

POLICY BRIEF

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The Influence of the UN at the Country Level: The Case of Sri Lanka from 2007 to 2011

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In the face of cascading crises which need international action, an understandable question is: “what is the “UN doing about it?” In an increasing number of cases, it is common to hear, “what is the use of the UN if it cannot do more about.....?”

The answers are often difficult because the questions assume there is one “United Nations” when there are many different “United Nations”. Like a family, they are related, but they are also distinct.

One “UN” revolves around the issues of peace and war discussed at the UN Security Council. A second one involves setting international standards in areas ranging from health to human rights, from aviation to armaments, food to financing, telecommunications to trade and much more. A third involves creating new agreements and structures to better manage global public goods like climate change, the oceans, global public health, and even knowledge production. There is also the UN civil service in many UN headquarters around the world.

However, this paper focuses on another “UN” that is often overlooked and undervalued. The UN at the country level is embedded in more than 160 countries around the world. This country-based manifestation of the UN was created in the 1960s and 1970s primarily to help “developing countries” to develop and to meet humanitarian needs arising from the effects of conflict and war, and/or “natural” disasters. Now its role is changing.

KEY RESULTS:

Assessments of the effectiveness of the UN often assume that there is one “United Nations,” when in fact there are many different “United Nations”: one of these is the UN at the country level, whose work is often undervalued or overlooked.

As the experience in Sri Lanka from 2007 to 2011 demonstrates, the UN despite internal and external limitations, can have unique influence on a country’s crisis response and development path, because of its role in most countries as the “locally based international organization” transparently embedded in a country and society.

Through that, it may be able to influence a country across the range of needs related to peacebuilding, human rights, crisis response/humanitarian assistance, and development/recovery.

If there is stronger recognition and support for that role, the UN can be a better “influencer,” helping countries to prevent crises and/or respond to them in ways which improve their citizens’ lives.

The experience in Sri Lanka demonstrates both the limits on what a UN Country Team can do “locally,” and what more a UN country team can do to influence the possibilities a country has.

I led the UN's work inside Sri Lanka from mid-2007 to early 2011 as United Nations Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative and the UN Secretary-General's Designated Official for the Safety and Security of Staff. In that role I worked with 15 UN organizations that were part of our country team, including 1,700 Sri Lankan national staff and 300 internationally recruited staff.¹

The UN at the country level can influence government and society in ways disproportionate to its relatively small size, because of the legitimacy and weight of the other "UNs" but also because of the respect, trust, and broad networks it often enjoys in a country. But there are also limits to this from factors both internal and external to the UN. If some of these limits could be changed, the UN at the country level could be a more effective partner to prevent crises, and help countries deal with the complex challenges they now face.²

This policy paper will look at how this can be better done, drawing from experience in Sri Lanka between 2007 and 2011. This period has been reviewed and pointed to as an example of the failure of the United Nations to prevent war and to protect civilians, notably the tens of thousands of civilians, including children, women and men, who died in the last stages of the war.³ This was a stark demonstration of the limits of influence the UN at all levels had, including our UN Country Team. However, even in this circumstance, the UN was able to use its influence to mitigate some of the worst effects of a brutal war, and after the war ended, to help hundreds of thousands of traumatized people to have a chance to rebuild their lives.⁴

¹ This policy brief is a summary of a longer paper to be published.

² Though this brief focuses on Sri Lanka there are very many other examples from work in other countries that can be cited too in showing the influence of the UN's work at the country level, including in countries I have served.

³ See the Report of the Secretary-General's Panel of Experts on Sri Lanka, 31 March 2011, United Nations:

[https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-](https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/POC%20Rep%20on%20Account%20in%20Sri%20Lanka.pdf)

[CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/POC%20Rep%20on%20Account%20in%20Sri%20Lanka.pdf](https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2012-11-14/statement-internal-review-panel-report-sri-lanka), and the Statement by the UN Secretary General on the Internal Review Panel

Report: <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2012-11-14/statement-internal-review-panel-report-sri-lanka>.

⁴ This brief is not intended as a complete record of the UN's role in Sri Lanka during those years. Rather its focus is on ways in which our UN Country Team and Humanitarian Team were able (or not able) to influence the situation in Sri Lanka during these years.

