

TUC Aid Tsunami Relief Programme

Sri Lanka and Thailand

*Project Report
by
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Acknowledgements

TUC Aid takes this opportunity to express its deep appreciation of the contribution made by Pete D Castelli III, Country Programme Director, Manori Witharana, Programme Officer, and other staff members of the American Centre for International Labour Solidarity (ACILS) in Colombo to the successful implementation of the Tsunami Relief Programme in Sri Lanka. It also wishes to thank the twelve partner organisations for their invaluable support and advice at all stages –design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation – of the Project.

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Project Report

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General

Sri Lanka - a lower middle-income country¹ with a population of some 19.8m - has been a member of the Commonwealth since 1948 when it regained independence from Britain. The country ranked 93rd out of 177 countries in the UNDP Human Development Index in 2005².

The GNI growth in 2006³ was 7.4% while the rate of annual inflation averaged 11.6% for the same year. Unemployment stood at 6.5% of the labour force in 2006⁴. Agriculture that accounted for 16.8% of GDP in 2006 remains an important sector while the share of industry including construction, mining and quarrying rose to 27% in the same year. The share of the services sector was 56.2% in 2006⁵. Despite significant progress made in the elimination of poverty in the last two decades, one out of five households still lives below the poverty line in Sri Lanka.⁶ There is evidence that economic growth in the last decades has had some adverse effects on income distribution. In 2003/2004, the Gini Index for Sri Lanka was 0.46⁷.

The ethnic conflict that has led to a protracted war in the Northern and Eastern parts of the Island from 1983 onwards continues to take a heavy toll in terms of both human and financial resources. The conflict is estimated to have cost 70,000 lives and has made an indelible impact on the nation's psyche. The Ceasefire Agreement signed between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tamil Tigers of Eelam (LTTE) in 2002, though not explicitly repudiated by either party, has been largely ineffectual since August 2006. The resumption of intense fighting in the Northern and Eastern parts of the Island is estimated to have resulted in over 4,000 deaths in the past 12 months.

¹ In 2006, GDP per capita was USD 1,355. Annual Report, Sri Lanka Central Bank, 2006

² With life expectancy at birth 74.3yrs, adult literacy rate 90.7%, Infant mortality 12 per 1000 in 2004.

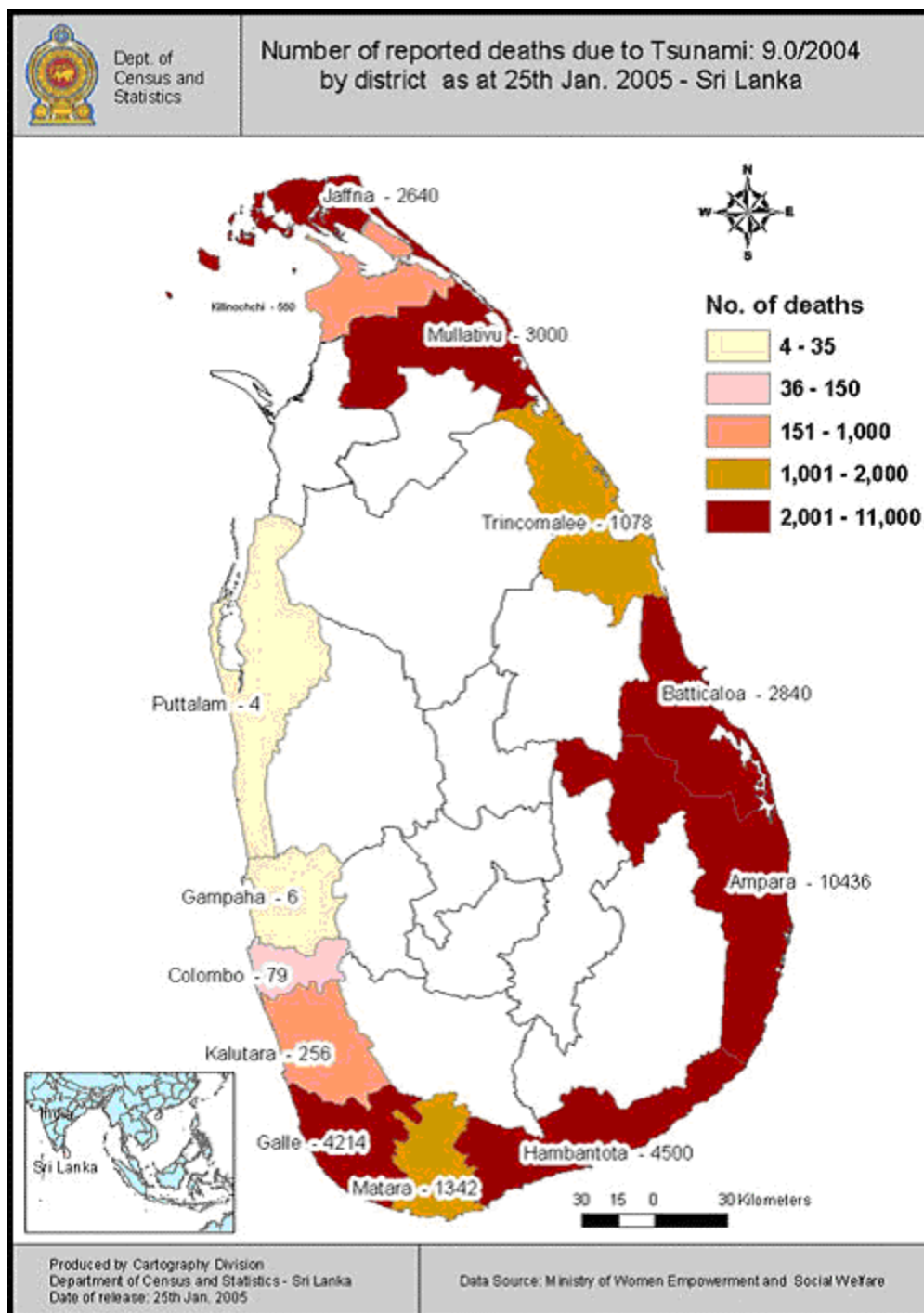
³ Annual Report, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2006

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ 19.2%, according to the House Income and Expenditure Survey 2001/2002.

