements grew a change needed to happen.

Legislative reforms

A slum and shanty dweller's illegal status

The inability of slum and shanty dwellers to buy land forced them into a perpetual state of 'illegal' citizenship. 'Official' or 'formal' residency through ownership of land was the only way to establish legal citizenship. The law at the time stated that those without a legal place of residence were not citizens. This meant that all squatters who were unable to purchase land forewent legal and human rights, and "forced to languish without recognition or right to self-development by the legal system and authorities."[37]

Slum and shanty dwellers represented the overwhelming majority of the Sri Lankan population. To have to be recognised by their nation State for their legal and human rights status is an abhorrent prospect. The overwhelming proportion of Sri Lankans who existed, and whom may still exist in this category, is astounding. If citizenship and legal rights would not be addressed then increased home ownership was an important step forward for Sri Lankan human rights.

Acknowledgement and State responsibility for 'informal' settlements

In 1973 the government passed the *Common Amenities Board Law*. This legislation recognised the existence of the settlements and the government's responsibility to provide and maintain services to them.

Under section 5 (d), the Common Amenities Board (CAB) was required to:

> "*provide and maintain … services including water, sewerage, drainage, gas, electricity, garbage disposal, air-conditioning, telephone, radio … to condominium properties.*"[38]

That same year Keunaman MP introduced the *Ceiling on Housing and Property Law* which capped the amount of housing owned by any one individual or one family. It allowed the government to acquire vast amounts of land from wealthy land owner families and private developers.

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[37] Sirivardana, S., Lankatilleke, L. 1987, p. 5.
[38] "Condominium Property" means property comprising land with a building or buildings of more than one storey and having more than one independent unit of residential or non-residential accommodation. Ceiling Housing Board Law No. 1 of 1973 at p. 11.

Under section 2 (1) *Ceiling on Housing and Property Law*:

> "*The maximum number of houses which may be owned by an individual who is a member of a family shall be such number of houses which together with the number of houses owned by the other members of that family is equivalent to the number of dependent children, if any, in that family, increased by two.*"

Under section 2 (2) *Ceiling on Housing and Property Law*:

> "*The maximum number of houses which may be owned by an individual who is not a member of a family shall be two.*"

The *Land Reform Act* 1972 was another powerful Act that allowed the government to nationalise land owned by foreign companies (mostly British). The Act also limited land ownership amongst individuals to 25 acres of wet land (paddy land) and 25 acres of dry land. An owner could own 50 acres having both, but only 25 acres if they possessed one type.[39]

The obligation to maintain reclaimed land now lay with the government. The government enlisted the Common Amenities Board as its agent to undertake this responsibility.

The *Rent Restriction Act* of 1941 was also amended in 1980. The Act was now detrimental as it deterred landlords from upgrading their properties to basic levels of habitability. The rent restriction provisions acted as a disincentive for landlords to invest and upkeep in their properties. It, in effect, trapped poorer renters in abominable living conditions.

These legislative reforms were fundamental to the restructuring of housing policy in Sri Lanka. It gave the government an enormous amount of land to use in a way they saw fit. Without granting this somewhat indulgent reform measure (by capitalist standards), the government would not have obtained the control and flexibility it needed to achieve the objectives of the MHP.

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[39] This information was provided by Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

Premadasa PM and housing on the political agenda

In 1977, Mr. Ranasinghe Premadasa[40] was elected Prime Minister. He had three main agendas:

1. An Accelerated Mahaweli Programme
2. Establishment of Free Trade Zone
3. A Housing Programme[41]

Figure 18 Premadasa PM[42]

Premadasa PM considered housing crucial to building a nation. In his speech "Housing and Shelter – People's Birthright" in 1981 he said:

> "*To us the importance of a home – the crucible in which the soul of the nation is forged through the family – and its importance in maintaining traditions and values of the society are abundantly clear.*
> *I believe, with all my heart that if you give a man a decent home, you have laid the sure foundation of making him a decent and useful member of the community. Think then of the tremendous savings – the social costs – that you see through the prevention of disease, disorder, lawlessness, the pollution of the environment and the loss of life itself if you can give a man a home. I can illustrate with many examples from my own country that the benefits of providing a home is not only material but also moral and spiritual.*"[43]

Sirivardana wrote that Premadasa PM introduced outward-looking policies of economic liberalisation, rapid employment creation, increased food production and housing programmes as elements of a central goal – to strengthen democracy and relieve the plight of the poor.[44] Sirivardana said Premadasa PM was a "rooted and organic individual with vision … who would talk and learn from anyone, the ordinary

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[40] Sirivardana, S., 1988, p. 6. Premadasa PM began his political career in local city politics. In 1955 he became Deputy Mayor of Colombo before moving into national politics as Minister of Local Government from 1968-1970.

[41] Hameed, I. A. p. 3. Implemented in 1977. In an interview with Mr. Susil Sirivardana on 22 February 2006, he believed Premadasa PM's passion for elevating the state of Sri Lanka's social poverty was derived from his poor and rural background.

[42] Photo by Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

[43] Address by Hon. R. Premadasa, M.P. at the 4th Session of the UN Convention on Housing Settlements in Manila (27 April 1981) "Housing and Shelter – People's Birthright".

[44] Sirivardana, S., 1988, p. 6.

man, the man on the street". He was highly disciplined and "drew his inspiration from the common man."[45]

Dr. Mataraarachchi was less convinced of Sirivardana's glowing praise. Dr. Mataraarachchi suggests Premadasa PM's political use of 'housing and homes' as a major theme in his campaigns was a political ploy to summon an emotive response in his favour from the untapped lower socio economic vote. The theme was directly aimed at the poor and they responded with overwhelming appreciation.[46]

Dr. Mataraarachchi is further convinced that many of the policies during the housing programme's beginnings (most notably the Direct Construction method used in the HTHP) were mechanisms used to financially repay political donations accepted prior to Premadasa PM holding office.

Whatever motivations – honest or political – Premadasa PM did create government bodies to improve housing development.

The creation of a National Housing Development Authority

As well as being Prime Minister, Premadasa PM appointed himself as Minister of Local Government and Housing. This allowed him to oversee the inner workings and implementation if housing strategies. He created two authorities to administer his housing programmes.

1. Urban Development Authority (UDA) for infrastructure[47]; and
2. National Housing Development Authority (NHDA) for housing decisions on cost, technologies, type of building, size and location of houses etc.

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[45] In an interview with Mr. Susil Sirivardana on 22 February 2006
[46] I find it appropriate to note that I spoke to many middle class Sri Lankans during my research stay in Sri Lanka and surprisingly none of them had any knowledge of the housing programmes implemented by Premadasa PM.
[47] Although the UDA was a vital limb to the success of the housing programme, the work and success of the UDA will not be discussed in this essay.

Figure 19 The NHDA building in Colombo

As the new facilitator of housing, the NHDA extended efforts towards five main areas:

1. Loans for middle and lower middle-income housing.

2. Loans for upgrading houses

3. Construction of urban flats

4. Land supply to building societies

5. Administration of regulatory laws[48]

Previously, European housing techniques, materials, layouts and costs used in welfarist public housing were completely unsuitable for the Sri Lankan climatic, social and financial context. The NHDA's task was to reassess the paternal, State administered welfare housing framework and implement a suitable alternative.

During this time in England, John Turner[49] was advocating concepts of local, self-managed housing development, absolute autonomy from centrally administrated housing and Aided Self-Help (ASH) programmes. All these concepts influenced the beginnings of a Sri Lankan paradigm shift in favour of support-based development housing.

Though the focus of this research paper is the success of the MHP, it cannot be explored without a thorough examination of the experimental HTHP.

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[48] Sirivardana, S. 1988, p. 5.
[49] John Turner was a strong advocate of autonomous social housing. His concepts have been widely accepted throughout modern Europe. See bibliography for reference books.

Phase II: 1978 – 83: Hundred Thousand Houses Programme

The HTHP was a State-dominated, provider-based housing programme previously unmatched in scale and political commitment. The programme anticipated building 100,000 housing units over a 5-year span[50] - a target previously unseen in a third world country.

Unlike housing projects before it, the HTHP was *a combination* of providing houses, as well as supporting citizens to build their own houses. Low-income earners had the opportunity to become land owners and homebuilders. The structure of the HTHP is tabulated below.

HTHP sub streams	Urban or Rural	Method of Construction	Housing Units
• Large Neighbourhood schemes in hinterland Colombo	Urban	Direct Construction	
• Slum and Shanty Upgrading Programme[51]	Urban	Direct Construction	36, 000
• Electorate Housing for Poorest of the Poor	Urban and Rural	Direction Construction (1978-1980) Aided Self Help (1981-1983)	
• Rural Housing Development	Rural	Aided Self Help	
• Village Reawakening[52]	Rural	Aided Self Help	50,000
• Housing Loans	Urban mainly	Self Help	14,000
			100,000

Figure 20 Hundred Thousand Houses Programme Structure[53]

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[50] Sirivardana, S. 1988, p. 7. The private sector, without the support of the government was able to build 400,000 – 500,000 housing units unprogrammed.

[51] Designed to improve the low-income neighbourhood in the urban environment. Aimed at improving the habitat of the urban poor through measure that provide security of tenure and housing finance to improve their own shelter.

[52] The Model Villages Programme was an attempt to evolve a comprehensive approach to village re-awakening in which the improvement of shelter was attempted together with economic, social and moral upliftment of the people. The programme aimed at making satellite rural centres

[53] Sirivardana, S. 1988, p. 7.

Three HTHP methods of construction

Three methods of construction were used:

1. Aided Self Help
2. Direct Construction
3. Self Help

Aided Self Help (ASH)

Administered by the NHDA, Aided Self Help provided –

- Land
- A house plan
- A building manual
- Building materials

Low-income earners repaid the cost of the materials to the NHDA and emerged as the absolute owners of the property.

The advantage of this construction method was its flexibility for settlers to work at their own pace; communities could pool labour and help each other; settlers could alter the house plan if they so chose. Almost all the skilled labour was available within the community group.

Figure 21 Logistics were carried out through whatever means were available[54]

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[54] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

There were different 'housing kits' within the ASH construction method depending on the various religious and climatic parameters of the resident. Figure 22 displays the various design preferences for different religious or cultural groups.
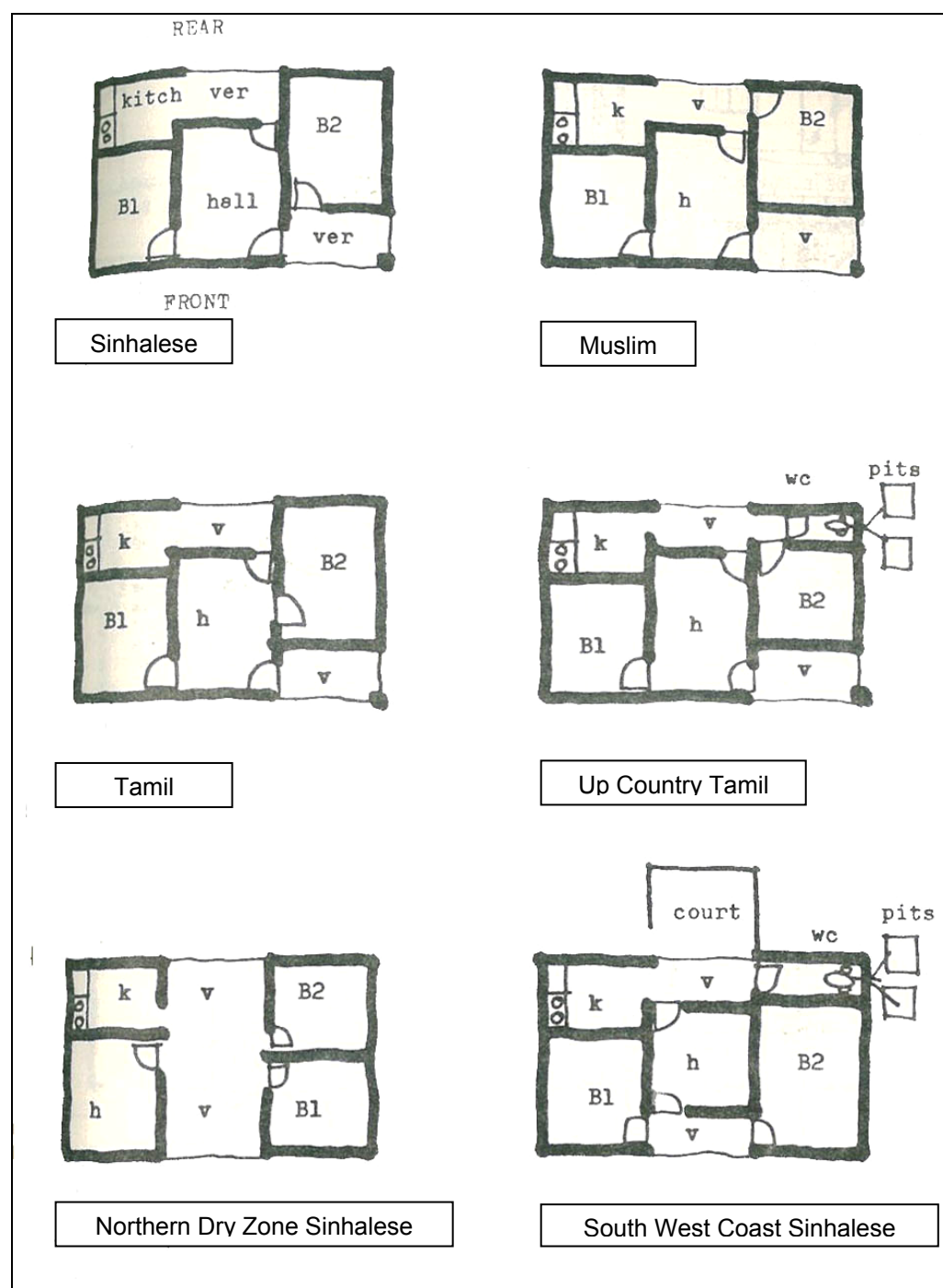

Figure 22 Housing Kits for different religious and cultural groups[55]

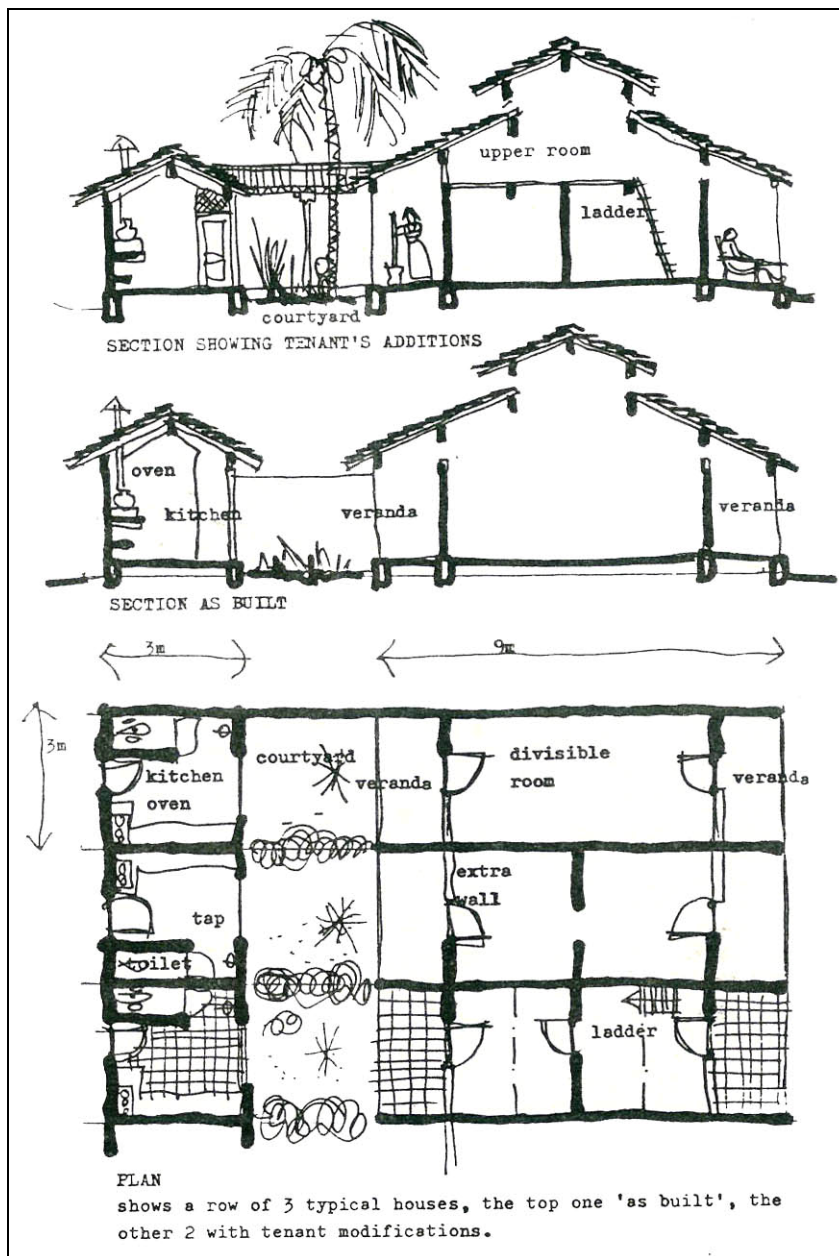|	
v	verandah
k	kitchen
h	hall or family room
B1	bedroom1
B2	second bedroom
wc	toilet

[55] Robson, D. G, p. 153.