⁵ The Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam, for 30 years the leading group advocating an independent "Tamil Homeland" in northern and eastern Sri Lanka who signed a ceasefire agreement in 2002.

The Influence of the United Nations on the Events in Sri Lanka from 2007 to 2011

As the conflict between the LTTE⁵ and the government intensified through 2006, the UN in the country retained influence on development issues. However, the space for humanitarian assistance was limited, and on human rights and other areas viewed as "political" by the government, like conflict prevention, there was a big push back on initiatives or even statements by the UN at headquarters or the country level.

When I arrived in June 2007, the country was facing very big issues: those of war and peace, how to provide humanitarian assistance to hundreds of thousands of people displaced by the 30-year conflict, how to provide development opportunities amidst this, and how to ensure people's basic human rights were met.

However, I found out soon that our ability to influence this was seriously constrained by the strong criticism of the UN by many in Government, society and the media, for not endorsing the dominant view that "war was the answer" to the issues Sri Lanka then faced.

An extreme and early example of this was the critique by Sri Lankan leaders of the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Sir John Holmes, as a terrorist for confirming in an answer to media questions in August 2007 that during 2006 Sri Lanka had the most deaths of humanitarian personnel of any country in the world. The reaction to this and related stories saying the UN was helping the LTTE, meant many of our staff were harassed, humanitarian access was limited, and UNICEF's main warehouse was closed for months.⁶ As this unraveled during August and September 2007, my colleagues and I realized the limits of our influence and the need to find ways to increase and broaden it.

As our UN team reacted to increased pressure and harsh criticism, we first tried to better use formal, "diplomatic" channels to protect the space we worked in, but the events of mid-2007 proved these were inadequate. Therefore, our UN Country Team and Humanitarian Country teams (UNCT and HCT) began to consciously use a mix of informal and formal means of influence to increase our ability to help people. The results were mixed: on some issues the UN proved to have considerable influence, but on others it was either ineffective or less than was needed.

⁶ The Politics Of Humanity: The Reality of Relief Aid, John Holmes, Bloomsbury, 2013. See particularly chapter on Sri Lanka.

This brief examines the means and tools we used to try to influence the four main issues facing Sri Lanka during these years: peace, humanitarian assistance, development, and human rights.

1. Peace:

Our work on trying to prevent an escalation of the conflict and, at best, peacebuilding, involved engagement with the Government at the highest levels, including the UN Secretary-General, the President of Sri Lanka, Foreign Ministers, and top officials of key countries, and at times during 2007 to May 2009, with senior leadership in the LTTE. Ban Ki-moon had regular conversations by phone with President Mahinda Rajapakse and personally made a 24-hour long visit on 23 May 2009, just four days after the end of the war, accompanied by the three UN Secretary-Generals. Between 2007 and 2010 there were personal visits by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (once), the Emergency Relief Coordinator/UN USG for Humanitarian Affairs (five times), the UN USG for Political Affairs (three times), and the USG/Chief of Staff or the UN SG (three times). In the best of circumstances there was good dialogue, but often meetings were difficult, or their outcome manipulated for political gain.

Complementary to this top-level engagement were the efforts in Sri Lanka of our team with locally based partners. We worked very closely with ambassadors who had significant influence on the government (e.g. USA, India, Japan, Norway) and who had communication channels with the LTTE (e.g. Norway, Switzerland). We also engaged with business and civil society leaders involved with earlier work on peacebuilding.

Unfortunately, all these initiatives both by UN HQ senior officials and our country level team, failed on the biggest issue: finding a peaceful end of the war. Fundamentally two political issues prevented us, either at the HQ or country level, from influencing this:

1. At the national level: The strong domestic view, including among business leaders and parts of civil society, that it was “finally” the time to defeat the LTTE at whatever the cost, and secondly, the large amounts of political and military capital already invested in a complete defeat of the LTTE.
2. At the international level: The competition between India and China for influence in Sri Lanka meant it was in neither’s interest to risk relations with the government. Secondly, the “war on terrorism” combined with the LTTE leadership’s rhetoric and actions raised support among key countries for an “end to terrorism” in Sri Lanka.