⁷ Based on household income, Key Social Indicators, Annual Report, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2006



Tsunami waves

The most devastating natural disaster to hit Sri Lanka in her 2500-year long recorded history occurred when Tsunami waves caused by a major earthquake off the west coast of the Island of Sumatra swept her shores on the morning of 26 December 2004. The death toll and the number of the injured were estimated at 35,332 and 21,500 respectively in Sri Lanka alone. The damage to physical infrastructure – roads, bridges, railways, and telecommunications – was extensive. Out of the 88,544 housing units affected by the disaster, some 39,900 were completely destroyed while

some 10,000 units, though partially damaged, were beyond repair⁸. Some 4,600 non-housing buildings were also completely destroyed in the disaster which displaced around half a million people in the affected districts. A total of 97 health facilities and 182 schools were damaged in the Tsunami. In 2005, the Annual Report of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka estimated the damage to the economy at 4.5% of the GDP⁹. Fisheries and tourism bore the brunt of the damage and some 150,000 people lost their livelihood.

Response from international trade union movement

A preliminary assessment carried out in January 2005 by the Global Unions-ICFTU mission that visited Sri Lanka in the immediate aftermath of the catastrophe revealed no significant damage to trade union infrastructures. However, the mission reported that a large number of trade union members had died, that many had lost their houses and other belongings and that a very large number of people lost their livelihoods. The mission also reported that job losses were particularly significant in tourism, fisheries and ancillary services sectors and that public services, notably, education and health, had been badly hit. The trade union mission also mentioned that a disproportionately large number of children had perished, that many surviving children were unable to attend school, as undamaged school buildings were being used to accommodate internally displaced persons and that many trade unions had been involved in emergency and transitional relief phases.

TUC Aid Needs Assessment Mission

The TUC, through TUC Aid, made an urgent appeal to all affiliates for funds for emergency relief and long-term rehabilitation of victims of the disaster in South East Asia. A circular from the General Secretary to all affiliates followed the Appeal, first launched through the TUC Website. In February, TUC Aid made a donation of £25,000 to the Disaster Emergencies Committee (DEC) Appeal to be used for emergency relief. There was an overwhelmingly generous response to the TUC Aid Tsunami Appeal from affiliates and the general public, which enabled the Charity to raise some £320,000¹⁰.

Project

Bandula Kothalawala from the European Union and International Relations Department visited Sri Lanka from 17 to 24 August 2005 with a view to assessing the needs of the trade union movement in collaboration with the American Centre for International Labour Solidarity (ACILS). The TUC Aid Tsunami Relief Programme was based on the recommendations of his Report submitted to TUC Aid Trustees in September 2005. The Programme aimed at achieving the twin objective of facilitating long-term rehabilitation of victims in order to enhance their prospects of sustainable livelihoods and of strengthening trade union organisations' capacity to support their members in their efforts to come to terms with the difficulties caused by the disaster.

⁸ Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka

⁹ Annual Report, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2005

¹⁰ TUC Aid, in addition to the two initiatives in Sri Lanka and Thailand, has funded two programmes in Indonesia.

This Report on the TUC Aid Tsunami Relief Programme in Sri Lanka and Thailand sets out its objectives, looks at the activities carried out in both countries and assesses its contribution to the long-term rehabilitation of the victims of the disaster. The bulk of the information was gathered from a series of informal conversations with beneficiaries and representatives of partner organisations in Sri Lanka and Thailand during visits in April 2007. It also draws on the discussions with Manori Witharana, Programme Officer, in the American Centre for International Labour Solidarity (ACILS) in Colombo, John Osolnick, Executive Director, Burma Institute for Democracy and Development and Zaw Tun, Programme Officer, and on various Progress Reports.

Activities

Following is a summary of activities supported under the TUC Aid Tsunami Relief Programme in Sri Lanka.

- Provision of office equipment, furniture and other equipment
- Financial and/or material support for trade union members in need
- Counseling and health clinics
- Vocational training
- Housing

The eleven trade union organisations and the Non-Governmental Organisation participating in the Programme undertook to ensure that;

- Selection of candidates for training places on vocational courses was based on merit and that at least 45% of trainees were women;
- Office equipment provided through the Project was put to good use and properly maintained;
- Selection of members' families for receipt of educational material and household items was made on the basis of identified needs;
- Selection of beneficiaries of houses was made in accordance with the criteria agreed with TUC Aid and ACILS.

Implementation of Programme

Ms Manori Witharana, Programme Officer, was assigned the task of implementing the Programme under the supervision of Pete D Castelli III, Country Programme Director for Sri Lanka and India, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding signed between ACILS and TUC Aid. The ACILS Office in Colombo agreed to provide office space and equipment for the Project. TUC Aid made arrangements to transfer the funds necessary for project activities on a quarterly basis.

TUC Aid was furnished with quarterly reports on project activities, which enabled it to keep the Trustees, affiliates and the general public informed of the progress in the

implementation of the Programme. All activities planned under the Project were successfully completed by May 2007, at a cost of some £102,922, representing 2.6% increase over the budget.

Material Support

The Confederation of Public Services Independent Trade Unions (COPSITU) was one of the few trade union organizations, the offices (in Matara and Amparai) of which suffered considerable damaged due to the Tsunami. Two computers with printers, tables, cupboards and filing cabinets were provided for their offices in the affected regions. The Ceylon Workers' Congress (CWC) also received office equipment and furniture to replace some of the equipment lost in the Tsunami.