Figure 23 Standard House Scheme and Tenant's additional Design Scheme[56]

The Housing Kit was easily adjusted to accommodate the design to a builder's liking. Robson[57] says this freedom also filtered into essential decision-making areas. People were able to make decisions on where to "site [the house] on the plot, which direction to orientate the house, exact positions of the doors and windows, the relative sizes of rooms and the final decoration; and allowed for all stages of traditional ritual, and all the prescriptions of astrology [could] be observed."[58] These options are not available to dwellers of pre-made government housing.

[56] Robson, D. G., 1984p. 152.
[57] Robson, D, G., 1984.
[58] Robson, D, G., 1984 p. 49.

Between 1978-1980 5,000 rural cottages[59] were completed and 13,000 more commenced. This method was especially successful in rural areas because of the availability of land, abundance of materials, and closeness of the community in supporting one another.

The NHDA had the technical role of selecting agreeable sites for housing development. Considerations were:

1. Preference for land allocation was given to organised communities. NHDA officers conversed with the house builder, and the Gramodaya Mandalaya, who was a village leader representative of the community to understand who these were.
2. Preference was given to communities who occupied government or local authority lands.
3. Preference was given to land that was immediately buildable upon. Land that required major filling or earthmoving was secondary.[60]

The ASH construction method relied on the State to administer land. The ASH and DC methods lacked choice in building material and cost of package; it also was challenged in the logistics of supplying materials to site, just and equitable selection and allocation of land, site management, and cost escalations.

Direct Construction (DC)

In the DC option, the NHDA determined the type, size, placement, materials and contractors of the house. Once construction was finished the new house was handed to the settler. This process is the epitome of welfarist hegemony. The DC method had serious cost run-outs, contract management, poor construction quality/short cutting, contractor corruption, and user dissatisfaction with uniform plan designs.

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[59] Each cottage was 333 sq. ft or 385 sq. ft brick and mortar, tiled roofs, cement rendered floors costs Rs. 15, 000, Rs. 18,000 respectively at first. By mid 1980 the cost rose to Rs. 18,000, and Rs. 24,000
[60] Hameed, I. A. p. 13.

Figure 24 Apartment blocks built by the State[61]   Figure 25[62]

Self Help

Self Help was a small housing grant given to families to purchase any materials they needed to upgrade, or to built anew.

Figure 26 House extension made possible[63]

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[61] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[62] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

HTHP Successes

The structure of the HTHP allowed housing to be equally distributed between the 168 Sri Lankan electorates. This was a democratic approach to what used to be a highly politicised exercise in implementing a few high-visibility projects in the capital or its hinterland and failing to provide resources and benefits equally countrywide.

Sirivardana believes equal distribution had two clear and positive effects. Firstly, "the poor were increasingly perceiving that the rhetoric was being translated into reality. Even those who did not directly benefit lived in hope. They respected and believed in the programme. A new trust between the poor and the government was being generated. Secondly, the programme was activating a housing polemic in politics. Housing policy became a political priority.[64]

The HTHP also attempted to marry many issues that are interwoven with housing. These being proper health care, sanitation, environmental protection, responsible agricultural practices, education.

Figure 27 Public information regarding environmental protection[65]

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[63] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[64] Sirivardana, S. 1988, p. 18. Dr. Udagama concurs that there is an "internal problem of inequitable distribution of resources, investment and opportunities at a regional level, … between the urban and rural. … [there] is a very heavy urban bias in development activities." Address by Dr. Deepika Udagama, The Ingram Public Lecture 2007 (26 Aril 2007), "Conflict, Tsunami reconstruction and human development in Sri Lanka: *Lessons to be learnt*" p. 6.
[65] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

HTHP Shortcomings

Cost

The government considered traditional Sri Lankan materials as substandard.[66] Subsequently brick was used for walls, tiles for roofs and cement for floors.[67] The employment of foreign materials for construction caused an increased strain on governmental budgetary allocations. The State's lack of discipline in regard to contractor prices; its insistence in using foreign materials together with inability for low income earners to sustain the high cost of materials, jeopardised the feasibility of the whole programme. Funds were used frivolously and quickly disappeared. Economic rationale was not sufficiently employed and so domestic inflationary pressures compounded by global inflation seriously affected the sustainability of the programme.[68]

Cottage size	Initial Cost per unit	Later cost per unit
Type 1: 333sq ft	Rs. 15,000 (US $830)	Rs. 18,000 (US$1000)
Type 2: 382sq ft	Rs. 18,000 (US$1000)	Rs. 24,000 (US$1300)

Figure 28 Cost per housing unit[69]

Figure 29 Rural brick and tile construction with traditional timber and palm structure at back[70]

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[66] Curiously through the 20th century, Sri Lanka authorities classified houses into three groups; permanent, semi permanent and temporary. In rural areas earthen floors, mud walls and thatched roofs were considered permanent, however in urban areas they were considered temporary and worthy of demolition. Why the government decided to classify their own traditional housing techniques as insufficient for living in both rural and urban areas is beyond understanding. It is also notable that rural folk who migrated to urban areas are extremely comfortable living in traditional structures.

[67] Sirivardana, S., Gunaratna, K., Jayaratne, K., Edirisinghe, J. 1991, p. 21, 23.

[68] Address by Hon. R. Premadasa, M.P. "Housing and Shelter – People's Birthright"; Sirivardana, in response suggests that the HTHP was not fuelling inflation but was an engine of economic development. It created dwellings, food and jobs for the formal and informal economy, directly in construction, and indirectly in construction related fields. He asserts that "housing had emerged as a real and palpable engine of development. And it was emerging not in one place, but almost everywhere. Its impact was at the base… For us, housing was productive; Sirivardana, S. 1988, p. 18.

[69] Address by Hon. Premadasa PM, "Housing and Shelter – People's Birthright" 1981, p. 26.

The MHP remedied this problem by using traditional materials instead of brick and cement, and employing stringent checks and balances. This is discussed later in the MHP phase.

Corruption

There were two main types of corruption which municipal officers had the capacity to exploit at the HTHP phase. The first was a lack of transparency and bias in allocating land sites to low income earners. There were no engrained guidelines as to which family or household was entitled to which site and why.

Secondly, land allocations were being made to those who were not entitled, such as middle income earners and political allies.

Inadequate resources and data

NHDA officers did not always receive comprehensive training, information or data. As a result initial site selections were often poorly done. Unfortunately, those with necessary data and maps, such as planning officers, were not involved in the site selection process.[71]

Relocation and infrastructure

Land was not available for resettlement in town centres. Settlement development sites were moved out to the fringes of the city[72] without adequate transport, water, or sanitation infrastructure.

Disconnection between end user and department officers

There was too great a disconnection between the end users and the departmental officers and decision makers in Colombo. The end users were not able to access the programme on their terms; they were restricted by bureaucratic guidelines.

Poor department co-ordination

Programme delivery difficulties surfaced because departments did not work together. The Housing and Basic Services Programme (in charge of sanitation and services), the Urban Development Agency (responsible for town planning and infrastructural

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[70] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[71] Hameed, I. A. p. 13.
[72] Hameed, I. A. p. 4.

development), and the National Housing Development Authority (NHDA) were supposed to co-ordinate and accommodate each others' programmes. This did not happen.[73] Agencies took their individual responsibilities too strictly and compromised the quality of the entire project.

<u>No community participation</u>

The HTHP was based on the concept of subsidies not on community participation. It did not provide sufficient opportunity for the dweller to make meaningful choices about their home. Although the local community conversed with the NHDA regarding which model of housing they preferred, the authority ultimately made all-important decisions without an avenue for influence or transparency open to the community. User satisfaction was curbed by the limited level of community participation in decision making. This was detrimental to its success.

The NHDA Deputy Manager Lankatilake at the time reported 5 fundamental ideals insufficiently manifest in the HTHP framework.[74]

1. Housing is an activity of the people and not of governments and therefore people should be at the centre of the decision making process.
2. Government has an important gap to fill to realise people's initiatives, i.e. what people cannot do on their own, the government should step in – that is where support begins.
3. Government's role is clearly not to do what people have been doing for centuries, i.e. building houses and settlements, but rather to strengthen the people's process of doing it.
4. Start with the premise that people are resourceful; they are rich in practical initiatives and creativity, they need recognition, encouragement and support.
5. Solutions to problems are found in the hands of people and not with technocrats or bureaucrats.[75]

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[73] Hameed, I. A. p. 14.
[74] Dasanayake, A. 1988 'Social Implications of Devolution of Decision Making Structures in Support Based Housing' <u>Thesis for the Development Planning Unity, Bartlett School of Architecture and Planning,</u> University College London, p. 6.; quoting Lankatilake 1988 p.1-2.
[75] Dasanayake, A., 1988.

HTHP Ends in 1982

During Premadasa PM's 1982 election campaign he announced his promise to create a million houses for a million people in 5 years.

In October 1982 Premadasa PM won his second term in government and a parliamentary committee was quickly forced to reconstitute as a task force for the MHP. From November 1982 to January 1983, heads of each agency in the Ministry of Housing met weekly to develop and define core strategies and policy for the MHP.

The target of 100,000 housing units was comfortably reached by 1982, at a cost of Rs. 63 billion (or US$3.64 billion). A further US$102 billion was invested, with the assistance of the World Bank, to improve water supply and sewage disposal facilities in Colombo.[76] The HTHP had been, in all, a success. These challenges, mistakes and successes went on to inform the MHP.

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[76] Address by Hon. Premadasa PM, "Housing and Shelter – People's Birthright" 1981.

Phase III: The Million Houses Programme

Statistics from the 1971-1981 Housing Census highlighted that despite the HTHP target of one hundred thousand houses being reached, for every house produced by the State, the private sector produced seven.[77] Quality aside, the statistics proved that regular people without government assistance were faster and more resourceful in building their own shelter than the government was in providing it.

If the MHP was to be successful it needed to keep that reality in mind. The MHP was simply unattainable logistically and financially without a fundamental re-assessment of the provider-based methodology.

A Paradigm Shift

In order to create a million houses on a limited budget the MHP task force was faced with developing two options for national implementation. They were to either:

1. Further develop the HTHP provider-based paradigm; or
2. Develop a new support-based paradigm.

The NHDA chose the second option. The British Development Planning Unit[78], (whose avant-garde work in housing development philosophy was also influential in India and Africa) became the educators and supporters of the new paradigm.

The new paradigm supported poor people in their own housing construction ventures instead of presenting people with a State-dictated model. This represented the emergence of a completely new plane of thinking and trust between authorities and the poor.

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[77] Sirivardana, S. 1988, p. 10.

[78] This information was provided by Mr. Susil Sirivardana in an interview, February 2006. He said that the Development Planning Unit at the University College of London was a great supporter and educator of the 'support-based' regime. The notion of support–based housing was advocated by the founders of the DPU, Charles Abrams and Otto Koenigoberger in the 1960's. Their philosophy was "if you can't beat them, join them". They believed that "even shanties are homes and should be recognised as official urban housing stock." Wakely, P. I., 'The Devolution of Housing Production: Support and Management', Development Planning Unit, University College, London; HABITAT INTL. Vol. 10, No. 3. (1986) Pergamon Journals, Great Britain, p. 54.

After much re-learning, re-education and devolution of the HTHP provider-based policy, the Ministry of Housing Task Force produced a manifesto. It is printed in the MHP Implementation Guidelines first published in January 1984 by the NHDA[79] and reproduced below.

The New Path

The philosophy of the Million Houses Programme is build upon the firm foundation of the successes of the Hundred Thousand Houses Programme. At the same time, it is a clear advance from it, and radically different in fundamentals. Its ambitious goal is to reach far greater numbers – a million or more mainly poor families – at a lesser cost to the nation but more satisfaction to the actual builders.

The MHP is founded on the Mainstream of Sri Lankan house-building – a tradition of house-building by individual families.

Home-building families occupy a pivotal position. Like the farmer who grows our food, the home-builders will be taking the vital shelter decisions. The key decisions regarding costs, technologies, standards, infrastructures, siting and environment – the where, the how, what and by who, - will be taken by the community of home builders. Thus, they become the main actors in the country's housing and settlement process.

The MHP caters to a great variety of different needs and priorities: new housing and upgrading, water supply and sanitation, infrastructure and utilities, land and loans, skill training and technical information, decentralised decision-making and unified village/district development. While the public and private sectors unite to realise a national shelter programme, it covers the three vital sectors of our human settlements-villages, towns and plantations.

What does the state do in this programme? It supports, strengthens, and complements the Mainstream. It facilitates and supports both the individual homebuilders and the communities, provides plots and loans, eases constraints, informs builders and trains bother participants and staff. It will intervene only when individuals and communities cannot solve problems on their own. So while the state is the supporter and facilitator, the individual families will be the doers and the decision-makers.

People's participation will increase a thousandfold, and improve qualitatively. Communities will be responsible for their shelter more than ever before. Tradition will be reinterpreted anew.

The new slogan: MINIMAL INTERVENTION MAXIMAL SUPPORT BY THE STATE: MAXIMAL INVOLVEMENT OF THE BUILDER FAMILIES.