This low level of influence on either the Government or the LTTE to bring about a peaceful (or at the minimum, a less bloody) end to the war was demonstrated in the war’s last days including the failed effort to arrange a late surrender by the LTTE, resulting in thousands more deaths than if a surrender had been arranged.

Another longer lasting impact was that the Sri Lankan experience was used as a “model” for other countries fighting internal “insurgent” groups. By categorizing these groups as terrorist (with or without justification) an approach was used in other places of not letting concerns about human rights or the death of civilians to get in the way of eradicating “terrorists” who used “human shields,” while keeping any outside “witnesses” far away.⁷

The UN, at all levels, was not able to influence a peaceful end to the war. It is possible that if the Security Council were involved, if international public opinion was strongly mobilized through stronger advocacy by the UN based on the serious human rights violations happening, if the regional powers worked together to support a peaceful solution, and if there were more ways to influence the LTTE to negotiate a stop to fighting, there could have been a different outcome. But given the strong commitment of the Government and much of Sri Lankan society to conclude the war, and the LTTE’s reluctance to appear to surrender, all of these conditions would have had to be in place. Unfortunately, not even one of them was.

However, after the war’s conclusion conditions were different, and the UN did develop more influence, especially on peacebuilding at the local level. That will be described in the following discussion on development.

2. Humanitarian Assistance:

The role of the UN in Sri Lanka in providing humanitarian assistance was relatively more accepted than its role on peace for several reasons:

- There was a clear need for humanitarian assistance.
- There was long cooperation on humanitarian assistance.
- While the UN’s involvement in peace was partly accepted as a follow-up to the ceasefire agreement of 2001, it was not fully accepted, and perceived by many as outside interference. In contrast, member states including India and China, supported humanitarian assistance and the UN’s role in it.

⁷ From October 2023, there were uncomfortable echoes of the same language in the conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza.

Therefore, our team had more tools to increase the space for humanitarian assistance and these were very much needed as the political environment from 2007 to 2011 meant that neither the Government nor the LTTE wanted humanitarian work to “get in the way” of their ability to meet their military or political objectives.

In response to such pressure, our team deliberately used a wide range of tools to assist more people, especially more effectively after the end of fighting in May 2009. Some of these were:

1. Using our strong country base to build close (if not always easy) relationships with key people in Government and the military at all levels, to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and to increase the effectiveness of our advocacy for humanitarian protection.
2. Before the war ended, including when sending humanitarian convoys across lines in late 2008 to early 2009, having regular contact with the LTTE.
3. Building and maintaining close links with respected Sri Lankan civil society leaders.
4. Engagement with religious leaders. This took two forms:
 - a. Our team worked with some senior Buddhist monks, whose advocacy opened space for our humanitarian work, and subsequently our support for recovery after the war.
 - b. We cooperated with the Catholic bishops in Jaffna and Mannar, who were among the most credible advocates for the rights of Tamil civilians.
5. Engagement with business leaders which was most effective in gaining national support and resources to assist displaced persons after the end of the fighting.
6. Media engagement: As mentioned above, much of the media was highly critical and even hostile to the work of the UN and many international NGOs. To reduce this, we took a pro-active approach to influence the media through building stronger ties with both international and local media, putting in place a system of daily media monitoring in all languages and of all types of media, and coordinating close communications among different UN members of the country team.
7. As referred to above, we built close links with key embassies, who were more willing to use their influence on humanitarian access, and development issues than they were, earlier on

issues of peace and human rights, including through a joint mission of the Foreign Ministers of France and the UK in April 2009.⁸

8. Engagement with community leaders helped us to be better informed on their issues and increased our ability (especially after the war) to influence government and humanitarian partners.
9. Using the weight of UN rapporteurs, notably the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), helped us to address key access and humanitarian protection concerns. His recommendations recognized there was a security risk from former combatants (LTTE cadres) being mixed in with a larger civilian population. But he also recommended a process be put in place so that they again had freedom of movement and could return to their homes. Together this created a middle ground, by recognizing security concerns, but saying these should be for a limited time and the restrictions should be lifted and returns supported. The process and schedule he recommended was accepted by Government and was a key element to the Menik Farm camp transforming from being the second largest displaced person camp in the world to being closed in 18 months.
10. In 2009 the use of detailed satellite imagery was more limited than it is today, but the work of UNOSAT provided very detailed information that helped us convince many in government that the number of people affected by the humanitarian emergency was not 70,000, but approximately 300,000 and helped us to get agreements to increase the amount of humanitarian aid provided through convoys and to prepare to assist a larger number of displaced people.