The Sri Lanka Nidahas Sevaka Sangamaya (SLNSS) handed over five mopeds provided by TUC Aid to five of its members who lost their modes of transport in the Tsunami. The Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya (JSS) received a grant which enabled it to distribute sets of household items, kitchen utensils and educational material to fifty families in Kalutara and Galle in the south of Sri Lanka. The Friendship House in Koggala which supports trade union members affected by the Tsunami through the provision of training and counseling services received office equipment and furniture, a moped, an overhead projector, a projector screen and kitchen appliances to be used for training purposes.

Financial Support

The President of the Sri Lanka Nurses' Association (SLNA) and her colleagues requested that some financial assistance be granted to some of their colleagues¹¹, especially those from the North and the East, affected by the Tsunami. TUC Aid responded with a grant which was handed over to the recipients by the SLNA at its 63rd Annual Meeting held on 17 February 2006 in Colombo.

Support for Livelihood Development

¹¹ 9 men and 16 women received financial assistance totaling 225,000 LKR (approximately £1,125 at the time)

At Beuwala, coastal town some 55 km from Colombo, some beneficiaries of material support were interviewed in a meeting held at the Offices of the Maritime Workers' Union. Members of the MWU and of their families were provided with fishing nets (10), sewing machines (5), bicycles (10), food processing appliances (10) and, in a few cases, essential household items. There was clear evidence that the recipients had put to good use the material support provided by TUC Aid. Not all recipients of assistance were available for interviews. The five female recipients of sewing machines have set themselves up in business as seamstresses in the village and succeeded in earning a living, helping their families to make ends meet. One lady who received kitchen utensils has started selling food packets to the workers in the small port. Two of the men who received a bicycle and a fish-box each are selling fish in the area while the recipients of fishing nets are pleased that they are now able to make a living. One recipient of a toolbox said that he had been successful in finding work in polishing furniture. The Maritime Workers' Union affiliated to the National Workers Congress – an affiliate of the ITUC - provides training for family members of its members in pastry-making and computer literacy and also arranges tuition for children of its members.



Recipients of material support in an evaluation meeting

The meetings with some recipients were held in the Friendship House at Koggala, some 130km from Colombo. Female beneficiaries had received sewing machines that they use for dress-making. Bicycles, toolkits for repairing radios and a showcase were among the items provided for men whose livelihoods were affected by the Tsunami. All recipients said that they had been able to earn some extra money, thanks to the material support from TUC Aid. Donations were made in response to a request for material support from the All Ceylon Federation of Free Trade Unions (ACFFTU) whose members had lost their livelihoods.

Counselling Services and Health Clinics

The Government Nursing Officers' Association (GNOA) received a grant from TUC Aid, which enabled it to provide counseling services and health clinics in Colombo, Kalutara, Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Trincomalee and Batticaloe. Some thirty men

and twenty women took part in each of the 14 counseling programmes conducted in the towns concerned. Two types of counseling programmes were carried out – one for people affected by the Tsunami and other for local civil servants, public health inspectors, midwives, school teachers and representatives from voluntary organizations. At local level civil servants play a crucial role in the long-term rehabilitation programmes run by the Government and various NGOs. People found health clinics very useful, as many of them had lost their medical histories in the Tsunami and had been unable to continue medication.

Only a few civil servants, the majority of whom were grama niladaris ¹², who attended counseling services were available for interviews during the visit. They expressed their gratitude for the service which they found very useful. Many of them had been on duty on the day of the disaster and gave graphic details of the event and the response from the authorities at local level. All of them said that they did their best to cope with the Tsunami with the very limited resources at their disposal and that they went out of their way to help the victims and emphasized the need for raising awareness of the risks of similar disasters and for a proper disaster management training for local officials. There was a sense of frustration and resentment among those interviewed, for, according to them, high-ranking civil servants had often put the blame on them for the inadequacy of their response. In sum, they were of the view that senior civil servants claimed credit for the successes and shifted the blame on to them for failures. Grama niladaris play a vital role in facilitating the functioning of civil administration and provide a variety of services at local level.

Housing Programme

The Trade Union Women's Forum and the Free Trade Zones/General Services Employees' Union in their meeting with the TUC Aid representative in Colombo made an earnest request for financial support for building houses for those of their members who had their houses destroyed or damaged in the Tsunami.

The selection of beneficiaries was done in consultation with TUC Aid and the ACILS by the two partner organizations – Trade Union Women's Forum (TUWF) and the Free Trade Zones/General Services Employees' Union (FTZGSEU) in accordance with agreed criteria. The three main criteria were that;

- The recipient should be a member of a trade union;
- He/she should own the land on which the house was to be built;
- He/she was not entitled to significant financial support for building a house from institutional sources.

It was also stipulated that beneficiaries be chosen from among those whose houses had been destroyed or damaged beyond repair and that at least half the beneficiaries be women. One partner organization informed that not all candidates were able to fulfill all the first three criteria simultaneously, as the vast majority of its members who suffered in the disaster did not own any land at all and as many were

¹² Grama Niladaris are low-ranking civil servants in charge of a small administrative division usually a village. They carry out important administrative duties at local level.

entitled to some financial support from the Government. It was therefore agreed that priority be given to those who met all the criteria and that potential trade union members be considered for receipt of a house if he or she met the other two criteria.

Fourteen out of the 18 houses were visited between 23 April and 26 April 2007. They are, except for one, located in the South-West part of the Island and are far apart. The house nearest to Colombo – Capital of Sri Lanka – is in Kalutara (43km) while the farthest (160km) is situated at the southernmost tip of the country – Devundara, also known as Dondra. The houses were, with few exceptions, built in rural areas which, in a few cases, are difficult to access by road. Beneficiaries are from poor working families with very modest means and could not have afforded to acquire land in urban areas¹³.