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[79] Sirivardana, S. 1988, p. 24-25. Rural Housing Sub-Programme Implementation Guidelines January 1984, National Housing Development Authority.

Figure 30 The government promotes its new housing direction with a sign saying the slogan "International Year of Housing"; "Minimal intervention maximal support by the state"[80].

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[80] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

The New Housing Paradigm – 'support' or 'enabling' based housing

The Sri Lankan public were enthusiastic and receptive to the new qualitatively and quantitatively matured programme that reflected what Sirivardana called "full-blooded people based development."[81] Contrary to previous paradigms, the MHP was a 'people process' where the State was invited to participate in the process, not the people participating in a State process.

The paradigm shift meant control of construction, decision-making of design and participation in housing delivery was transferred from the State into the hands of the people. This transition is depicted in Figures 31 and 32.
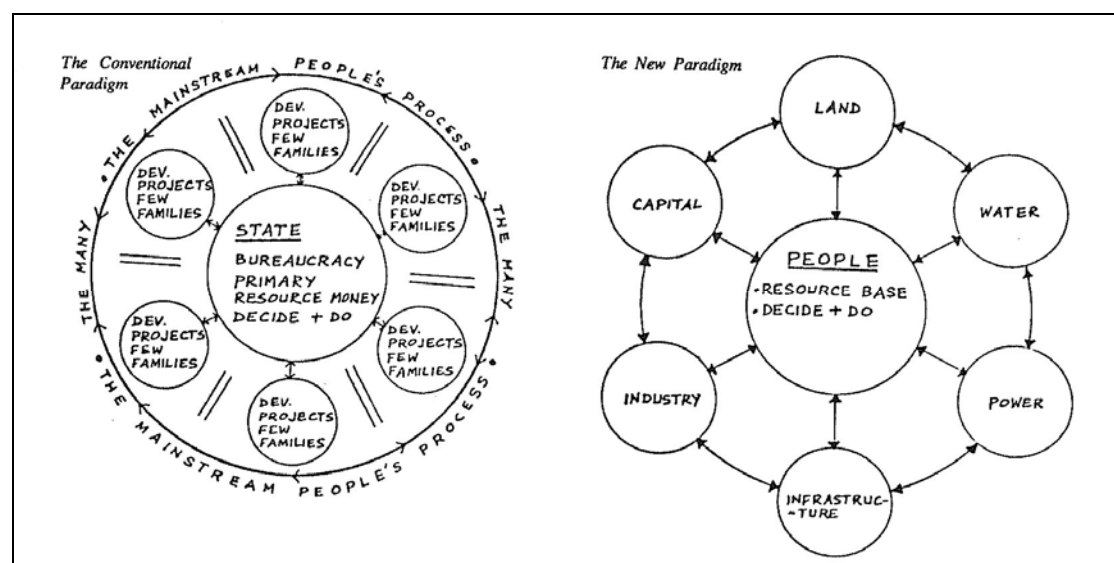

Figure 31 Conventional State administered public housing[82]
Figure 32 The new paradigm

In Figure 31, the State can be seen to be central to the whole process. They control and maintain the facilitation of housing projects. The State has a connection with each individual participant. In Figure 32 the participant is shown to be at the centre of the process and they have the ability to co-ordinate with other government authorities as a community body. Here the house-builders are the most important resource in housing development.

Sirivardana says the government learnt to trust the ability of the people to "create, deliver and take responsibility for their [own] self-improvement."[83] The government
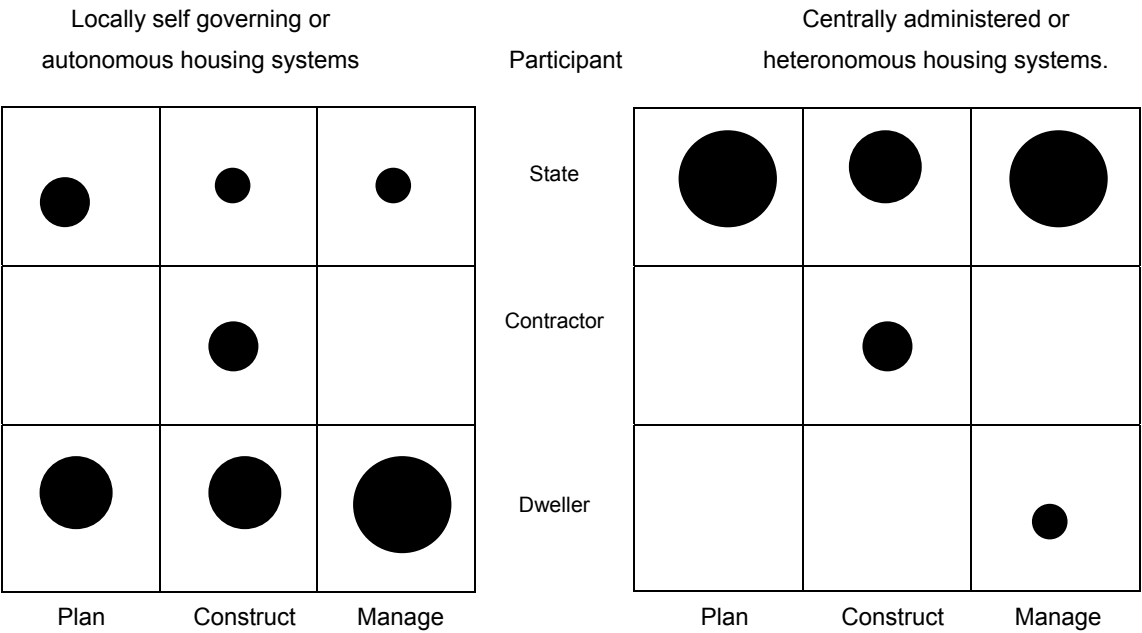
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[81] Sirivardana, S. 1988, p. 23.
[82] Sirivardana, S., Gunaratna, K., Jayaratne, K., Edirisinghe, J. 1991 p. 24.

went against its deeply rooted housing practice of 'dominate and deliver' by extolling maturity in placing the people/house-builder at "the very centre of the programme".[84]

As an aside, Hameed notes that it was not easy to educate the community, who had previously been passive recipients of benefits to play an equal role in the development partnership.[85] He added that it was "even more difficult to convince the managers, the implementers and the administrators"[86] that community participation and a support policy was the answer. It is understandable that there would be some initial resistance and hesitation. The MHP was able to overcome these issues through training and participatory enthusiasm.

Turner also diagrammatically represented the participatory difference between provider-based and support-based housing in his book *Housing by People*.[87] Figures 33 and 34 compare a locally self governed housing system against a State administered housing system. The diagrams compare the planning, construction and managing stages of a house's life cycle between the State contractor and dweller.

Locally self governing or autonomous housing systems			Participant	Centrally administered or heteronomous housing systems.		
●	●	●	State	⬤	⬤	⬤
	●		Contractor		●	
●	●	●	Dweller			●
Plan	Construct	Manage		Plan	Construct	Manage

Figure 33   Figure 34

The diagrams highlight the differences in decision making and control between the two parties. They are almost complete opposites. In Figure 34 the authority remains

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[83] Sirivardana, S. 1988, p. 23.
[84] Sirivardana, S. 1988, p. 23.
[85] Hameed, I. A. p. 19.
[86] Hameed, I. A. p. 19.
[87] Turner, J. *Housing by People*, (Marion Boyars Publishers: London, 1976) p. 29.

substantially with the State and filters down through the division of labour to the base. The lack of circles for 'Users' in Figure 33 indicates that in reality "the housing project residents have little or no choice in regard to their housing. They are presented with a package which they must take or leave.

Figure 33 reflects the decision making and control belonging to the autonomous or semi-autonomous dwellers, such as those in shanty housing settlements. The shanty-dweller is free to change the house design, prolong the construction timeline, or use found materials. "The package house deal presents no such choices once accepted, and the larger the heteronomous package system, the more difficult it becomes to escape."[88]

Turner's universal principles of housing needs are characterised by 3 aspects: access, shelter and tenure. He asserts that these are only attained through 'enabling' the users. These characteristics form the basis of the MHP philosophy.

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[88] Turner, J., 1976, p. 82.

The MHP structure: Sub Programmes

The MHP was an amalgamation of six sub-programmes, each covering a major area of need. The six sub programmes are tabulated below. This essay will focus on sub-programmes 1 and 2.

Sub-Programme (SP)	Acronym	Target Group	Urban /Rural	Lead Agency
1. Rural Housing SP	**RHSP**	**Rural Poor**	**Rural**	**NHDA**
2. Urban Housing SP	**UHSP**	**Urban Poor**	**Urban**	**NHDA**
3. Plantation Housing SP	PHSP	Plantation workers	Rural-Plantations	State Plantations Corporation, Janatha Estates Development Board
4. Mahaweli Housing	MHSP	Rural Poor	Rural	Mahaweli Authority
5. Major Settlement Schemes Housing SP	MSSHSP	Rural Poor	Rural	Land Commissioner
6. Private Sector Housing SP (a) Informal people's sector (b) formal sector	PSHSP	All classes	Rural and Urban	Housing Finance Institutions and Regulating Authorities

Figure 35 Sub-programmes of the Million Houses Programme

Support-based housing in sub-programmes 1 and 2 were implemented in these ways:

1. Decentralisation of decision making power
2. The creation of Community Development Councils (CDCs)
3. Community Action Planning and Land Regularisation
4. Providing a system of accountability and transparency
5. Respect for the Traditional Vernacular
6. Housing Information Service Strategy

How was 'support based' housing implemented?

Decentralisation of decision making power

Provider based housing was extremely bureaucratic in its decision-making, facilitation and organisation. The mechanics of the HTHP was centralised at the NHDA office in Colombo. The MHP was a project ten times the size of the HTHP. As a result, it was impossible to facilitate a million quality houses for all climates of the country from one centralised government department. The NHDA was simply not adequately equipped.

Decentralisation of the organisational core from central government in Colombo to local/municipal government factions, and from those local factions to the people, meant better control, accessibility and facilitation of the programme for the people. In the initial stages of the programme the transition into support based housing was a little uneasy. Local government agencies remained subservient to central government guidelines or circulars. Local government officers did not have input into the development programme issued from Colombo and therefore simply acted as agents of the central government. Furthermore, people did not have input into the programme they were subject to. It looked very similar to the HTHP structure, but slowly the government began to appreciate what people could do for themselves and the new paradigm took shape. The State decentralised and de-evolutionised intervention in housing and increased end-user and community participation.

Depicted in Figures 36 and 37 is the hierarchical decision making structure of the Rural and Urban Sub-Programmes. These diagrams illustrate the inter-relationships between departments through to the community. They only represent the structure for housing development and do not include sanitation or infrastructural programmes.
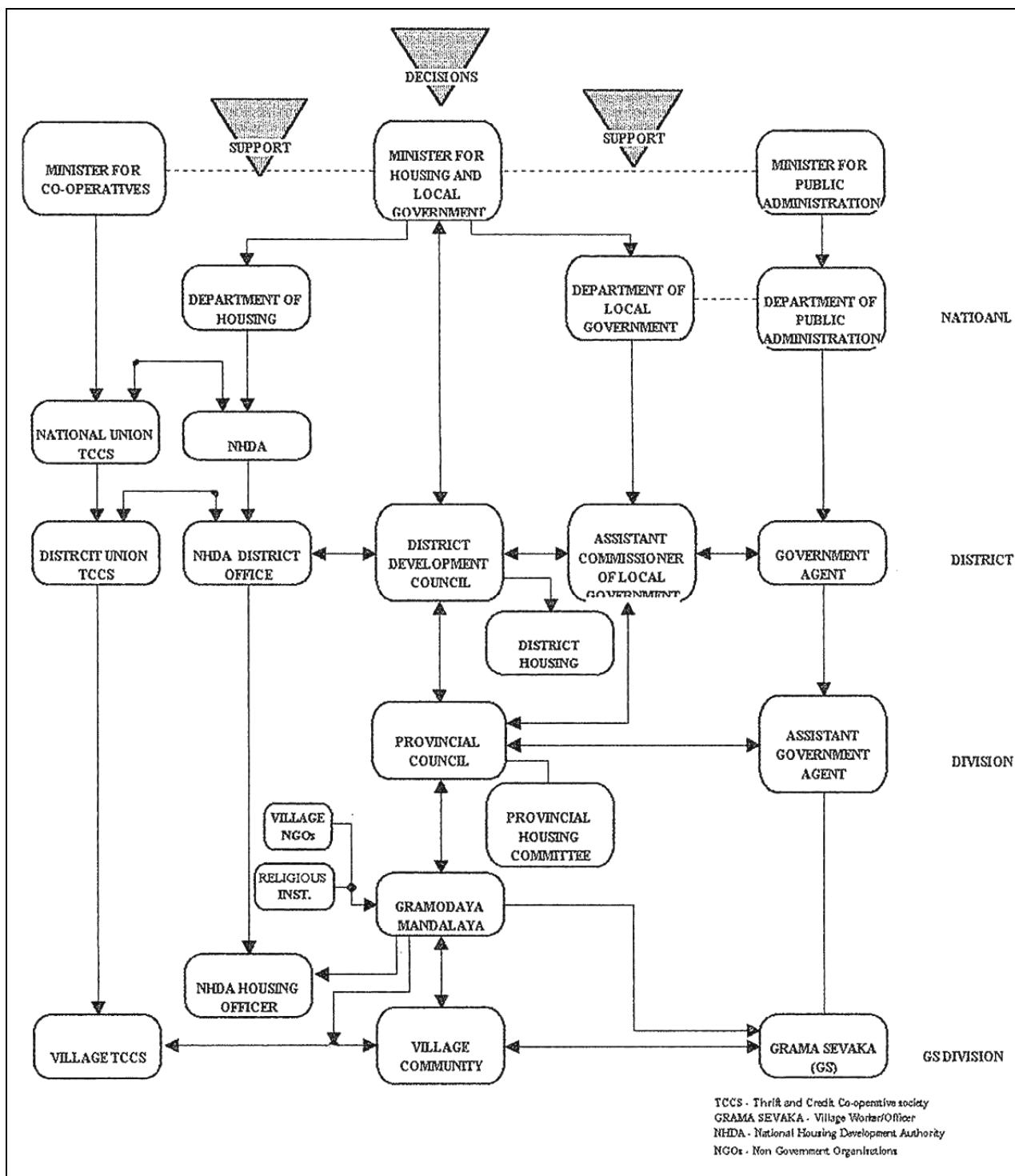
Figure 36 Decision making structure of Rural Housing Sub-Program[89]
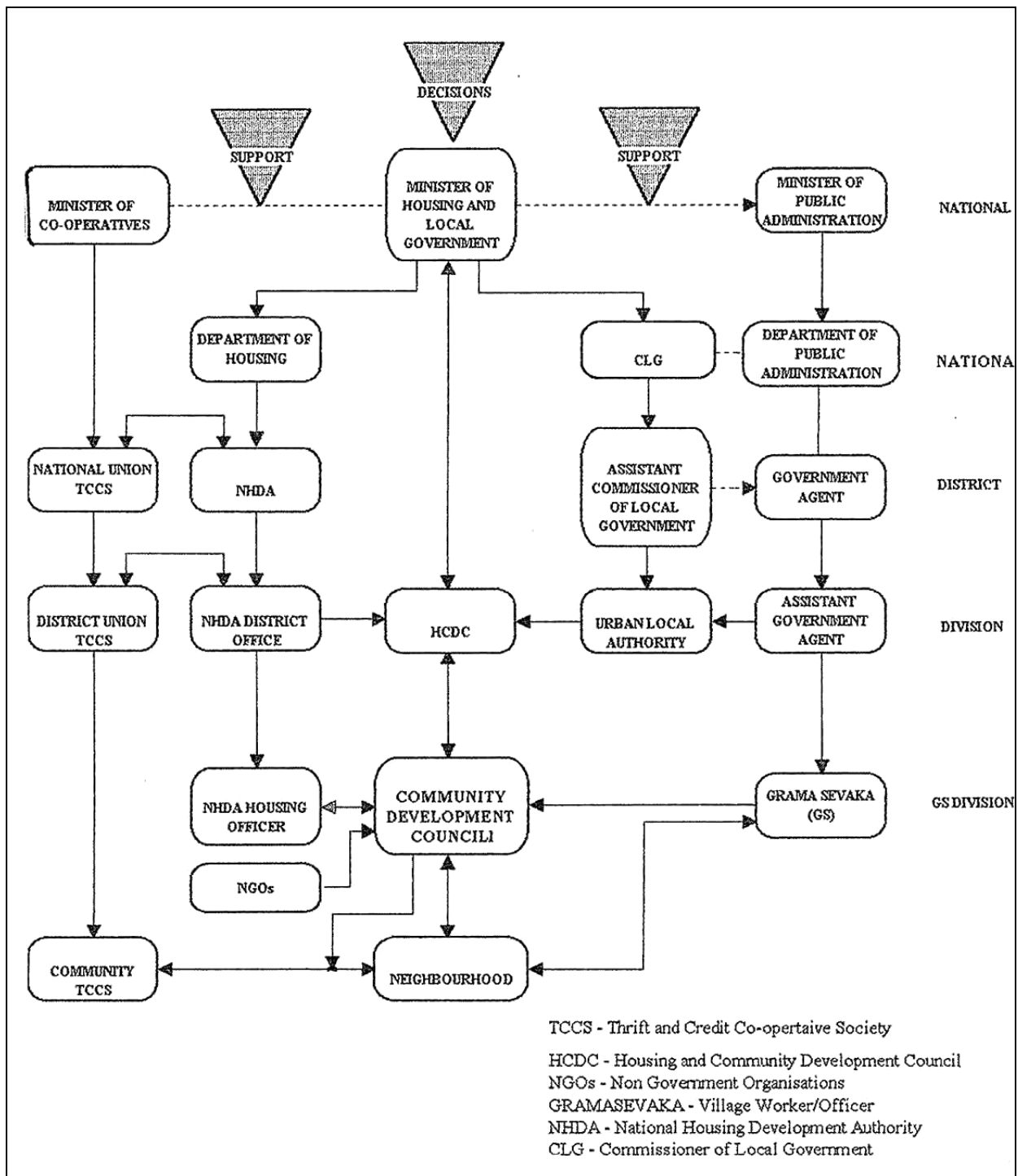
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[89] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