3. Development/Recovery:

Once the immediate “lifesaving” needs of the 300,000 IDPs were met, our work shifted to helping them return as soon as was possible and safe. Hence, we worked to create the conditions for that return which included:

1. Providing adequate food, water, shelter, sanitation, and health services so people would recover their health and strength.
2. Providing education for children.
3. Assisting with the recovery of lost documents needed with respect to a range of government services.

⁸ Bernard Couchner and David Miliband, whom members of our team briefed soon after their arrival.

4. Identifying civil servants among the IDPs in the camp who could be supported to assist with the initial provision of services within the and/or with the provision of services upon their return to their home areas.
5. Acceleration of “mine action” work” so that IDPs could return to their home area.
6. A return plan, endorsed by the Government and the humanitarian community, that included agreed protocols for when it was safe to return and the range of services to be provided.

Our “toolkit” for influence was like that for our humanitarian assistance, reflecting the close linkages, as people’s conditions improved to being strong enough to return “home”. However, many of the tools we had, were now more effective. This was because our role on development/recovery was less of a barrier to the main military and political objectives of the Government, which had been accomplished: the complete defeat of the LTTE. But barriers remained and key to creating the opportunities for an earlier return and development were, the development and implementation of a plan for the staged return of people to their homes, accelerated work on mine action and a recovery plan for the restoration of the full range of services needed for people to rebuild their lives.

To take this forward we used similar tools as we did for humanitarian assistance but in different ways and with increased effectiveness.

1. The most important way of influencing development and recovery was our (complicated) relationship with Government. The commitments made by the President during a mission by the UN Secretary-General also opened doors. Even more important was the wide range of contacts our team had, whether at the top of the government and the military, or with the civil servants on the ground.
2. In the Sri Lankan government system, the GA (Government Agent) was the key person at the district level in delivering development. Our staff, especially our Sri Lankan national staff had close and long relationships with these officials, most of whom were ethnic Tamils from those areas.
3. The close working relationship with member states amplified and increased our advocacy on recovery. At this stage India and Japan’s strong support for an early return, complemented the earlier humanitarian advocacy of the USA, EU states, Norway, Switzerland, Canada, and Australia.

4. We were able to influence mine action work so that it was done sooner and better, which was a key element in supporting the earlier return of hundreds of thousands of people.
5. Our team was able to access a mix of UN humanitarian, development, and special funds for peacebuilding after a conflict.
6. The military leaders who were initially given responsibility for the areas formerly under LTTE control had also served in UN missions in other countries and understood and liked the UN better.
7. Our relationships with religious leaders had even more impact now, as advocacy was listened to more now, and as there was more openness to helping people return with the war finished.
8. In Sri Lanka, of the 2,000 staff working for UN agencies, approximately 1,700 were nationally recruited Sri Lankan staff. Many had deep knowledge of the communities affected by the fighting and of the government officials, such as teachers, medical staff, agricultural support staff who worked in the areas affected by the fighting (although those areas were under LTTE control for many years the central government had staff providing services). The knowledge, skill, bravery and commitment of these staff was important at all times but was especially effective in supporting the return of the IDPs and helping social and economic recovery.

Overall, our work on development and recovery was largely effective in that hundreds of thousands of people returned to their home areas sooner than anticipated, even if it was later than most wanted to. However, the impact of this on their recovery would have been more if the initial broader support from government⁹ during 2010 had lasted through 2011 and beyond. As a result, not enough was done to deal with the physical, human, and psychological/emotional damage caused by the last years of the war.

⁹ Broader in this context means support to rebuilding local governance capacity, and strengthening communities and beginning to address transitional justice issues. By late 2010 Government support for such work reduced, and their support became limited to “basics” such as food, agriculture, basic health and education, and infrastructure.