Four of the houses built by TUC Aid

¹³ Sri Lanka is a densely populated country, (299 per sq km in 2001). The pressure on urban land is particularly high in the Southwest part of the Island.



House one of the beneficiaries used to live in

Some of the beneficiaries were not available for interviews, as they had gone to work. It was possible to talk to spouses, siblings and/or parents. At the time of the visits, not all the houses were occupied by the beneficiaries for a variety of reasons. In some instances, there was still some minor work to be carried out before the beneficiaries were able to move in. In one instance, the family concerned was waiting to be connected to the National Grid. Another family said that they had not been able to move in, as they did not yet have essential furniture. However, in a number of cases, recipients had decided to postpone the occupation until an astrologically auspicious moment for the event could be determined¹⁴.

Some recipients had made improvements to their properties out of their own resources. One recipient had proper ceilings installed at his own expense while another had ceilings made out of cheap soft material. All houses have been provided with electricity, water and external toilet facilities.

Almost all the houses seem to have problems with facilities for cooking although they have some space to be used as a kitchenette. Most beneficiaries are unwilling to use the space for the purpose due to the smoke from burning firewood and seem to prefer to cook outside. Several families, when asked to choose a household item, opted for a gas cooker and a cylinder¹⁵. Some families had been re-located following the Tsunami, which had caused difficulties in getting to work.

All beneficiaries expressed profound gratitude to TUC Aid and the British trade union movement for the generous support they received in their hour of need. One family who had lived in a wattle-and-daub house throughout their life was particularly appreciative of the new house built for them by TUC Aid.

Vocational Training Programmes

The Jana Setha Sahana Foundation – local NGO with close links with trade unions in Sri Lanka – conducted a vocational training programme funded by TUC Aid. The JSSF had arranged for some of the beneficiaries of their vocational training programme to be interviewed during the visit. The beneficiaries had been selected

¹⁴ The vast majority of Sri Lankans believe in astrology and consult an astrologer before undertaking any important enterprise.

¹⁵ Households in rural Sri Lanka and even in many urban areas, have no access to a pipe-borne gas distribution network. They usually purchase 13-kg gas cylinders for domestic use.

on the recommendations of the Grama niladaris and approved by the Assistant Government Agent of the area. A total of 360 persons received training in making joss sticks, candles and exercise books in the first six months of 2006. The tables below provide a breakdown by gender and district. It is important to point out that due to the deterioration of the security situation in the North and East of the Island, some training workshops which were to have been conducted in the districts concerned had to be transferred to the South-West region. All trainees following the completion of the course were provided with a toolkit and raw material necessary for establishing themselves in business.

Joss Sticks

| District | Women | Men | Total |
|------------|-------|-----|-------|
| Kalutara | 17 | 3 | 20 |
| Galle | 38 | 2 | 40 |
| Matara | 37 | 3 | 40 |
| Hambantota | 32 | 8 | 40 |



Candles and Joss Sticks made by beneficiaries

Candles

| District | Women | Men | Total |
|------------|-------|-----|-------|
| Kalutara | 19 | 1 | 20 |
| Galle | 18 | 2 | 20 |
| Matara | 20 | 0 | 20 |
| Hambantota | 15 | 5 | 20 |

Exercise Books

| District | Women | Men | Total |
|----------|-------|-----|-------|
| Kalutara | 14 | 6 | 20 |

| | | | |
|------------|----|----|----|
| Galle | 31 | 9 | 40 |
| Matara | 26 | 14 | 40 |
| Hambantota | 28 | 12 | 40 |

Source: Progress Reports

The people interviewed expressed satisfaction on the progress made in self-employment.

The JSSF has been careful to limit the number of trainees in each trade in each district in order to ensure that the trainees are able to sell their products in local markets at competitive prices and that their businesses remain commercially viable. There is considerable demand for joss sticks in Sri Lanka, as they are used in



Buddhist and Hindu temples. The full-moon day in each month being a holiday, most people visit their local temple and burn joss sticks. The demand for joss sticks increases considerably during some months when full moon days of special significance in the Buddhist and Hindu calendar fall. At the moment, the JSSF provides assistance for the trainees to purchase raw materials at reasonable prices while exploring the possibility of establishing a loan scheme.

Wax candles are used for lighting in some households while they are also burnt in churches and other places of worship. The market for candles, too, is considerable although it is currently dominated by small and medium-scale manufacturers. Supply often falls short of demand. There is potential for expansion through diversification, as the market for different varieties of candles – decorative candles, in particular, seems to be growing.

There is growing demand for exercise books from schools¹⁶ in Sri Lanka currently met by small and medium-scale manufacturers. The trainees sell their products at local fairs and shops at competitive prices and seem satisfied with the arrangements for outlets. They do not have a “cutter” machine for trimming the edges of exercise books and are dependent on local printers who charge for the service. The JSSF is studying the possibility of purchasing a cutting machine which could be located at a

¹⁶ There are 9,727 schools with a total student population of 3,942,412 in Sri Lanka, according to the 2005 Census.

community centre to be used by trainees in a particular area. The JSSF has also experienced difficulties in ensuring the supply of raw materials for the trainees on a regular basis.

It was not possible to conduct long interviews with trainees to learn more about their livelihoods and prospects for trading outlets due to the lack of time. There is a need to look into the health and safety implications, if any, of the working conditions at home. It is not claimed that their current working conditions are harmful to their health or that the work they do at home is hazardous. Nevertheless, frequent exposure to chemicals and/or inhalation of fragrances and sawdust used in making joss sticks could carry health risks. The safety of the instruments used in making exercise books needs to be verified. Moreover, since the work is carried out at home, it is important to check whether there are any health risks for young children.