Figure 37 Decision making structure of Urban Housing Sub-Program[90]

The decision making is restricted to the central axis only. Either side of the central axis are departments and organisations which provide information and support to the decision making axis. It is important to note that other systems of housing have one point of decision making, and this is at the top of the diagram. The MHP model stretches from the top down to ground level 'village community' or 'neighbourhood'.

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[90] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

The creation of Community Development Councils (CDCs)

In order to encourage and support people as 'decision-makers' and 'doers' local governments created Community Development Councils (CDCs).[91]

Figure 38 CDC members discussing construction[92]
Figure 39 Kadolkelle and Sirikurasawatte CDC meeting[93]

The creation of CDCs was pivotal to implementing the MHP and the Urban Basic Services Programme. A CDC is a council comprised of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Assistant Secretary Treasurer, and committee of five ordinary members (or more if the settlement area had large grounds).[94] The community elected the office members. Gramodaya Mandalas or village leaders were usually elected as Chairman.

When the concept of CDCs was first introduced, many poor people had little or no educational background and little experience in large scale teamwork.[95] To mediate this municipal or local government officials acted as Secretaries to the CDCs for the first year, then Assistant Secretaries, withdrawing completely after two years. This introductory structure aimed to motivate and guide community participation and self-determination.

From the outset, it was intended that the CDCs were to act as a permanent tool for the comprehensive development of the community and the environment. The municipal negotiated with government on behalf of the participants to receive basic amenities and plots of land. They were seen as the main instrument from which all housing development programmes were to be implemented in settlements.

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[91] Sirivardana, S. 1988, p. 10, 11.
[92] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[93] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[94] Plummer, J. *Municipalities & Community Participation: A Sourcebook for Capacity Building*, (Earthscan Publications Ltd: London, 2000) p. 72.
[95] Plummer, J. 2000, p. 72.

The first CDCs were registered in 1979 and the number of groups reached approximately 700 around the country.[96] CDCs typically met weekly to address problems and resolve disputes at a grassroots level with a local/municipal government officer. CDCs played a crucial role in economically facilitating infrastructure, and building strong ties in the communities. The CDCs regulated land, settled conflicts, identified landless families, determined plot boundaries, organised loans for families, and provided access to service organisations to improve infrastructure (like drainage, footpaths, corridors etc) on behalf of the community.

The system was activated when a community member required a service. A community member would approach the CDC and or elected CDC representative who would then submit the request to the Community Municipal Council. Resolutions were always attempted at ground level first. Most issues did not have to go behind bureaucratic doors to be solved. CDCs provided 'horizontal linkages'[97] between people of different backgrounds and housing authorities.[98]

Women were prominent members of CDCs. It was common for men to have to work during the day and as a result a lot of the construction and organisational work was left to the women partners.

Figure 40 Women CDC members

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[96] Plummer, J. 2000, p. 72. Funding for CDCs was provided by UNICEF via the UBSP between 1979-1996. It appears that despite the success of the CDCs as a mechanism for communities to work together and interact with government and planning they have not continued. It was unknown if many registered CDCs are defunct, inactive or dormant due to lack of funding. Unfortunately it seems that the change in government has affected a valuable development tool.

[97] Plummer, J. 2000, p. 73.

[98] The CDCs however never realised long-term mobilisation and empowerment perhaps because they were created by external officials and for the facilitation of short-term projects. Thus, when the MHP ended (after a change in government) the continuation of the CDCs became meaningless. Other problems also arose with leader corruption and lack of continued funding.

The following is a summary chart by Sirivardana which depicts the devolved system of decision making and support.

Decision making level	Decision / Choice by House builder	State Support
Household level	- designing the house - choice of technology - choice of materials - building the house - mobilising resources	- design option - technology option - community building guidelines - small loan - information and training - householder file
Community Level	- organising (CDCs) - planning & programming of action plan - collective decision making in the preparation of building guidelines - demarcation of plots, roads and service lines - design and construction of amenities	- organising workshops - regularisation of tenure - provision of blocking out guidelines - preparation of design - provision of funds
Local Authority Level	- identification and priorities of settlements - programming of work - allocation of funds selection of beneficiaries	- implementation guidelines - provision of funds - technical support
National Level	- linking housing to local government - strengthening local government - ensure country-wide programmes and implementation - how not to dominate local institutions	- defined and interpret support based policy - articulare programmes clearly embodying formes of support (financial, technical, training etc) - national guides and guidelines

Figure 41 The relationship between decision maker and supporter[99]

As the chart illustrates, there were various levels of participation. For participation at an individual or household level the support staff needed only to consider the wants of that household family. The officer or supporter was required to visit the dweller, provide a 'householder file'[100] (which acts as a guide to housing design and construction) and discuss the possibilities of construction, need and financial repayability.

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[99] Sirivardana, S., Lankatilleke, L. 1987, p. 31.
[100] It includes a schedule of the HOLP-Rural or HOLP-Urban and other guidelines in a plastic envelope that protects it from the weather. Sirivardana, S., Lankatilleke, L. 1987, p. 8.

On a community level the relationship between decision maker and supporter takes on more of a partnership form. Working in a concert to identify community needs, conduct workshops to further community education and solving problems was paramount during the initial stages of the project to establish a rapport between the community members and technical State staff. When projects of a considerable size needed to be implemented, parties worked together in a community-based methodology called Community Action Planning (CAP).

Community Action Planning and Land Regularisation

What is CAP? It was an action planning team[101] together with community members on appointed days visit land sites to discuss plot boundaries for a cluster of households using planning principles and technical guidelines. Boundary days are usually on weekends allowing all members of the community to attend. The decisions made regarding plot allocation and boundaries were negotiated on the day. Objections and negotiations took place on the spot. There was no mechanism for review or change after a final consensus had been met.

A community based approach to settlement re-blocking can have very diverse results. The Siddharthapath settlement, a highly congested shanty settlement with a strong community organisation, conducted their own re-blocking exercise and the result was minimum demolition with lots of small and oddly shaped plots.[102]

On the other hand, another project (which had less community organisation) hired a surveyor to do the re-blocking. That community preferred a new settlement layout which had long-term benefits but meant most of the existing structure would not be preserved. This resulted in high demolition but regular and equal sized plots.

The process of re-blocking and community resolution is completely up to the community. As a general guide, the procedure[103] of community problem solving is reproduced below.

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[101] Usually 4 members: a team leader (an official); measurer (on official or trained community member); anchor person for the tape measure (a community member); and pegger (a community member if wooden pegs are used) or digger (several community members if marker stones are used). Chularathna, H.M.U. 2000, p. 3.
[102] Chularathna, H.M.U. 2000, p. 3.
[103] Hameed, I. A. p. 27; Chularathna, H.M.U. 2000, p. 3.

Community-based development guideline

1. The project officer carries out a reconnaissance survey to assess the problems and facilities on site. This would be done by observation and discussion with community members.

2. Elected representatives of the CDC or village community (Gramodaya Mandalayas) converse with officials from implementing agencies, such as the NHDA, NGOs, local government officials - Grama Sevakas, Thrift and Credit Co-operative Society officer (TCCS), together with health staff, technical staff, and project officer in a workshop.

3. The team will form into 3 groups and the participants will visit the site to observe and record the community needs.

4. All issues and problems are recorded and if necessary a priority list is prepared. It may look something like this…

Problem	To whom	Why
1. Mosquito menace	Community	The drains are not covered
2. Water logging	Part of the community	Part of site low lying

5. Solutions for problems are worked by each group and presented to other groups by community leaders. Suggestions and corrective measures are made at this stage.

Activity	To whom	How
1. Land Regularising (land marking)	NHDA / Community	Community to help in land marking – digging and planting stones
2. Garbage Collection	Local Authority / Community	Neighbourhood to collect. Local Authority act as main collectors

6. The magnitude of the problem is assessed and activities are given priority ratings.

7. A time framework for each activity will be worked out by the parties responsible for implementation. A concrete action plan is now created.

8. Systems to monitor the implementation of the action plan are discussed and hopefully resolved

9. Everyone is informed of the action plan. Community leaders will present the draft proposal to the entire membership of the community at a public meeting. Comments and suggestions are taken into account, corrections made if necessary.

10. A final agreement will be reached on issues, solutions and responsibilities and copies of the agreement retained by officials and community.

11. Workshops are held to further discuss the problems and methods of address. Workshops can be centred on specific issues – like constructing wells, or planning principles and technical guidelines – such as housing orientation or plumbing services.

Figure 42[104]

Of course, for the whole process to work both parties must bring active participation to the forum. Community members must be proactive and enthusiastic about the development and improvement of their own community; and support officials must have proper administrative infrastructure[105] and training to deliver support.[106]

The degrees of community participation vary from place to place, depending on the organisational structures and their members. By now it is clear that community participation is not the carrying out of tasks decided by planners or bureaucrats, but rather a joint effort in delivering services in partnership with planners, local government and other community members, coupled with enthusiasm, momentum and a sense of responsibility. It is a natural motivator that can be an enormously beneficial for the wellbeing of the individual and relationships within the community.

Providing a system of accountability and transparency

Building contracts in the HTHP were awarded to contractors outside the community as the lowest tenderer or as a political favour.[107] These contractors were the most susceptible to corruption and poor workmanship because they were only accountable through invoice statements to the body from which it gained its funds, that is, the central government. Problems occurred when the central government failed to check workmanship of the contractor; as a result short-cutting was common.

By contrast, the MHP had a constant check and balance system because it was a highly localised programme. It promoted local trade and local contracts. Local authorities were given the responsibility to contract services, and did so from the local community members. Accountability and transparency was easily regulated by the community on the basis of community connection, pride, responsibility, sense of ownership, achievement and high transparency.

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[105] One significant problem was the proper facilitation of the decentralised programme. Many electorates were understaffed, under resourced and ill prepared for the influx of demands placed upon them. Hameed blamed this on a lack of suitable manpower at local authority levels which resulted in considerably unfair amounts of pressure on staff, with flow on effects of delayed programme delivery, reduced staff morale and inefficiency

[106] This would be achievable through seminars, training programmes and information sessions. Hameed argues that in the MHP, Hardware and Software support were not always carried out to their fullest potential. Comprehensive training and department communication did hinder the MHP. Departments and their staff lacked management and lack of cross-programme knowledge of interrelated environmental, health and sanitation programmes outside their department. It led to delays, interruptions and misunderstandings between departments, community projects and funding arrangements. This was a major drawback to the efficiency of the MHP's implementation. The MHP was unprecedented and highly innovative, yet is youth meant fine-tuning of problem areas was still a long way from resolution.

[107] Interview with Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

As a community, participants would watch construction, as it occurred, and were free to call upon the CDC to assess workmanship along the way.

Figure 43 Community working together[108]

Figure 44 Family effort[109]

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[108] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[109] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

The MHP largely abolished government contractors and instead contracted members of the community. The CDC and community participation was the natural check on quality construction, and finance allocation.

The CDCs however never realised long-term mobilisation and empowerment perhaps because they were created by external officials and for the facilitation of short-term projects. It is unfortunate that after a change of government the participation of CDCs dramatically diminished. Other issues such as leader corruption and lack of continued funding were also problematic.

Respect for the Traditional Vernacular

During the HTHP, brick, cement and tiles were considered the most modern, and therefore the best materials for construction. This was an unnecessary and most expensive for a highly rural, third world country like Sri Lanka. Experimental projects using local materials and local technics were carried out in 1982. This led to a rediscovery of vernacular technologies. It had great implications for the final programme as it reduced costs by around 50 percent.

Figure 45 Traditional timber, thatch and rammed earth with limestone cladding[110]
Figure 46 Traditional stone work[111]

Instead of expensive and high embodied energy materials such as bricks and concrete, traditional materials specific to that area were used. For walls, it may be laterite rock, rammed earth blocks called 'sinva ram', wattle and daub called 'varichi', or lime plaster. This had dramatically reduced costs for the low-income builder and consequently confirmed the plausibility of the programme.

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[110] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[111] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

Figure 47 Traditional rammed earth hut[112]

Figure 48 Wattle and Daub or Varichi wall construction during the MHP[113]

The change to traditional materials was also sustainable because it liberated the settler from global market forces as s/he became his/her own supplier and builder.

