Method of tracking the displaced : A lesson from The Study of the Aftermath of Tsunami and Recovery in Indonesia

Bondan Sikoki
Cecep Sukria Sumantri
Elizabeth Frankenberg
Wayan Surisatini & Duncan Thomas

On December 26, 2004 a massive earthquake struck in the Indian Ocean, creating a tsunami that slammed into the nearby island of Sumatra some 45 minutes later, resulting in unparalleled devastation. The tsunami subsequently traveled across the Indian Ocean, wreaking havoc on coastal areas throughout the region.

Estimates suggest that worldwide casualties number nearly 250,000 people. The vast majority of deaths occurred in Indonesia, where in some communities as much as 70% of the population is reported to have perished. The accuracy of these estimates is unclear, but it is clear that the disaster has taken a horrifying toll and that the timing and scope of the event was completely unanticipated.

The Study of the Tsunami Aftermath and Recovery (STAR), provides scientific evidence on the magnitude of this shock in Indonesia, as indicated by an array of social, economic and health indicators.

The goal of the STAR survey, is to provide information on the impact of the tsunami by re-interviewing SUSENAS (National Socio-Economic Survey) 2004 respondents who were living on the coast where the tsunami struck and collecting, in 2005, the same information on the health, socio-demographic and economic status of each individual that was collected in 2004. The follow-up survey locates all respondents who were interviewed in the 2004 wave of SUSENAS in coastal districts of Aceh and North Sumatra. Star track 42,000 respondents in 600 communities in coastal Aceh and North Sumatra All of these respondents has been followed-up with 92 % success in the 5-17 months after the tsunami and a subsequent wave is now in the field. We follow those who have moved away from the origin communities study site as well as those who remains in the origin communities. While the vast majority of movers has remained to stay in Aceh and Sumut, some in temporary quarters and camp site we have tracked movers across the islands of Sumatra, Java and Bali and those who decide to return to their origin communities back from where they started.

Tracking and finding respondents is a challenge in any longitudinal survey, but also the key to success. In communities reduced to rubble after the tsunami the task of figuring out who died, who moved away and where they went is an even greater challenge. There is need to develop special protocols to answer these questions. A typical longitudinal survey obtains information about survival and movers from one informant. Star demands a more intensive and extensive model for tracking the displaced.

The goals of this paper are to demonstrate the use of multiple informant report and other protocols in the process of determining whether respondents are alive or dead and finding respondents that have scattered

throughout the tsunami affected areas and sought opportunities outside the damaged zone. The paper will illuminates the reasons underlying the success at tracking under difficult condition and show the advantages of using multiple informant report in tracking the displaced as against the regular method of tracking with single informant.