Lanka Jathika Estate Workers' Union (LJEWU)

Due to the worsening security situation in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, there was no plan to visit the Vocational Training Centre set up in collaboration with the Lanka Jathika Estate Workers' Union (LJEWU) in Kalmunai, some 320km from Colombo. The Centre was however visited by a staff member of the ACILS in 2006 on 3 October 2006. Moreover, the LJEWU reported on the training activities on a regular basis to ACILS while their General Secretary, K Velayudam, attended the Partners Meeting on 27 April 2007.



Handloom Machine at Kalmunai Training Centre

The Project had been delayed due to the difficulty of finding suitable land to construct a permanent structure for the Training Centre. Mr Mayan Mustafa, local MP, had made available a plot of land belonging to him free of charge, following representations made by the LJEWU and government officials. A building consisting of a long hall, an office and a storeroom was put up for the use of trainees.

Due to the lack of space only fifteen out of the twenty-five handloom weaving machines are used at any one time. Sarongs, bed linen and curtains are currently produced by those who received training under the Project. Mr Velayudan assured that there was sufficient demand for handloom textiles in the region and that marketing of the products had not been a problem. 50 weavers have so far been trained under the Project. The handloom industry being highly labour intensive, there

is potential for generating employment opportunities for rural women. It is estimated that the industry provides direct employment for some 15,000 persons in the Island.

The handloom textile industry in Sri Lanka dates back to ancient times and remains one of the country's more traditional exports. The industry faces new challenges in the globalizing economy and needs to adopt new techniques and combine innovative designs and patterns with modern material while preserving its distinctive identity and unique craftsmanship. The main input used in the industry is cotton yarn usually imported from India. So far, the Training Centre has not experienced any serious problems in the supply of cotton yarn.

It is hoped that more employment opportunities will be created through diversification of the product range which seems to be rather limited at present. Moreover, there is potential for further expansion into export markets¹⁷, for instance, by promoting the production of soft toys made of hand-woven fabrics.

The Training Centre in Kalmunai also provides training in cement block¹⁸ making which responds to increased demand for cement blocks as building material following the destruction caused by the Tsunami waves. One machine was purchased for the Training Centre. The five people trained under the Project are working together as a team. There is considerable demand in the area for cement blocks used in the construction of houses.

There is potential for further expansion, as the demand for cement blocks in the area is growing. Moreover, the technology is ideal for micro/ small scale enterprise and makes extensive use of locally available raw material and waste. It is estimated that 600-800 blocks can be made in an 8-hour working day with one skilled and 6-8 semi-skilled workmen, which points to considerable scope for employment generation.

Problems

The Project activities commenced slightly later than expected due to the fact that the successful candidate for the post of Programme Officer declined the offer of employment. In the course of the implementation, the Project encountered a few other problems which caused some delays in some programmes, especially vocational training programmes. The construction of permanent structures for housing the machines and material for making concrete blocks took longer than expected, causing delays at the start.

The rapid deterioration of the security situation in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka caused serious difficulties for the construction of houses. Despite considerable efforts by the Programme Officer and partner organizations, it proved impossible to find a contractor willing to undertake the construction work in the Eastern Province.

¹⁷ In 2005, earnings from export of handloom textiles amounted to LKR 135mn.

¹⁸ Cement block technology is considered to be cost-effective, environmentally friendly and efficient in areas where bricks are not available or too expensive. A lean concrete mix (1:12-14, cement, aggregate) is compressed in a machine to form a regular shaped uniform block, measuring approximately 300x200x150mm. The soil in the area is said to be suitable for block manufacture and there is also plenty of rubble to be used as aggregate. Blocks are normally used as walling material.

TUC Aid had to abandon the housing scheme in the East and re-allocate the funds for the construction of the remaining houses in the South of the Island. In fact, due to security reasons, only one of the five houses, originally planned for the East, was built in Kalmunai. The events in 2006 in the Eastern Province amply vindicated the decision not to go ahead with the housing programme.

The cost of building materials rose sharply in many parts of the Island, especially in the areas affected by the Tsunami due to the sudden upsurge in demand for them following the destruction of buildings¹⁹. Moreover, the average wage of brick-layers, carpenters, welders etc went up considerably due to the increased demand, causing difficulties for the housing programme. In addition, the rate of inflation accelerated in the second half of 2006 mainly due to the rise in defence expenditure²⁰. It was therefore decided to reduce the number of houses to be built from 20 to 18, thereby making it possible to successfully complete the programme within the budget agreed with the Trustees.

Lessons

The TUC Aid Tsunami Relief Programme in Sri Lanka was designed and appraised following a Needs Assessment Mission to the country in August 2005 by a TUC official, which enabled the Trustees to have a reasonably good appreciation of the long-term needs of the trade unions and members affected by the disaster and commit resources to meeting them within a limited set of parameters. That TUC Aid stepped in during the transition phase between emergency relief and the long-term rehabilitation phases provided it with a unique opportunity, not only to assess the needs appropriately and adequately, but also to target its interventions on a relatively small group of people and unions who most needed it.

The long-standing relationship with the trade union movement in the United States and the experience and the expertise of the ACILS in Colombo facilitated the task of implementing the programme in collaboration with 11 trade union partners and one non-governmental organization. The Project benefited significantly from ACILS' long-standing relations with the trade union movement in Sri Lanka, its knowledge of, and familiarity with, the country and its institutions.

The partners showed great enthusiasm, unwavering commitment and firm determination in organizing the activities and acted with a sense of responsibility and ownership in order to achieve project objectives. Representatives from some partner organizations visited some project sites at considerable risk to themselves despite the worsening security situation in the Eastern Province.

Recommendations and suggestions

The TUC Aid Tsunami Relief Programme is the spontaneous response from the British trade union movement to a tragic event which destroyed the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people in South East Asia. It is not part of

¹⁹ The cost of construction of houses rose by some 22% between 2004 and 2005, according to the Index published by the CBSL, in Nov 2006.