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[112] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[113] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

Through this change, local craftsman, material suppliers and labour forces were mobilised generating a small but stable economy.

Figure 49 Woven palm leaf cladding
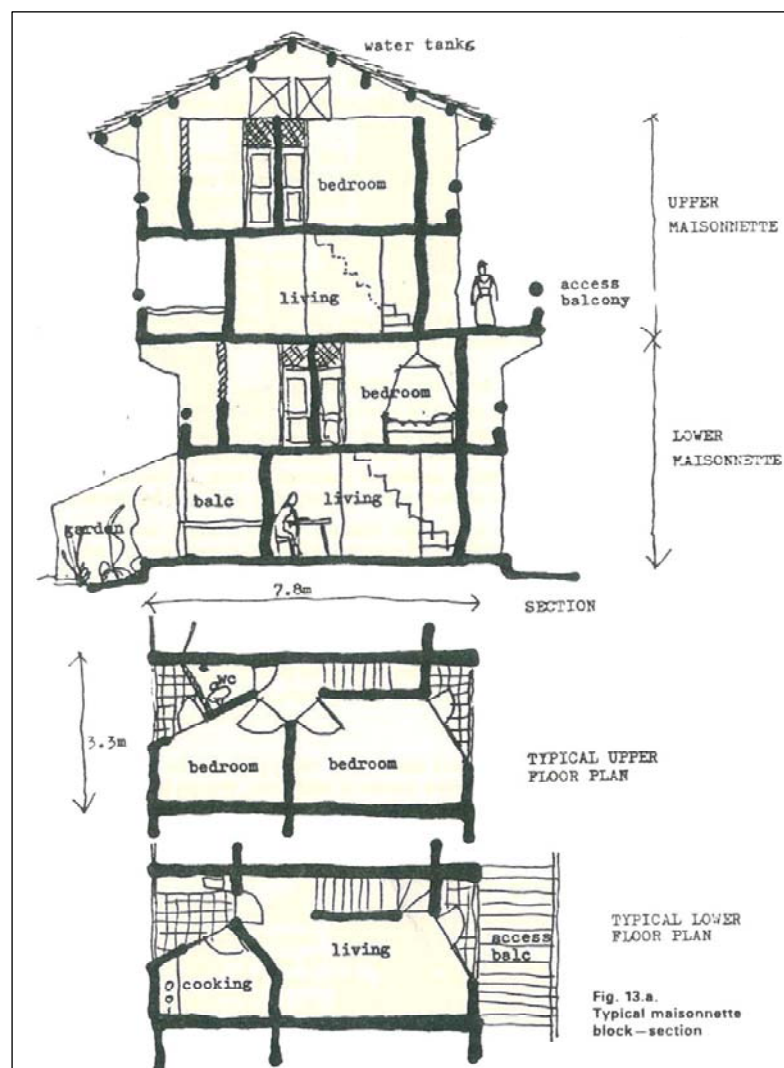
Figure 50 Laterite rock house
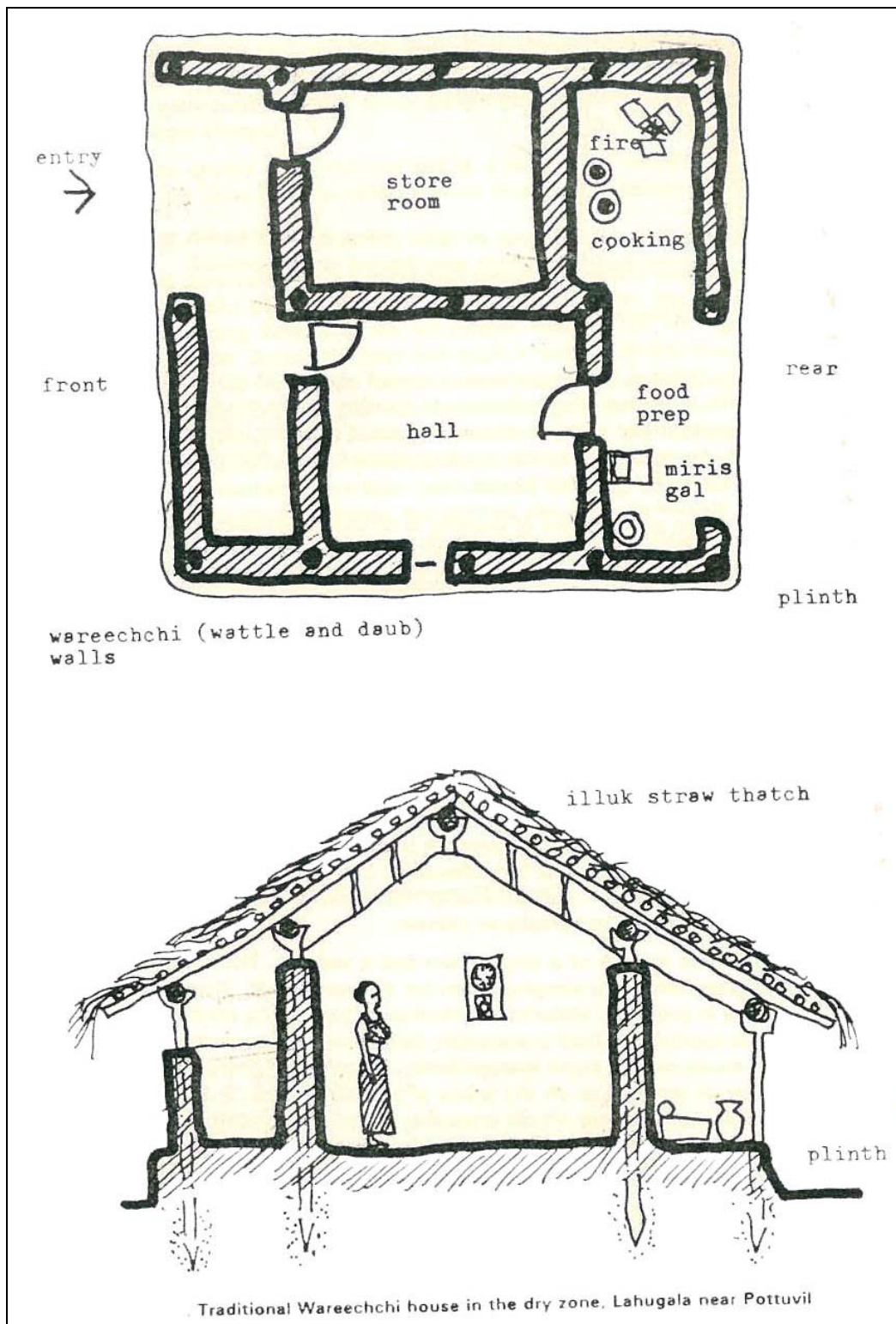
Figure 51 Varichi House

With a re-interpretation of traditional building culture, people were able to build better and bigger houses at a lower cost. All new rural houses were thenceforth built using indigenous materials and local techniques. This allowed a more harmonious marriage of design, materials and cost; and above all, user satisfaction.

Housing Information Service Strategy

Before a loan is embarked upon, research and information as to cost and commitment is required by the house builder. The Housing Information service strategy provided that information and support to the Urban Housing Sub-Programme.[114] It was a community generated and produced information system designed to support the householder in their project cycle. The householder received it from a CDC or technical officer. It included the following tools:

1. Householder file
2. Building rules and Options Package
3. Building Information Sheets
4. House estimates and Technical reports
5. Partnership workshops

House Holder File

The Householder file was given to every family in the programme. This was to help the family manage its construction process. The file acted as both information guide and information store. The file came in a strong plastic bag which allowed important documents and information to be stored safe and dry.[115] The back cover of this file contained the basic information about the family, the house and loan package that the family wishes to receive, and a few sheets of blank square rule paper so that families could sketch their desired house plans.

The field staff or technical staff could then have visited each family and discussed the plan that the family drew. The technical support staff would then have been in a position to help them prepare a 'house estimate'.

House Estimate

The 'house estimate' became the 'Bill of Quantities.'[116] As the decision making process was undertaken in the family's home with an individual support staff, the family were able to understand the exact quantity of materials, the labour days required,[117] the time frame and burden of the undertaking. The householder would have had the one-on-one opportunity with a technical support staff to ask and have questions answered. This method of consultation enabled the householder to own the building process.

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[114] I could not find an equivalent to the RHSP.
[115] Sirivardana, S., Lankatilleke, L. 1987, p. 8.
[116] Sirivardana, S., Lankatilleke, L. 1987, p. 8.
[117] Sirivardana, S., Lankatilleke, L. 1987, p. 8.

<u>The advantages of the Housing Information Service Strategy</u>

Sirivardana writes that for many years prior to the MHP, Information Officers resided in central housing department offices and could not filter information effectively to grass roots level.

The 'frontline' or 'field service' method within the support-based paradigm of the MHP was critical to convey information but also in establishing trust between the people and the authorities. Individual householders were more receptive and believing in the MHP because of ease of access and the familiarity of the technical support officer that resulted.

The government officer supported and provided information to the householders on how to realise their potential so that the decisions made by the household are informed ones. The professionals did not design houses for families but "designed the tools for the families to design their own houses."[118]

Housing Options and Loans Package (HOLP)

The Rural Housing Sub Programme and the Urban Housing Sub Programme were funded by large agencies like UNICEF and USAid. These funds were used to create low interest loans to low-income families for the purposes of buying land and carrying out housing construction.

The credit or loan system enabled people to build the houses they wanted and needed. This was the mechanism that placed tangible control in the hands of the people. The creation of the micro loan system is considered the **devolutionary** point of bureaucratic decision-making, and the **revolutionary** moment of participatory development.

Low-income communities did not (and now still do not) have access to credit from banks or credit unions for housing or any other venture. The MHP loan packages allowed the householder to negotiate borrowing capital, on his or her own terms, in order to buy land and build a house in which to live. Dwellers were able to borrow at a low interest rate in view of owning the house outright at the end of the repayment period.

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[118] Sirivardana, S., Lankatilleke, L. 1987, p. 7.

The Rural Housing Sub Programme and the Urban Housing Sub Programme had separate Housing Options and Loans Package (HOLP) specific to the conditions or rural or urban dwelling. The packages included a variety of housing, utility and land types adapted to answer the full gamut of potential housing needs for poor families. Dwellers had the choice of choosing their specific loan on the basis of personal need and repayability.[119]

The loan options are referred to as the Housing Options and Loans Package – Rural and Housing Options and Loans Package – Urban.

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[119] Sirivardana, S. 1988, p. 29.

Needs	Options Packages Main and sub-categories	Loans Ceilings In Rupees	Target Group	Interest Rate	Repayment Period
- Upgrading, repairing, improving or extending existing houses or line	**1.0. Upgrading Package** 1.1. Upgrading house + latrine 1.2. Upgrading line + latrine 1.3. Upgrading house + latrine	5000 5000 12000	Large Large Medium	3 3 10	
Where land is available and only a new starter house is needed	**2.0. New House Package** 2.1. incremental or core house 2.2. Incremental or core house + individual services	5000 7500	Large Large	3 3 10	
Various ancillary services	**3.0. Utilities Package** 3.1. Improvement to well 3.2. Pump for domestic water 3.3. Latrine 3.4. Electricity for house 3.5. Access 3.6. Survey Fees 3.7. Construction of well 3.8. Construction of tube well 3.9. Bio gas unit	3000 7000 7000 12000	Large Large Large Medium	3 6 6 10	15 years
Where there is a need for both a plot and a house with services	**4.0. Nava Gamgoda or Site and Services Package** 4.1. Planned sites 4.2. Site + communal services 4.3. Site + individual services 4.4. Site + core house + communal services 4.5. Site + core house+ individual services	3500 4000 8500 16000	Lge/Mdm Large Large Large Medium	3, 10 3 3 6 10	

Figure 52 Housing Options and Loans Package - Rural

HOUSING OPTIONS AND LOANS PACKAGE (URBAN)

A. UPGRADING PACKAGE

NEED: Upgrading or repairing or extending an existing house.

OPTION	LOAN AMOUNT	INTEREST RATE	MONTHLY REPAYMENT Rs.
1. Upgrading house	4,000	3%	27.64
	5,000	3%	34.55
	6,000	6%	50.64
	7,000	6%	59.08
2. Upgrading house + Latrine	5,000	3%	34.55
	6,000	6%	50.64
	7,000	6%	59.08
	8,000	6%	67.52
3. Upgrading Tenement	4,000	3%	27.64
	5,000	3%	34.55
	6,000	6%	50.64
	7,000	6%	59.08
4. Upgrading Tenement + Latrine	5,000	3%	34.55
	6,000	6%	50.64
	7,000	6%	59.08
	8,000	6%	67.52
5. Additional Space	4,000	3%	27.64
	5,000	3%	34.55

Repayment Period is 15 years.

B. NEW HOUSE PACKAGE

NEED: Where only a basic house is required and land is already available.

OPTION	LOAN AMOUNT	INTEREST RATE	MONTHLY REPAYMENT Rs.
1. Basic house (common water & sanitation available)	8,000	6%	67.52
	10,000	6%	84.40
	12,000	10%	128.95
	13,000	10%	139.70
2. Basic house + water & Sanitation	10,000	6%	84.40
	12,000	10%	128.95
	14,000	10%	150.45
	15,000	10%	161.20

Repayment Period is 15 years

C. UTILITIES PACKAGE

NEED: Where individual service and title clearance is required.

OPTION	LOAN AMOUNT	INTEREST RATE	MONTHLY REPAYMENT Rs.
1. Water connection	1,000	3%	17.97
2. Pit Latrine	2,000	3%	35.95
3. Latrine + Septic Tank	4,000	3%	71.88
4. Bucket latrine conversion	2,000	3%	35.95
5. Electricity connection	2,000	3%	35.95
6. Water + Latrine + Electricity	5,000	3%	89.85
7. Survey + Registration of Deeds	1,500	3%	26.96

Repayment Period is 05 years.

D. NAVAGAMGODA OR SITES & SERVICES PACKAGE

NEED: Where serviced plots and shelter are required.

Cost per Plot (CPP)

OPTION	LOAN AMOUNT	INTEREST RATE	MONTHLY REPAYMENT Rs.
1. Site + common water & sanitation			
2. Site + individual water & sanitation.	4,000+CPP	3%	27.64+
3. Site + basic house + common water & sanitation available	7,500+CPP	6%	63.30+
	9,500+CPP	6%	80.18+
	11,500+CPP	10%	123.60+
	13,500+CPP	10%	145.10+
4. Site + basic house + individual water & sanitation.	9,000+CPP	6%	75.96+
	11,000+CPP	10%	118.20+
	13,000+CPP	10%	139.70+
	15,000+CPP	10%	161.20+

Repayment Period is 15 years.

Figure 53 Housing Options and Loans Package – Urban

Each package listed was capped at a set ceiling rate. Borrowers were free to receive credit anywhere up to the ceiling rate. This was designed to mitigate oppressive debt. Loans were repayable within a 5-15 year span at 6 per cent interest depending on the model chosen.

Loans allowed dwellers to opt for credit only on what they needed and could afford at the time. For example, most families had some sort of shelter at the time, a loan allowed them to obtain a better toilet or roof in addition to what they already had. The programme did not require the complete demolition and reconstruction of a new building, nor vast amounts of money to elevate their living conditions to a better standard. The small loans of the MHP proved that poor families could embark on a project or build their own houses by supplementing it with other resources like materials and labour incrementally.