4. Human Rights

During these years our work on trying to protect human rights, like that on peace, showed the limits of our influence, but later it also demonstrated some of the unique opportunities our country team had to help protect peoples' rights once the war was finished.

Between the 2002 ceasefire and its de-facto end in April 2006, the UN was deeply engaged with the Sri Lankan government on a range of human rights issues, including strong support for the National Human Rights Commission. The UN's deep concern about the change in the Government's approach after the end of the ceasefire was illustrated through the mission of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour in October 2007, and in her final statement that said:

"In the context of the armed conflict and of the emergency measures taken against terrorism, the weakness of the rule of law and prevalence of impunity is alarming."¹⁰

In the subsequent two years the number of killings, abduction and disappearances, including pressure on human rights defenders and journalists drastically increased. The scale of human rights abuses increased dramatically from March 2008, when approximately 300,000 ethnic Tamil civilians became trapped in the north, with the LTTE forcibly conscripting children to fight and preventing people from leaving the areas under their control. Government forces did not adequately distinguish between civilian and military targets, leading to the death and injury of tens of thousands of civilians.¹¹

The conclusion of the war in mid-May 2009 came at a very high cost in terms of civilian casualties as well as military. The UN, and the international community more broadly, were unable to prevent the mass killing of Tamil civilians trapped between the LTTE and advancing military forces. However, despite widespread and credible concerns about serious violations,¹² the Human Rights Council passed less than ten days after the conclusion of hostilities, a resolution that made no mention of this, which rather than reinforcing

¹⁰ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2007/10/235822>

¹¹ The most authoritative information is in the Report of the Secretary General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka
<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/POC%20Rep%20on%20Account%20in%20Sri%20Lanka.pdf>

¹² Some within the UN and international community felt the UN should have been more outspoken on the level of violations. This information was available and communicated through the senior officials in New York, including to the Security Council, and was also available to the Human Rights Council when they were discussing the resolution.

our ability to influence human rights, undermined it.¹³

However, there were some doors to influence human rights that we were able to open during the last stages of the war and in the months afterwards. One was our ability with partners such as ICRC to mount several convoys to the area where people were trapped. Secondly, because of UN national staff and dependents,¹⁴ who remained in the area, we were able to monitor the situation, including the effects of the fighting on civilians and estimate the numbers killed and injured. While this did not stop or slow the fighting at the time,¹⁵ our documentation of what happened in this period did influence subsequent assessments of how the war ended and of human rights violations.

The influence of the UN was more effective on protection of the rights of displaced people outside the "combat zone" in the IDP camps, and subsequently as people returned to their homes after the war in the following ways:

1. Protection of IDPs in camps. Despite constraints, our involvement influenced these camps to be "non-permanent" and led to a schedule for the early release of certain categories of people, and then to the return of people to their home areas.
2. Protection during returns. While not formally allowed to have protection staff in the return areas, staff from agencies with protection mandates (such as UNICEF & UNHCR) assisted.
3. Child Soldiers. Our UN team, primarily through work led by UNICEF, was deeply involved with issues of children in conflict, including child soldiers.
4. The 24-hour visit of the UN Secretary-General on 23 May 2009 concluded with a joint statement of the Sri Lankan president and the SG referring to human rights, saying "*The Government will take measures to address those grievances*".¹⁶
5. During this period the work of our UN team and myself benefited from the work of a Human Rights Advisor. She and her colleagues provided us a unique link in engaging with and to a limited extent, protecting Human Rights Defenders.
6. The documentation we tried to gather on the human rights situation, informed the work of the Secretary General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka, and was an influence on the restructuring of the UN's approach to supporting UN country teams in trying to prevent and respond to conflicts and situations of mass human violations.

¹³

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/ltd/g09/133/42/pdf/g0913342.pdf?token=F86pXw3ykWzVzyfeSI&fe=true>

¹⁴ After our last convoy into the area where people were trapped in January 2009, approximately 120 staff and dependents remained, accompanied for approximately 3 weeks by 2 international staff members.