²⁰ In Nov 2006, the annual rate of inflation was 12.7%, Monthly Bulletin, CBSL, 2006.Vol 56, No 11.

regular trade union training and education activities supported by TUC Aid in developing countries. It is therefore not intended to make recommendations to ensure its continuity. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the following suggestions will enhance the usefulness of the intervention for its beneficiaries.

Housing

1. It is evident that most beneficiaries, if not all, are in need of further support to move in, as soon as possible. Most need essential household items - furniture, gas cookers in many cases – and some financial assistance to get connected to the National Grid. Therefore, it is recommended that each family be granted 20,000 LKR (about £92) to be used for the purchase of household items of their choice or as deposit for the supply of electricity.

Material support

2. Many trade union partner organizations are in need of office equipment – mainly computers – to modernize their offices to be able to provide a more efficient service for their members. It is recommended that 75,000 LKR (£350) be made available to each organization to be used for the purchase of a computer.

Vocational Training

3. The JSSF has informed TUC Aid of the difficulty of the regular supply of essential raw materials, especially paper for making exercise books. It is recommended that 100,000 LKR (£460) be made available to the JSSF to be used for the purchase of paper for the trainees.
4. The JSSF is also requested to provide relevant information on a suitable cutting machine used in making exercise books so that the possibility of raising the necessary funds could be considered.
5. It is suggested that, at some stage, the JSSF give some thought to possible health and safety implications of the vocational training programme, notably, to any health risks associated with frequent contact with materials used in the manufacture of joss sticks and candles.
6. It is hoped that the LJEWU will be able to continue training programmes in Kalmunai as a self-financing venture, that the trainees will be encouraged to diversify the product range and that the market will expand further when the security situation improves in the area.

Thailand

Background

Thailand is a middle-income country with a per capita income of USD 2,720 in 2005. Its population was 62.4m in 2005²¹. Life expectancy in 2005 was 70.9 years while adult literacy was 92.6% in 2006²².

The Tsunami waves²³ caused 8,221 deaths and extensive damage to infrastructure in Thailand. Some 8,400 people were injured in the disaster which struck six provinces in Thailand. Phang Nga, Krabi and Phuket were the worst affected, Phang Nga Province alone accounting for 71% of the total deaths. It is estimated that 58,550 persons in 12,815 households were directly affected and that 3,302 housing units were completely destroyed by the Tsunami waves. Education, health, agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture and tourism suffered significant damage. The damage to the national economy is estimated at 1.3% of GDP.

The Thai authorities committed substantial resources to the long-term rehabilitation of Thai victims of the disaster while foreign governments were swift to attend to the needs of their citizens affected by the Tsunami. Migrant workers in the affected provinces were by and large left out of the mainstream relief, resettlement and rehabilitation schemes put in place by the Thai authorities. According to some estimates²⁴, the Burmese account for some 80% of migrant workers in Thailand. There is no reliable data on the number of deaths or injured among Burmese migrants. While registered Burmese migrant workers were offered some financial assistance by Thai authorities, the vast majority of undocumented Burmese migrant

²¹ Based on Central Registration Database as at 28 April 2005, Bank of Thailand, website.

²² Thailand, Country Data Profile, World Bank website.

²³ Data in this section were extracted from the Economic Impact of the Tsunami in Thailand by Asian Disaster Preparedness Center,

²⁴ Thailand, Plight of Burmese Migrant Workers, Amnesty International, June 2006.

workers received little or no assistance from the Thai Government. Moreover, a large number of Burmese migrant workers are said to have gone into hiding following the Tsunami for fear of arrests and harassment by Thai authorities, which made it even more difficult to establish the number of Burmese migrant workers killed, injured or directly affected by the Tsunami.

Project

TUC Aid, following consultation with the Burma Institute for Democracy and Development (BIDD), Washington DC, USA and the Federation of Trade Unions in Burma (FTUB), based in Thailand, approved funding in July 2005 for the Trade Union Assistance for Burmese Migrant Workers in Thailand Project. The one-year Project aimed at supporting long-term rehabilitation of Burmese migrant workers affected by the Tsunami waves consisted in providing;

- Fishing nets and crab traps for fishermen who lost their livelihood;
- Water tanks for storing clean water for workers resident in some islands off the coast of Phuket;
- School furniture and material, uniforms and tutorial support for children of migrant workers to learn the Thai language;

The School, situated at some 230km from Phuket, was visited on Saturday 28 April 2007. It was built by an Italian charity for the use of the children of Burmese migrants who are unable to attend Thai schools due to the lack of basic proficiency in the Thai language. Prior to the establishment of the School, the children used to help their parents with their work. It appears that the local schools are so resource-constrained²⁵ that they give priority to pupils from Thai families. At the time of the visit, the School had 41 pupils – 15 boys and 26 girls – aged 5-15.

Breakdown by Grades

| Grade | Primary | One | Two | Three | Four |
|--------------|---------|-----|-----|-------|------|
| No of Pupils | 27 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 1 |

Source: Progress Reports

²⁵ The allocation of resources for schools is based on the number of pupils from a catchment area. Children from undocumented migrant families are excluded from the register.



Students with parents at the School

The thirty parents who send their children to the School work in rubber plantations (6) and fisheries and prawn farms (24). Their income ranges from 4,000 to 5,000 Thai bahts per month (£62 to £77²⁶). Most children live in the surrounding area, although one student is said to be travelling from a distance of 25km. The School hours are from 09.00 to 11.30 in the morning and 13.00 to 16.00 in the afternoon.

In Primary Grade and Grades 1-2, Burmese, English, Thai, General Science and Maths are taught while History and Geography are added to the curriculum in Grades 3-4. The tutorial staff consists of three teachers – one senior teacher, assistant teacher and one Thai teacher. At the time of the visit, the Thai teacher had left and a replacement was being sought. The senior (female) teacher – a High School Graduate from Burma - has attended a short training course in teaching methods organised by the Grassroots Human Rights and Development Education Committee based in Khuk Khak, Phang Nga. The assistant teacher, too, also Burmese, is a High School graduate. The School also employs a cook who prepares meals for the children and the staff.