Figure 54 Time management and planning was decided by participants[120]

Figure 55 Temporary shelters or previous homes on site were left during construction[121]

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[120] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

The packages allowed fast remedying for poor standards of living to those who needed it most – with the added bonus of freedom to build to the dwellers' liking.

Latrine Options

Latrines were one of the most needed elements for housing upgrading. Dwellers were given a number of options in simple diagrams and terms. Depending on how many people it had to service and the environment.
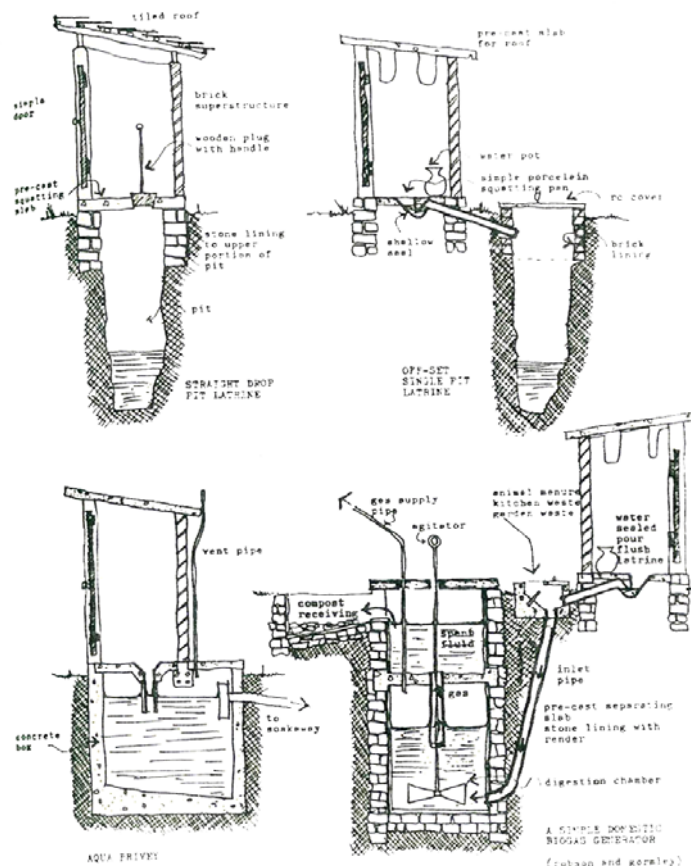
Figure 56 Some latrine options

Financial control and management

Donor foundations allowed the MHP to provide small loans to poor families, as well as donate funds to CDCs, local authorities and other grassroots organisations to use at their discretion for the benefit of housing development.[122] The donations allowed the MHP to devolutionised former centralised funding regimes by giving some financial control and management to small local bodies like CDCs and low-income earners.

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[121] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[122] Sirivardana, S., Lankatilleke, L. 1987, p. 29.

<u>The average cost</u>

In the first year alone, the MHP touched 42,213 families.[123] The average housing loan for each sector is tabulated below, with the HTHP average cost for ease of comparison.

Sub-Programme	MHP Average loan per family	HTHP average cost per unit per family
RHSP	Rs. 5,250 - 5,300 (US$202 - 211)	Rs. 18,000 (US$1000)
UHSP	Rs. 7,000 - 9,000 (US$269 –346)	Rs. 24,000 (US$1300)

Figure 57 MHP Average Loan Cost

The MHP is clearly cheaper. In both cases the MHP is around a third of the HTHP model. In addition to the affordability, the MHP accommodated better materials, better consultation methods and increased builder autonomy.

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[123] Data is calculated for the period January 1984 -September 1985. Ailappernma, W.D, 'Reaching a million families – The Million Houses Programme of Sri Lanka', Chairman of the NHDA, <u>Subregional IYSH Asia Meeting</u>, New Delhi, India, 11-14 Dec 1983, p. 2

Loan Approval Process

Once the decision to build has been made, the building proposal then proceeds up the hierarchy for funding approval. This is depicted in Figure 58.
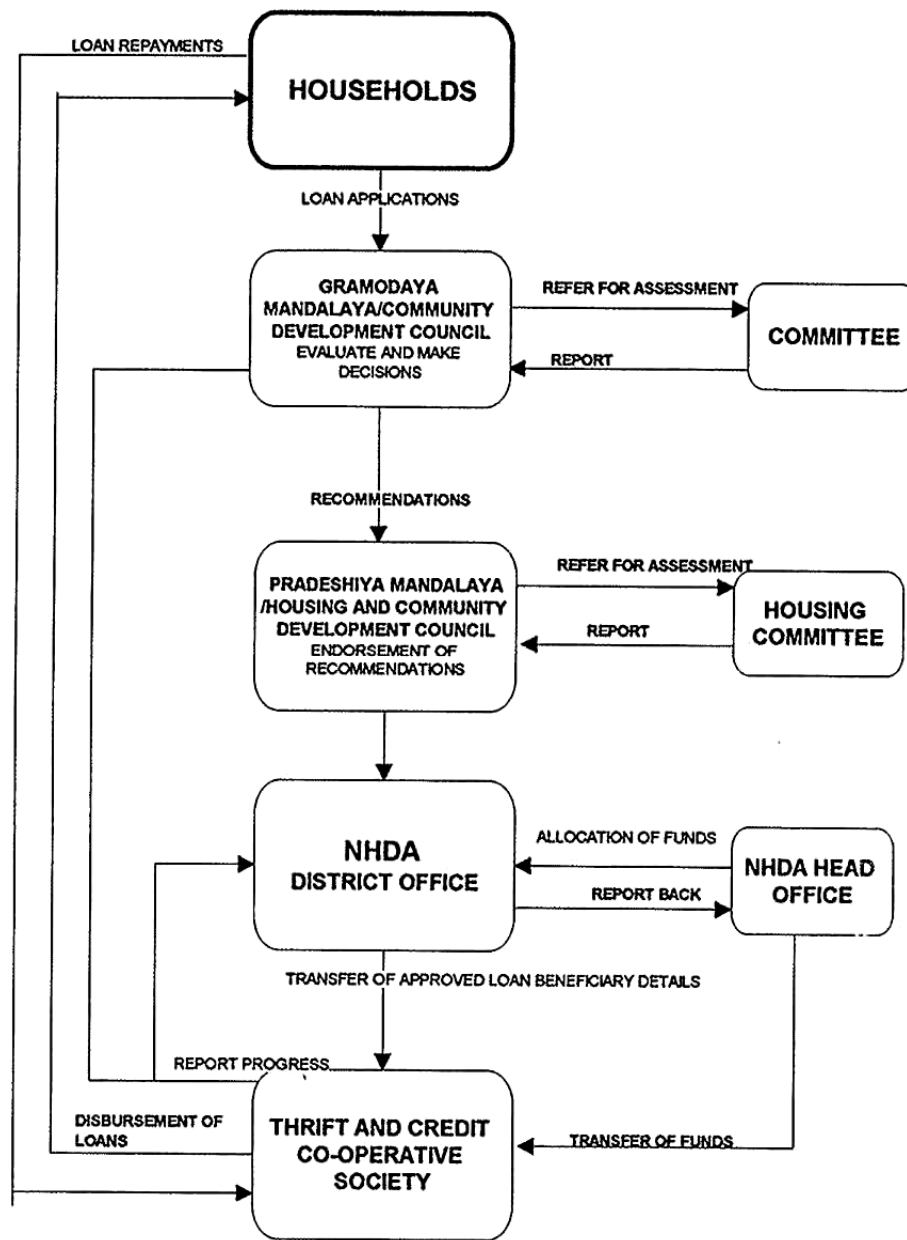
Figure 58 The Loan approval hierarchy[124]

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[124] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

In the loan approval interim the NHDA would provide small start-up funds to initiate momentum. The loan request and fund flow structure is represented in Figure 59. (Please note that Figure 58 placed the householder at the top of the page, my diagrams are reversed with the householder at the bottom)

National Co-ordinator

(NHDA)

$$\downarrow\uparrow$$request

Implementing Agency

(Housing Community Development Council;

District Level Council; Municipal Council; NGO)

$$\downarrow\uparrow$$request

CDC

$$\downarrow\uparrow$$request

Local community / Village community
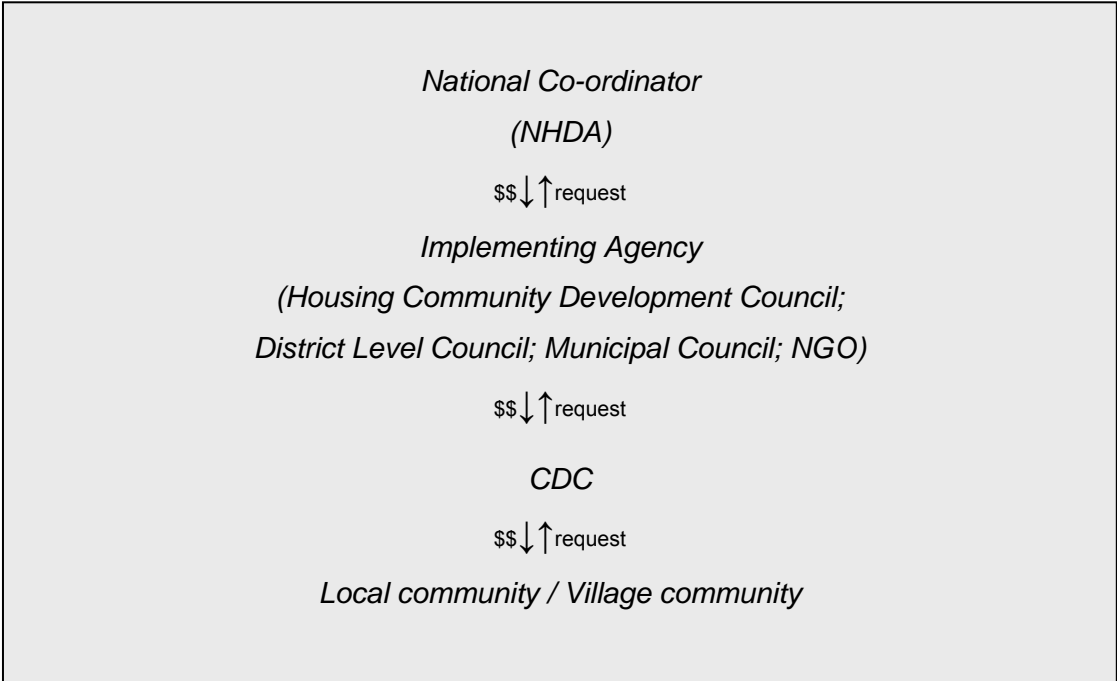
Figure 59 Start-up funds structure

Key	
↑request	Requests for loan going up the hierarchy
$$\downarrow	Funding for loan going back down the hierarchy

MHP Shortcomings

Fund Delays

Bureaucratic delays occurred because of the long and convoluted reimbursement method used to access funds. Once loans were approved and initial start up funds gained from the NHDA. The NHDA would first request approval and then were reimbursed back by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. For reimbursement to be given by the Ministry, it had to request funds from the Treasury, and the Treasury would then have to gain approval and reimbursement from the Donor agency.

There was always the possibility that the higher funding body would not approve the loan or provide a reimbursement to the lower department. Figures 60 and 61 demonstrate the length and fragility of the funding process. Figure 62 shows a faster more effective method that could have been implemented.

Figure 60 Chain of Loan Approval Request

Donor Agency   Donor Agency   Donor Agency

$$
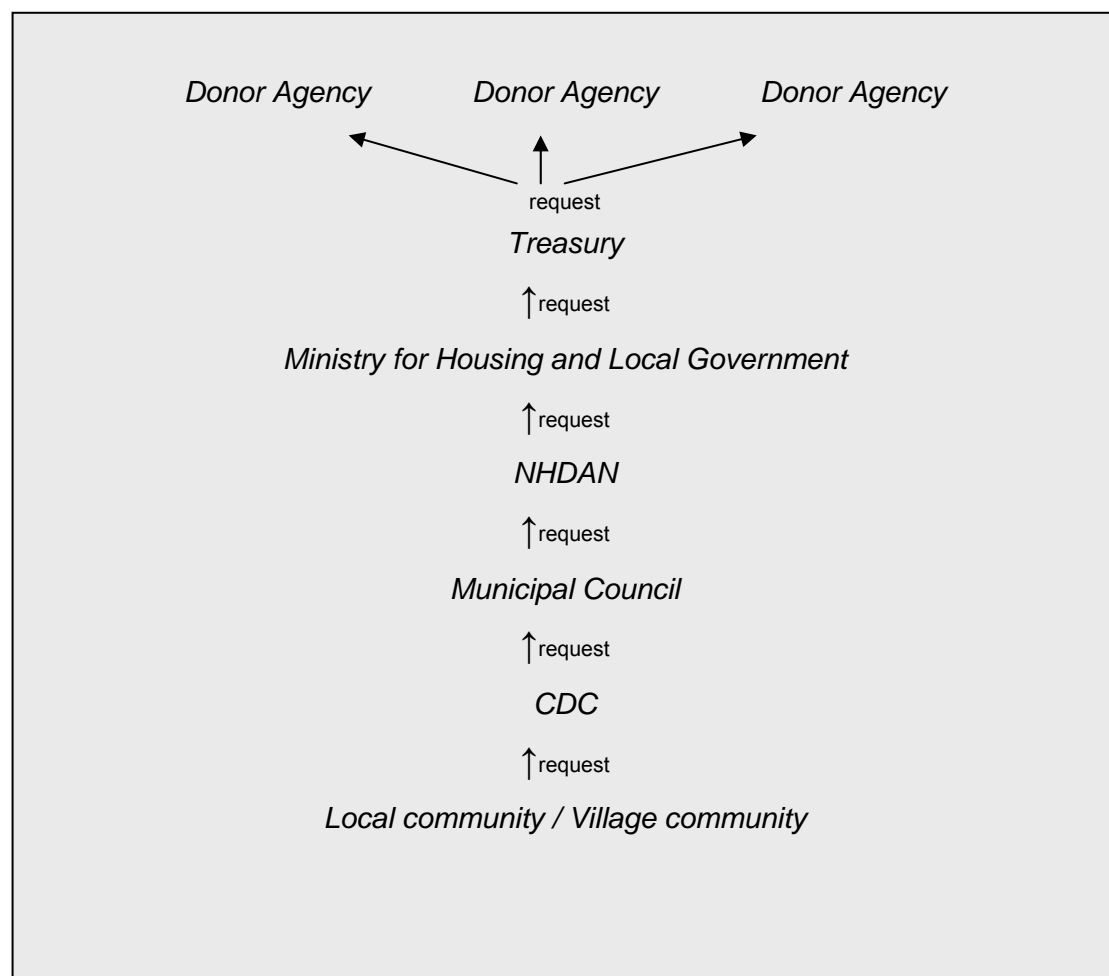
Treasury

$$↓

Ministry for Housing and Local Government

$$↓

National Co-ordinator

(NHDA)

