



**Final Mission Report
Colombo (Sri Lanka)
(07 January-16 February 2005)**

A) Notes:

Background: WFP Colombo is the HQ and all around the island there are WFP offices where tsunami affected local area and people.

Opening date: WFP was already in Sri Lanka: Installation of tents and prefabs started on 7th January 2005 (12 days after the disaster happened)

First Operation: 10 January 2005 (3 days after the arrival)

B) Set-up:

- Staffing: Francesco D'Abbronzo and Nunzio Melacca, two UNHRD staff member qualified for the installation and training of Wiik Halls (10x24 and 13x32 sq.m.) and prefabricated buildings (living and office units, shower/toilet units
- Staff fully dedicated was based in Colombo, identified area for the installation of the tents were Kilinochi and Mullatiwu in the Northern side, Hikkaduwa, Galle, Habantota and Batticaloa on the south, Trincomalee and Ampara on the east side.

C) Facilities:

- Tents warehouse Wiik Halls 10x24sq.m and 10x32sq.m. (11 units)
- Offices/Living accommodation (23 units)
- Toilet/shower units (3 units)

Comments-Lessons Learnt-Recommendations

I) Comments:

- Me, Francesco D'Abbronzo and my colleague Nunzio Melacca, went in Sri Lanka on the 7th Of January 2005 for the tsunami emergency; our mission consisted of installing tents and prefabricated buidings and consequently we had the function of training local people and the WFP local logistic officers.
- Upon our arrival we had the ordinary briefing with WFP logistic officers, Miss Simon Lyon was in charge as Head of logistics and we get the first information related to what we had to do there.
- All the tents and the prefabs (prefabs arrived later, that's why our mission was extended for three weeks more) should have been installed around the island but we quickly realized that the situation in Sri Lanka was very hard: on the north side there was still problems related to the Tamils army which rules all the area and every external tentative of help was subject to their approval.
- In that area we made our first trip: in 5 days we installed three warehouses in Kilinochi and Mullatiwu, we had the possibility to train local people, and this

because we had a very big assistance from the local Head of Office who followed and cared all the aspects linked to our job.

- So we came back to Colombo and we spent one week waiting for the next destination;
- We realized that, according to the WFP logistic officers, there were a lots of problems in identifying the other locations and (as it happened) we spent many days without doing anything; we also advised that maybe we were there too much in advance, and we could be back in Sri Lanka when everything would have been cleared.
- But, our mission was extended, due also to the fact that prefabs was arriving, and we could restart with the installation of this stuff.
- Next location was in the south, Hikkaduwa, where we had to install another couple of tents; but, from the beginning of the trip we noted there was something wrong: first, nobody took care of our security clearance, our driver filled the security form, but we knew and we saw(!) that in Colombo WFP compound there was an office dedicated to this matters, and at the first briefing we knew that before every internal mission somebody had to accomplish all the security procedures.
- We also had a lots of problems in the location of the tents: in Hikkaduwa nobody knew what we had to do, where we had to install the tents and we spent a couple of days in liaising with the local authorities in all the matters such as manpower, the equipment we needed, the location of the area...this happened probably due to a lack of communication between WFP Colombo and the Area Logistic Officers.
- After Hikkaduwa we spent 20 days in the Hotel, all the stuff was stored in the airport warehouses and there was blocked due to the fail of the authorization from the Sri Lanka Government; even if the location for the other tents and prefabs have been identified, the Governemet didn't allow the transportation of the reliefs; after a meeting with the Head of logistic officers, we decided to make a training in Colombo: the intention was to train the Area Logistic officers and make them able to install the prefabs by themselves when this was possible.

II) Lesson learnt:

- Two colleagues of UNHRD team went in Indonesia for the same goal; we had the chance to communicate and soon we noted there was a lot of difference in what they found there; they found the assistance they needed, and, as they told us, they quickly get the purpose of their mission: after one week one local team trained by my colleagues was able to install the remaining tents and prefabs!
- We understand Sri Lanka is a complicated land, we really noted the effects of the civil war and the consequences related to unsteady government; we understand the emergency situation and we know that in those moment "if something can go wrong..it will go wrong"; but our mission is completely failed and we still trying to understand why this happened;

III) Recommendations:

- Many times we tried to advise WFP Colombo about the way we could follow to solve some problems, many times we tried to get in touch with WFP Colombo informing them that we were there as the "Erection Team", but, in case of need, we could be able to do something else: I'm talking about the identification of the

locations, the liason with local authorities, taking care of the transportation of the stuff;

- We knew we were there to install tents and train local people but, according to our previous experiences, according to the fact that in the past UNHRD team has been involved in emergency situation like Afganistan, Iraq, Iran, Sudan and go on, and in all of this missions we conducted our aims succesfully, maybe we could accomplish our job in Sri Lanka in a better way..if somebody would have cared of our advises.
- I'm not here to judge how WFP Colombo works, I'm not able and I'm not the right person..but i'm sure that through this lesson learnt we could be able to operate better in the future.

Brindisi, 18-05-2005