The BIDD has provided, out of TUC Aid funds, daily transportation of children to and from School, lunch (three dishes – meat or fish, soup and vegetables with rice), uniforms, stationery and textbooks. Each parent contributes 100 bahts per month, which is used to pay for electricity, drinking water and other necessities.

Some children with their parents had gathered in the School for the visit despite it being a holiday. They looked healthy and cheerful. Many parents expressed gratitude for the support from TUC Aid and hoped that their children would be able to continue schooling in future. The cost of running the school for one year is estimated at some £6,500²⁷, which the BIDD finds hard to raise. This is a reasonably accurate estimate based on actual expenditure in the past. Phuket is claimed to have the highest per capita income²⁸ in Thailand with a significant number of foreigners resident on the island, which has contributed to its high cost of living. The Offices of the BIDD/FTUB are located in Bangkok. Travel to/from Phuket, 867km from

²⁶ £1=64.57THB on 19 May 2007.

²⁷ Estimate for year 2006-2007 was about £6,340.00. This includes staff salaries, school material, transport of children to/from School, meals and 15% administration.

²⁸ Per capita income in Phuket was 190,365 bahts (some £2,948) in 2005, South Thailand, Bank of Thailand.

Bangkok, accommodation, meals and hire of car for transport during visits to the Project entail significant expenses which are not included in the School budget.

The visit to the Coral Island on 1st May was marred by bad weather. The island is situated some 9km off the South East of Phuket. The island is a popular holiday resort with a hotel and has also become a favourite destination for day-trippers who cross the distance by speed boats in 15-20 minutes.



As part of long-term rehabilitative assistance for Burmese migrant workers, TUC Aid provided water storage tanks for migrant families resident on the Coral Island. Twenty 8000-litre water storage tanks were distributed to four worksites on the Island. The tanks provide clean water for washing purposes for ninety workers who live on the Island. Employers paid for the installation of the tanks, which are used to collect and store rainwater²⁹ from the roofs.

In addition, the Project has provided support for the development of livelihood of fishermen affected by the Tsunami waves. 650 fishing nets and crab traps were distributed to fishing villages in the district of Suksamran in Ranong Province in Thailand. Some of the fishermen, who had received fishing nets, expressed their appreciation of the assistance provided by TUC Aid.

²⁹ The average rainfall per year is about 2540mm in Phuket.



Recommendations

1. The children of migrant families in the areas covered by the Project have no access to the Thai education system due to a variety of factors. Their poor command of the Thai language, consequent inability to fully integrate into the mainstream society, poor living conditions and covert restrictions on school admissions in the area will continue to stand in their way to formal education. The current arrangements for the School seem satisfactory given the limited resources at the disposal of the BIDD. It is therefore recommended that further financial assistance be granted for the School so that the children are able to continue schooling for another year.
2. Education is a basic human right. Children of migrant families should have access to formal education irrespective of the immigration status of their parents. It is necessary to explore all possible avenues of providing them with appropriate and adequate educational opportunities available for all children in the area. It is hoped that the BIDD, with the support of the international trade union movement - Education International, for instance- will be able to make representations to Thai authorities on the need for formal education for children of migrant families.
3. The children of the Burmese migrant families concerned are likely to continue to need some tutorial support in order to enable them to catch up with their Thai counterparts even if they are given the opportunity to attend normal Thai schools. It is therefore suggested that a fund-raising effort be undertaken to support the School, in the medium-term, as a complementary or additional support system for pupils in need of special assistance. Alternatively, given the preponderance of young children in the School, it may be worth considering the possibility of developing it into a pre-school, in the long-term, for migrant children. If appropriate, some Thai children could also be admitted, thereby, affording them a unique opportunity for integration at a very early stage.

Partner Organisations

1. **All Ceylon Federation of Free Trade Unions (ACFFTU)**
ACFFTU
94-1/6, York Building
York Street
Colombo 1.
Tel (94 11) 2431847
Fax (94 11) 2470874
General Secretary Mr Anton Lodwick
2. **Ceylon Workers Congress (CWC)**
72, Ananda Coomaraswamy Mawatha
Colombo 7, Sri Lanka
Tel: (94 11) 230 1359
Fax: (94 11) 230 1355
President/General Secretary: Hon. S.A.R. Thondaman
3. **Confederation of Public Service Independent Trade Unions (COPSITU)**
33, Opposite Maha Vidyalaya
Galmuruwa
Sri Lanka
Tel: (94 32) 40694
Fax: (94 11) 286 5438
General Secretary Mr. Adhikari Jayaratne
4. **Free Trade Zones /General Services Employees' Union (FTZGSEU)**
141, Ananda Rajakaruna Mawatha
Colombo 10
Telefax: 4617711
General Secretary Mr Anton Marcus
5. **Government Nursing Officers' Union (GNOA)**
5/10,
Balapitiya.
Tel: 09-122-58108
Mobile: 0777-268850
President Mr Saman Ratnapriya
6. **Jana Setha Sahana Foundation (JSSF)**
Janasetha Sahana Foundation
194/1, Sapugaskanda
Makola (South)
Makola
Tel: 2962800/2962126
Fax: 2962411
Mobile: 077-7302755
President Mr Wimalasiri Gunawardena
7. **Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya (JSS)**
416, Kotte Road, Pita Kotte
Sri Lanka
Tel: (94 11) 286 5436/7
Fax: (94 11) 286 5438
Chief Organiser: Mr. Palitha Athukorale
8. **Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union (LJEWU)**
60, Bandaranayakerpura, Jayawardenepura Mawatha
Welikada, Rajagiriya, Kotte

Sri Lanka
Tel: (94 11) 286 5138
Fax: (94 11) 2862262
General Secretary: Mr. K. Velayudam