$$↓

Municipal Council

$$↓

CDC
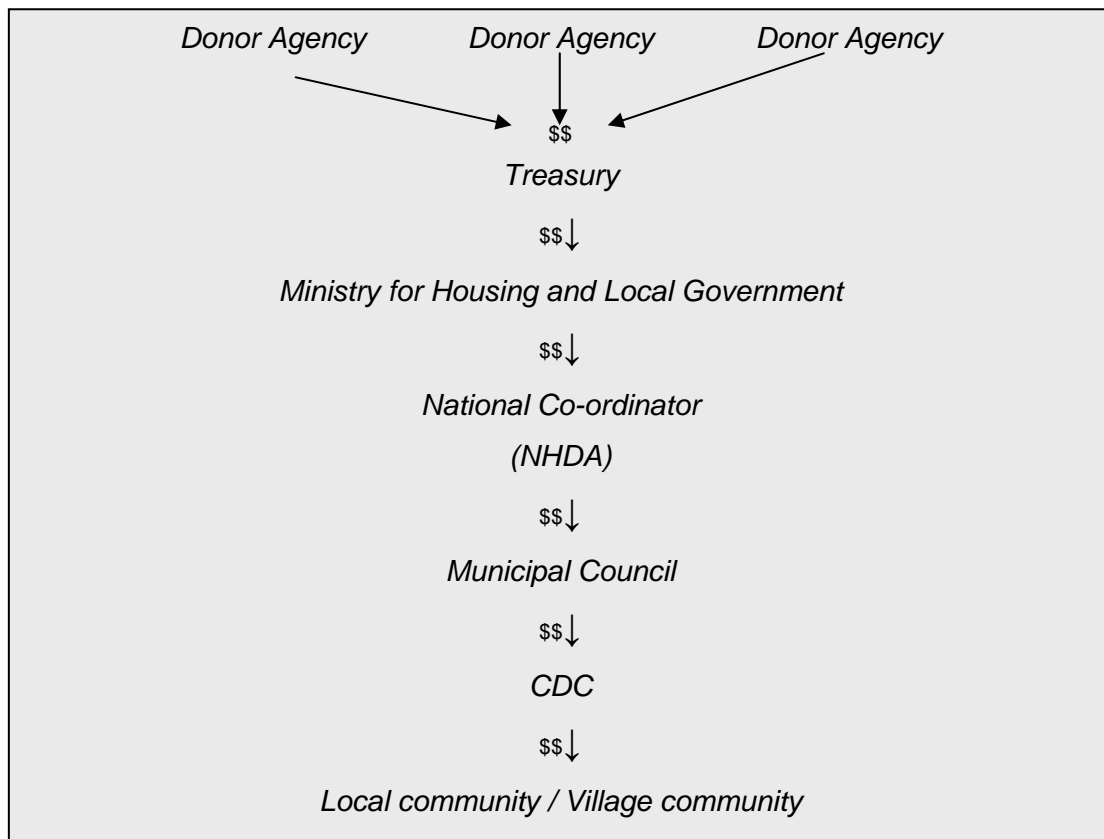
$$↓

Local community / Village community

Figure 61 Chain of Fund Reimbursement

Hameed noted that this method of reimbursement was used because the Treasury and Ministry wanted control and the ability to monitor expenditure.

From the hierarchical chains presented, it is obvious that the approval and receipt of funding was lengthy and riddled with highly unproductive bureaucratic hurdles. Each department had different methods of processing, and communication was limited between the agencies.

A quicker and more economical approach perhaps was to have the Donor agency deal directly with the NHDA, and for the NHDA to present audits to the Ministry and Treasury half yearly or quarterly so that they could still have detailed records of expenditure. See Figure 62.

Donor Agency Donor Agency Donor Agency

$$ ↓↑ request

NHDA

$$ ↓↑ request

Municipal Council

$$ ↓↑ request

CDC

$$ ↓↑ request

Local community / Village community
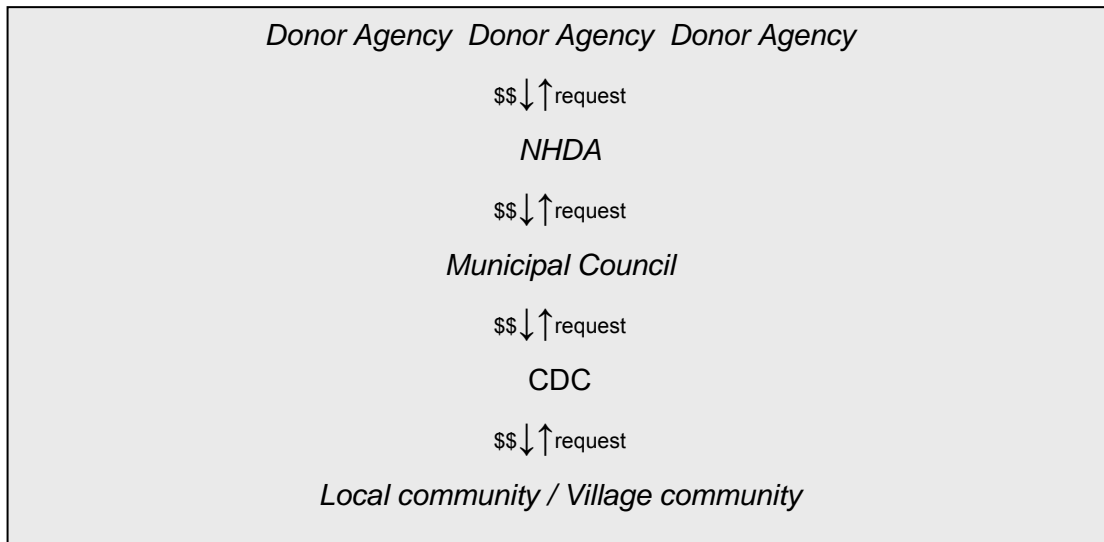
Figure 62 Faster request and reimbursement model

It appears that this method would rob the Ministry and Treasury of their ability to access and control expenditure.

A serious problem highlighted by Hameed was the control of funds by large organisations that lacked intimate knowledge of the programmes, problems or urgencies of the needs they aided. The momentum of the programme was left vulnerable and weakened by this funding system. If funds were allocated directly from the Donor agency to the NHDA, the cycle of request and receipt would have been much faster – encouraging enthusiasm and momentum in the delivery of services and housing to the community.

Hameed's solution was to brief high level officials and departments on progress and problems of programme delivery quaterly. Hameed also suggested that donor agencies should create specific guidelines of what they will reimburse and what will not[125] prior to the engagement of programme financing. He noted that many time delays occurred because funding was requested from the wrong body, or to a body that would not approve it. Guidelines should have been available to all members of the hierarchy so that time delays are minimised.

The MHP loan financing model was significantly faster and more effective than the previous methods used in the HTHP and prior to 1977. On a positive note this

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[125] Problems arose when applications for funding went through the length hierarchy and the application contained elements which that particular agency would not fund. Delays amounted as fund had to being the whole process over again with another donor agent.

method allowed dwellers control over what they applied for, what they received, and a supportive point of contact. This created greater overall participatory satisfaction.

Donor Control

Foreign aid was the main source of funding for the micro loans. Most funding agencies want to retain control of expenditure to monitor their contributions and ensure accountability.[126] Funding or donor agencies were not aware of or did not understand the premise of the MHP. Sirivardana suggests control was maintained due to fear of corruption or lack of trust in how local agencies and/or recipients would use the money wisely. Unfortunately this meant that the financing side of the MHP remained largely centralised.[127]

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[126] In some instances donor agencies try to implement certain activities and projects that are not aligned with the will of the people or the processes that are already in place. Implementing without consulting the community or educating agency officers of the customs and culture of the community makes the positive intentions of the project oppressive. All that would be needed to relieve this problem is greater communication, open mindedness and education of the social, economic and cultural background of the group. Respect for the processes and existing development programmes accepted by the people is expected.

[127] Sirivardana, S., Lankatilleke, L. 1987, p. 29.

MHP Successes

The programme endeavoured to facilitate true people-based development by empowering poor families through providing finance to remedy their needs themselves when they needed to. The programme eliminated a cache of costs for the State by burdening the dweller. But the dweller was happy to take the burden as it enabled home ownership, asset accumulation and legal status.

The MHP achieved:

- Reduced hired labour costs through community participation.
- Eliminated material costs by using traditional materials.
- Reduced State intervention in private enterprise.
- Faster construction
- Increased dweller participation
- Increased dweller satisfaction

Home Ownership

Home ownership was one of the most successful elements of the MHP. The programme properly identified that families who lived in shanty and slum settlements could not afford land to own; and continued to live in squalid conditions because they did not want to invest in their shelter for fear of eviction or demolition.

Legislative amendments enabling the NHDA to acquire low income settlements allowed the department to allocate housing lots for sale or for 30-40 year leasehold tenures.[128] Recipients of credit gained the ability to invest in improving their dwelling without fear of eviction using a Housing Options and Loans Package.

State Support

The State's role as a supportive body was successfully executed through two main means. These were:

1. Hardware support
   - includes physical attributes like land and infrastructure or large jobs that require government assistance in order for the community to begin development themselves.
2. Software support

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[128] Chularathna, H.M.U. 2000, "Land Tenure Issues and Improvement of Urban Low Income Settlements – Experiences of Colombo, Sri Lanka", <u>Regional Workshop on Settlements of the Urban poor: Challenges in the New Millennium</u>, Dhaka, Bangladesh, p. 6.

- includes information, training, credit, health, community organisation.[129]

Community Participation

Hameed asserts that community participation is traditional in Sri Lanka.[130] He said it is common for families to pool their resources, (mainly labour) to help one another in harvesting or building a house. In retrospect, MHP was merely an opportunity to harness that tradition and utilise it to the advantage of housing development.

In an effort to define what community participation actually is, Hameed reviews three types of community participation and decision making models.[131]

1. *Local Elite as Decision Makers*

   Selected representatives of the community (such as politicians, voluntary organisations, Gramodaya Mandelas) make decisions on behalf of the people. They decide and help implement pre-planned government projects and are the voice of the community. This option does not allow an individual's voice to be heard or represented and is highly susceptible to internal politics and corruption.

2. *Full control by People*

   In this model political and financial controls are completely in the hands of the people. In this situation people have control over finance, decisions on planning, contracting of works and their implementation. As financers the implementing government agency may have some measure of control over the finance and influence the decisions. But the people will be in a strong bargaining position and be able to impose their decision on the officials. For the people to take over full control, they must have managerial capacity and technical knowledge, in addition to a high level of education and political maturity. This approach is obviously not ideal for Sri Lanka.

3. *People's Participation in Decision-making*

   Officials from different government agencies pool their resources to identify the needs and requirements of the people and alternative proposals are forwarded to the people to work out a suitable solution. In working out a solution, public preferences are given importance. People are aware of their own needs in relation to health, nutrition, employment, education etc. They are also aware of solutions, and as to how those needs should be satisfied. The planner's role is to work out strategies that would satisfy these requirements and to provide the technical and professional support required by the public.

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[129] Sirivardana, S., Lankatilleke, L. 1987, p. 33; Mr. Susil Sirivardana interview, 22 February 2006.
[130] Hameed, I. A, p. 15.
[131] Hameed, I. A, p. 21.

Hameed suggests that the MHP was a reflection of the third option. Decision-making by community members was central to their participatory role, but financial, managerial and technical expertise was awarded as support by the government.

Crucial to the success of community participation in housing development is the creation and sustainability of CDCs. These organisations are the nerve centre of the community and promoted enthusiasm by collectively taking responsibility for constructing, repairing and maintaining common amenities; wells; repairing drains; garbage collection.[132]

Figure 63 Community wells[133]

Figure 64 Community bathing facilities[134]
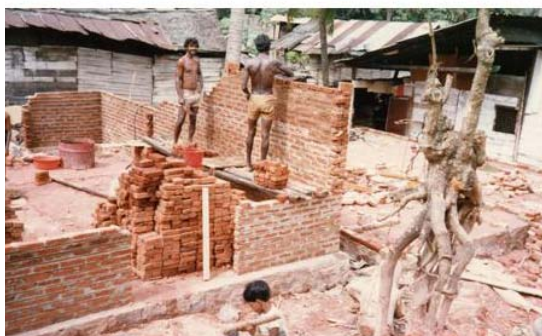
Figure 65 Community construction[135]

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[132] Hameed, I. A. p. 17.
[133] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[134] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.
[135] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

Construction by the community and working together towards a common goal provided an automatic check on the quality of construction, and a sense of achievement and identity.

It seems illogical that decisions made by low income earners for themselves were disregarded and instead decisions made by professionals or bureaucrats who come from a different political, social and economic background were embraced. It is sad and offensive to reflect upon the many years when prescribed and uninformed paternalistic housing was prevalent; that poor people were considered too ill skilled to decide and create their own high standard housing, or indeed, to determine what was suitable. Employing the presumptuous minds of bureaucrats and professionals was the wrong approach to solving the complex issues of poverty and development. Poverty should not be seen to obstruct freedoms to decide how or where people live or deny the right to live with dignity.

The MHP appreciated that poorer members of society possessed an incredible creativity, ingenuity and strength as the 'doers' and the 'deciders' of their own houses. The programme placed the development of human potential at its core. Political and legal legitimacy, security of tenure and human rights are only then able to be stabilised as integral concepts overall social development of the community.

Figure 66 Community meetings[136]

Housing as a Human Right

The obligation of States to recognise the right to housing manifests itself in several key areas. First, all countries must recognise the human rights dimensions of housing, and ensure that no measures of any kind are taken with the intention of eroding the legal status of this right.[137]

Too few governments have acted upon the fundamental human right to adequate housing in a manner sufficiently reflecting obligations associated with that right.[138] Accepting housing as a fundamental right is not the issue. The issue is protecting and promoting that right.

Former Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commissioner, Chris Sidoti, describes the right to adequate housing as:

> " … essential for human survival with dignity. Without a right to housing, many other basic human rights will be compromised including the right to family life and privacy, the right to freedom of movement, the right to assembly and association, the right to health and the right to development."[139]

Access to adequate, safe and secure housing substantially strengthens the likelihood of people being able to enjoy certain additional rights. Housing is a foundation from which other legal entitlements can be achieved.[140] The World Health Organization has asserted that housing is the single most important environmental factor associated with disease conditions and higher mortality and morbidity rates.[141]

This relationship or "permeability" between certain human rights and the right to adequate housing indicate the indivisibility of housing rights with other human rights.[142]

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[137] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, fact sheet No.21 'The Human Right to Adequate Housing', <http://www.ohchr.org/english/about/publications/docs/fs21.htm>

[138] Address by Chris Sidoti, Commissioner for the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission at the National Conference on Homelessness for the Council to Homeless Persons in Sydney (4 September 1996) "Housing as a human right" at 8.

[139] Address by Chris Sidoti, "Housing as a human right" 1996, at 2.

[140] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'The Human Right to Adequate Housing'.

[141] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'The Human Right to Adequate Housing'.

[142] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'The Human Right to Adequate Housing'.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) adopted and proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948. Article 25.1 states:

> *"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."*[143]

Housing is interwoven amongst all those right that give us freedom to live with dignity. Dr. Udagama writes that "if we cannot exercise our … freedoms to participate in decision making and exercise agency to negotiate our needs then that certainly taints our quality of life."[144]

Through the establishment of adequate housing, the MHP made way for other basic human rights to be addressed. This facilitated other MHP benefits such as assets accumulation, self determination, education and community support. The MHP philosophy lent itself to the maxim: *help others, help themselves.*

Figure 67 Urban housing before and after[145]

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[143] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 'The Human Right to Adequate Housing'.