The UN's role as an influencer in Sri Lanka from 2007 to 2011

This period examined in this paper, from 2007 to 2011 in Sri Lanka, demonstrated the limits of the UN's influence on maintaining peace and in preventing conflict, especially when member states do not have a unified position and when a government effectively used examples from the "war against terror" to justify its own actions. This in turn limited the space needed for humanitarian work and increased the opportunities for human rights abuses, and for increased threats to the safety of UN staff. The limitations were confirmed in the report of the Secretary General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka, and in a subsequent internal review, which correctly focused on what the UN, including our country team, was not able to do. While colleagues and I contributed to both exercises, neither of the teams involved were able to visit Sri Lanka because the Government did not facilitate their visas. This limited their ability to see what the UN at the country level in Sri Lanka was able to do. My perspective here, which was shared by colleagues in our UN Country Team and other senior UN staff,¹⁷ differs in that we saw, even in more detail, the limitations of our work, but also saw more clearly where the influence of our 2,000 staff created opportunities to help, that otherwise would not have existed.

The UN's influence during this period in Sri Lanka was more effective, than it would have been otherwise, in defending and expanding humanitarian and recovery/development space through its being "embedded" in Sri Lanka society. This helped us to engage deeply, at the political, parliamentary, civil service, business, civil society and "faith-based" organizations levels. This was not possible for other organizations or countries.

All this nationally and locally based work was combined with targeted high-level advocacy at senior levels. This means that, despite the failure to stop the war, from late May 2009, the UN Sri Lanka country team and humanitarian country team had significant influence on the return of IDPs and the size and nature of their recovery from the effects of the war.

¹⁵ In the Report of the Secretary General's Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka they felt these estimates should have been used more specifically rather than in general terms.

¹⁶ Joint Statement by the United Nations Secretary General, Government of Sri Lanka <https://press.un.org/en/2009/sg2151.doc.htm>

¹⁷ See as referred to earlier, John Holmes, The Politics of Humanity, notably the chapter on Sri Lanka

Conclusion: The UN's influence at the country level

This paper has focused on one example, that of Sri Lanka, during a time in which the UN was not able to do the first thing it was created for: "*to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war*".

However, even in this bleak picture, the UN did significantly influence the humanitarian assistance people received, and subsequently their recovery and development. Its influence on human rights was at times very limited, but persistent, principled work meant the UN's influence grew.

The work of the UN in Sri Lanka, during these years, demonstrates that the UN even in a complex, sometimes hostile setting, especially through its in-country presence can have considerable influence on helping people affected by crisis and helping them to recover.

The UN at the country level does not have (and should not have) the tools countries possess to influence others such as economic and military power.

However, the UN does have a unique set of tools that can help it influence a country to prevent crises and to meet the international targets and goals it has committed itself to:

- Its status as an organization all countries are part of, and the legitimacy of its basic principles endorsed (if not observed) by all members.
- Its power to convene a wide group of organizations and people within a country and to bring together countries and organizations.
- Its role in most countries as the "locally based international organization" transparently embedded in country and society.

As this example shows, even if the UN Security Council is deadlocked or inactive, the UN at the country level can play a positive role, building on its country knowledge and diverse networks. There should be stronger recognition of the unique value such strong local relationships have, built on the trust and respect enjoyed by UN Country Teams (and Humanitarian Country Teams too in most circumstances). These can influence a country across the range of needs related to peacebuilding, human rights, crisis response/humanitarian assistance, and development/recovery. Such stronger recognition and support to the UN's work at the country level, would make the UN as a whole more effective as one of the few (perhaps the only) partners, who can be a positive influence on helping countries to prevent crises and/or

respond to them in ways which improve their citizens' lives.

After "action-reviews" undertaken by the UN have often focused on just one element of this or emphasized more what "other UNs" need to do to overcome constraints, whether political or technical. At the country level the emphasis frequently is on **what the UNCT didn't do "locally."** It is also important, as this brief has tried, to focus on **what more the UN country team can do "locally" to influence the possibilities a country has.** As this brief has tried to show, a modest investment in the UN's country level work could yield a high return in terms of the influence and impact of the UN's work around the world.

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