9. Sri Lanka Nidahas Sevaka Sangamaya (SLNSS)

301, T.B. Jaya Mawatha
Colombo 10, Sri Lanka
Tel: (94 11) 269 4074
Fax: (94 11) 267 9021
General Secretary Mr. Lesile Devendra

10. The Friendship House

All Ceylon Federation of Free Trade Unions
94 1/6, York Building
York Street
Colombo – 01
Tel: (94 11) 2713386
General Secretary Mr Anton Lodwick

11. The Sri Lanka Nurses' Association (SLNA)

Room 123, Nurses Home
No. 93 Regent Street
Colombo 10
President Ms. Kusum Vithana

12. Trade Union Women's Forum (TUWF)

PAFFREL Activity Center,
No. 153, Sri Saranankara Road,
Kalubowila,
Dehiwala
Tel (94 11) 2726340
President Trixi Hettiarachchi

Annex II
TUC Aid Tsunami Relief Programme
Recipients of Houses

Partner Organization: Trade Union Women's Forum

| | Name | Address | Age | Marital States | Number of Children/ Dependents (if any) | Occupation | Union | How recipient was affected by the Tsunami |
|---|-------------------------|---|------------|-----------------------|--|------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | H M Malanie Fernando | No 41/50, Patrick Peiris Mawatha, Katukurunda, Kalutara | 46 | Married | 2 | Labourer (Unskilled) | National Motor Workers Union | House and household items were washed away. Her husband is disabled. Children are at school. She is the sole breadwinner. |
| 2 | K A Vijitha | Dommy Jayawardene Mawatha, Eranawila, Ambalangoda | 41 | Married | 3 | Labourer (Unskilled) | Lanka Jathika Estate Workers Union. Her Husband was a union member. | House was destroyed. Her husband had climbed a tree and fallen during the Tsunami. He is unable to work. She is the sole breadwinner. |
| 3 | E Ambiga Wickremasekera | Mondawatta Telwatta. | 44 | Married | 2 | Samurdhi Development Officer | Samurdhi Development Union | Family lost everything in the disaster. She had a narrow escape. Children were found three weeks later in a refugee camp. |
| 4 | T W Samanthi | Jinandala Mawatha, Karandugoda, | 20 | Unmarried | One sister | Machine Operator | National Workers' Union | Her family lost everything. Parents are unemployed. She is the sole breadwinner. |
| 5 | L H Malanie | 7, Gudumulla, Koggala | 45 | Widow | 2 | Helper | National Workers' Union | Husband and Mother were carried |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|----|-----------|-------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| | | Habaraduwa | | | | | | away. They lost everything. Children had been ill for months. |
| 6 | W M Mishani Jayani | Kimbulagala Hena Dewinuware | 27 | Unmarried | 3 (sisters) | Machine Operator | National Workers' Union | House had been washed away. Parents are unemployed. She looks after her sisters as well. |
| 7 | Sujeewa Malkanthi | 110/4, Matara Road, Piyidigama, Ahangama | 31 | Married | One child | Helper, Koggala Manufacturing. | ACFFTU | House and household items were washed away. Her husband had left her before the Tsunami. |
| 8 | V Shantha Kumara | Wanniya Road, Kalmuanai | 24 | Married | 2 Children | Labourer Wellassa Foundation | Wellassa Development Union | House and all belongings were washed away. Parents died in the disaster. |

Annex III
TUC Aid Tsunami Relief Programme
Recipients of Houses

Partner Organization: Free Trade Zones & General Services Employees Union (FTZ&GSEU)

| | Name | Address | Age | Marital States | Number of Children/ Dependents (if any) | Occupation | Union | How he/she was affected by the tsunami |
|---|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----|----------------|---|----------------------------|----------|--|
| 1 | D.R. Lalani Kanthi | No 925/4, Katuwana, Dodanduwa | 35 | Married | 2 | Machine Operator at Bontex | No union | House and household items were destroyed |
| 2 | Chameera Presanna | 119, Kurunduwatte, | 30 | Single | - | Machine Operator at | No union | House was destroyed |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|----------------------|--|----|---------|---|----------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| | Gajamange | Thalpe | | | | Shalanka | | |
| 3 | B. Kamal Padmasiri | No 80, Modaragoda, Koggala, Habaraduwa | 40 | Married | 2 | Cutting Supervisor, Asiatex | Now FTZ&GSEU | House and household items were destroyed |
| 4 | Asanka Mahesh Kumara | No 65, Medagatetuwa Road, Adunkale, Ahengama. | 20 | Married | - | Quality Control, Sofia Lanka | FTZ&GSEU | House and household items were completely Destroyed. |
| 5 | Nirani Indika | Guru Gederawatta, Denuwara, Ahangama | - | Married | - | Machine Operator, Orient Garment | - | House and household items were destroyed |
| 6 | Inoka Priyadarshani | Mahawatta, Denuwara, Ahangama | 28 | Married | 3 | Machine Operator, Orient Garment | No union | House and household items were destroyed |
| 7 | K.M.Kithsiri | Ganemulla Road, Sepalawatta, Polwatta, Denapitiyua | 32 | Married | 2 | Cutter, Koggala Garments | NWC | House and household items were destroyed |
| 8 | H.A. Kanchana | Wella Atharawatta, Palana, Walligama | 26 | Married | - | Machine Operator, Sofia Lanka | FTZ&GSEU | House and household items were completely destroyed |
| 9 | P.D.Sunil Shanda | Kalderam Watta, Palana, Welegama | 26 | Married | - | Machine Operator, Asiamode | Now member of FTZ&GSEU | House and household items were damaged beyond repair. |
| 10 | W.Charitha Rasangika | No12, Godumulla, Koggala, Habaraduwa | 25 | Married | 1 | Machine Operator | ACFTU | House was damaged beyond repair. |

Annexe IV