[144] Address by Dr. Deepika Udagama, The Ingram Public Lecture 2007 in Sydney (26 Aril 2007), 'Conflict, Tsunami reconstruction and human development in Sri Lanka: Lessons to be learnt'

[145] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

Figure 68 Rural housing before and after[146]

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[146] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

Colombo inner city MHP settlement

During my time in Sri Lanka I had the opportunity to visit an inner city MHP settlement. It was a beautiful example of a stable middle class neighbourhood. Once it was a shantytown, however it now thrives as a community with strong friendships and a sense of identity. Organic streets and laneways were filled with children playing and mothers chatting.

Figure 69 Local street where children play[147]   Figure 70 back laneway[148]

The houses boast quirky and innovative designs. Outdoor showers at the front gate are carefully articulated with stone and glass blocks to retain privacy. Oddly shaped houses reminiscent of shanty organicism and an amalgamation of materials make each house incredibly unique and personal. The houses together create a strong sense of place.

[147] Photo by Sonya Redman 2006
[148] Photo by Sonya Redman 2006

Figure 71 Front gate outdoor shower[149]   Figure 72 Front yard washing line[150]

Figure 73 A common laneway provides room for play and storage[151]

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[149] Photo by Sonya Redman 2006.
[150] Photo by Sonya Redman 2006.
[151] Photo by Sonya Redman 2006.
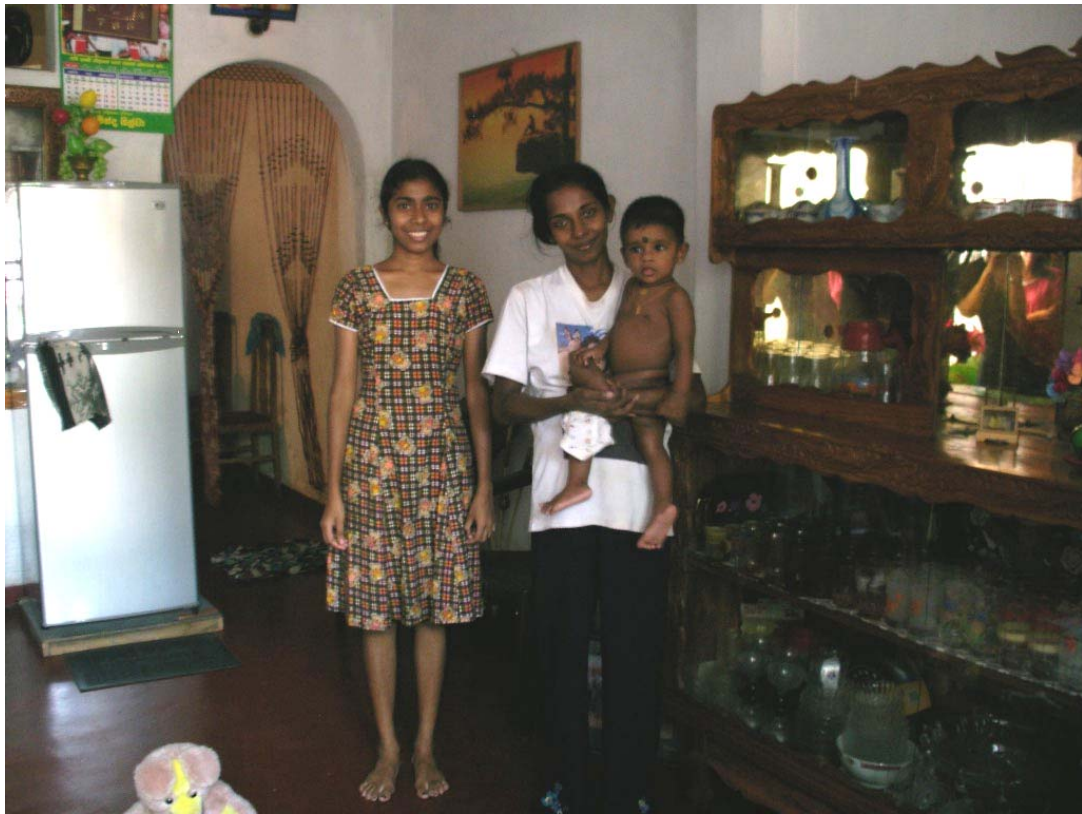
Figure 74 A small family living room[152]

Figure 75 Internal courtyard[153]

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[152] Photo by Sonya Redman 2006
[153] Courtesy of Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

The community members were proud of their houses and welcomed me with open arms to show the quirks and perks of each house. Many had wonderful light-filled courtyards inside. Many members of the community remembered the shantytown it once was and hold in overwhelming pride the small island paradise that now exists. Twenty years on the MHP did more than just build houses, it alleviated poverty and empowered communities through housing.

Figure 76 My Guides   Figure 77 A traditional outdoor kitchen stove

Figure 78 My guide and her friends in their front yard

Figure 79 Unusual numbering system of organic settlements

After the MHP

1989 was the final year of the MHP. In February 1988 Premadasa PM was elected President. The prime ministership went to Prime Minister Wijetunge of the United National Party (UNP).

At that time the country was plagued by civil unrest between the guerrilla LTTE (or 'Tamil Tigers') and the Sri Lanka military. Between 1989-1997, the ethnic conflict cost over 65,000 lives[154] and consumed over one-quarter of the annual GDP. The economy has since continued to plummet and funding was taken from development projects to satisfy military demands. In 1993, President Premadasa was assassinated by a suicide bomber.

Priorities changed. In 2000 the country was officially considered a war-like zone, all non-essential development projects (housing included) were suspended for three months in order to make more funds available to the military.[155] It followed a suicide bomber assassination attempt of President Chandrika Kumaratunga (which resulted in the loss of one of her eyes).

In 2002 there was a further official loss of 64,000 lives and 1.6 million people were displaced due to the continuing conflict. In 2003 the LTTE withdrew from peace talks and US$4.5 billion in aid was given in an attempt to restore the physical and social infrastructure that was destroyed.

As at 20 March 2007 there was an estimated number of approximately 292,000 war related internally displaced persons. The conflict has also paved the way for "human rights violations, including involuntary disappearances, assassinations and arbitrary arrests and torture. The cost in terms of human suffering is inestimable."[156]

Whilst Premadasa was still alive as President the 1.5 Million Houses Programme preceded the MHP with an infrastructural focus. Mr. Palansuriya suggests President Premadasa's death and a change of government influenced the closing of that programme in 1994. Housing has since disappeared as a political and national

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[154] Address by Dr. Deepika Udagama, "Conflict, Tsunami reconstruction and human development in Sri Lanka: *Lessons to be learnt*" 2007, p. 7.
[155] Daniel, K. ed., 2005 World Guide, Hardie Grant Books, Victoria, p. 681.
[156] Address by Dr. Deepika Udagama, "Conflict, Tsunami reconstruction and human development in Sri Lanka: *Lessons to be learnt*" 2007, p. 8.

priority. Subsidising housing loans also disappeared with the MHP, probably due to lack of donor agencies and an underutilisation of resources.[157]

I asked Mr. Palansuriya how housing projects are facilitated now in Sri Lanka. He informed me that the departmental structure in the Ministry of Housing and Construction that existed for the MHP was a burden on the NHDA and so housing programmes were dispersed between various Ministries.

Mr. Palansuriya says during the Premadasa PM's government, the Housing Authority, Urban Development Authority and the Water Board were all located in the Ministry of Housing and Construction. Today the Housing Authority is under the Ministry of Housing and Development; and the others belong to the Ministry of Urban Development. Each department has their own health, sanitation, infrastructural or housing programmes. He says that there is some co-ordination, but "a lot of misunderstandings". Mr. Palansuriya said the division between departments and programmes has made the whole housing effort much less successful than that experience during the MHP.

The NHDA has not completely turned its back on the techniques and methodology of the MHP in the rural sector where the complexity of construction and deficiency of land is not as difficult as the urban.[158] Mr. Palansuriya said Community Action Planning and many other programmes are still providing technical support and promoting community participation in housing and services delivery.

On a more positive note, the effects of the MHP have transcended national boundaries. Mr. Palansuriya noted, as did many other interviewees, that the MHP gained international recognition for its innovation and success. Mr. Sirivardana and Dr. Mataaarachchi stated that many of the initial task force members have gone on to use the MHP model in Africa and South East Asia.

The foundations of a promising development strategy have been created. We can only hope that Sri Lanka and other nations build upon the MHP's valuable lessons.

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[157] Address by Dr. Deepika Udagama, "Conflict, Tsunami reconstruction and human development in Sri Lanka: *Lessons to be learnt*" 2007, p. 9.
[158] In an interview with Mr. Palansuriya, Deputy General Manager of the National Housing Development Authority on February 2006.

After the Tsunami

The Boxing Day tsunami in 2004 claimed over 35,000 Sri Lankan lives. 17,000 remain missing, 516,000 people remain internally displaced with livelihood destroyed.[159]

Many of my interviewees and members of the general public agreed that not enough was done during that crisis. Secretary to the Treasury Dr. PB Jayasundera said "it is a known fact that the utilization of foreign aid is constrained by complex procurement practices of the donors as well as the government, environmental issues and at the time of implementation, inadequate domestic resources in the national budget, capacity constraints of contracts, poor project designing and unrealistic and rigid conditionalities attached to such project financing."[160] "Permanent shelter [w]as the most vexed issue ... and after 11 months only 1126 replacement homes had been built and another 15,619"[161] in the process.

Despite the surge of foreign aid, the construction of permanent homes has not been sufficient. Many blame the pace of redevelopment on the Government's arbitrary imposition of coastal 'buffer zones', which ban the building of houses along the water's edge and do not provide land alternatives. The government's oppurtunistic taxation of donations has also been a significant hindrance to expedient relief.

I queried Mr. Palansuriya on how the NHDA was involved in the tsunami effort. He said that unfortunately the government enlisted the help of private sector bodies, NGOs, and the Ministry of Urban Development after the tsunami. The NHDA was not immediately involved because the problem was thought to be "too big" for it. Unfortunately despite the NHDA's two and a half decades of housing experience, for reasons unknown, other agencies began designing houses for rebuilding.

He said the NHDA was finally involved after a few months when the "government realised the NHDA to have a housing officer in every rural division with experience relating to community housing construction and co-ordination." Since then it has been involved in the tsunami effort considerably. However, according to the Disaster Monitoring Unit of the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka the tsunami relief

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[159] Address by Dr. Deepika Udagama, "Conflict, Tsunami reconstruction and human development in Sri Lanka: *Lessons to be learnt*" 2007, p. 8.
[160] Address by Dr. Deepika Udagama, "Conflict, Tsunami reconstruction and human development in Sri Lanka: *Lessons to be learnt*" 2007, p. 9.
[161] Faroque, F, "Women riding the wave" *Sydney Morning Herald* 23-25 December 2005 at 18.

effort has seen a "frequent failure by authorities to consult the affected communities in the reconstruction process, especially with regard to housing needs."[162] Unfortunately, increasing civil unrest, financial instability, corruption, encroaching legislation and unorganised facilitation between agencies has hindered meaningful progress in this important task.

Figure 80 After the tsunami in Galle, 2004

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[162] Address by Dr. Deepika Udagama, "Conflict, Tsunami reconstruction and human development in Sri Lanka: *Lessons to be learnt*" 2007, p. 11.

Appendix A Host Families

The Perera family of Dangadera.

Figure 81 Myself, Aunty Perera and Ranmal in the kitchen

Figure 82 Aunty Perera, Athula and Ranmal in front of their house in Dangadera

The Jamayaka family of Negombo.

Figure 83 Myself, Sheshan and Mrs Jayamaka in front of their house

Figure 84 Mr Jayamaka

Appendix B Dickwella North School

Dickwella North School. The image shows the state of the school before construction of the new classroom building.

Figure 85 (left to right) Dickwella's principal, Australian volunteers, myself and Dr. Sarath Mataraarachchi.

Dickwella North School

Figure 86 State of Dickwella North School's classroom buildings

Figure 87 Dickwella North School classroom

Figure 88 My impression of the new building

Figure 89 My models of the new building submitted to the Melbourne City Council
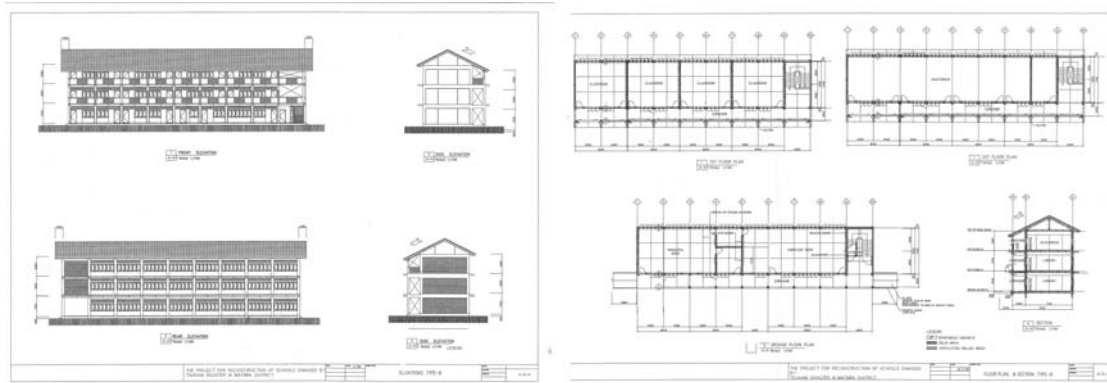
Figure 90 Drawings of the new building submitted to the Melbourne City Council

Figure 91 New building

Figure 92 New science equipment and computer facilities

Figure 93 New library and courtyard area

Interviewees

February 2006 – October 2006

Dr Sarath Mataraarachchi

PhD on the Million Houses Programme, University of Sydney, Town Planner, NSW Department of Housing

February 2006

Mr. Milton Batagoda

Director of PLAN, Tsunami Response Program

February 2006

Mr. L.S. Palansuriya

Deputy General Manager, National Housing Development Authority

February 2006
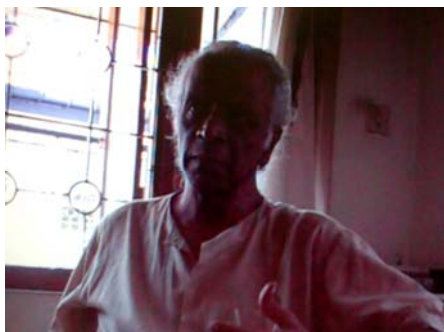
Susil Sirivardana

Former General Manager, National Housing Development Authority

List of Acronyms

ASH	Aided Self Help
CAP	Community Action Planning
CDC	Community Development Committee
DC	Direct Construction
HOLP-R	Housing Option and Loans Package Rural
HOLP-U	Housing Option and Loans Package Urban
HTHP	Hundred Thousand Houses Programme
MHP	Million Houses Programme
NHDA	National Housing Development Authority
RHSP	Rural Housing Sub-Programme
UHSP	Urban Housing Sub-Programme

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