

Women's Groups in Sri Lanka Working on Tsunami Relief

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The following pages offer information about women's groups in Sri Lanka working to provide immediate relief as well as longer term support for women affected by the tsunami. This list, which does not pretend to catalogue all Sri Lankan women's groups undertaking relief work, is compiled from information coming to UNIFEM from women's organizations, and other sources presenting gender-oriented information of interest.

1. Suriya Women's Development Center, Batticaloa

Focus:

Immediate term:

1. Addressing the immediate needs of women and children in the hard hit Batticaloa region. This work involves meeting both material needs and psychological needs.
2. Preventing gender based violence in refugee camps.
Monitoring and addressing incidents of gender based violence; Measures to prevent/deter such incidents.

Medium and long term

1. Continuing relief activities and activities in relation to gender based violations.
2. In addition, taking steps to ensure inclusive participatory decision making so that women's voices will be heard in shaping policies for temporary and permanent resettlement.

Who is doing it:

Suriya Women's Development Centre (Suriya) was established in 1991 (See <http://suriya.modblog.com/?show=main>) to work with the people displaced by the internal conflict in the North-Eastern province, and living in the camps, which were established in Colombo. Suriya focused on working with women and children. After the closure of the camps in Colombo and the inmates were forced to return to their former places of residence in 1993, Suriya moved to Batticaloa and has been working in the Eastern Province for the last eight years,

Suriya has worked with women's groups in all three communities addressing gender awareness, human rights, access to justice, violence against women, economic empowerment and other social development issues. Using theater and other avenues they have also been active in the movement for peace with justice involving women in the Tamil and Muslim communities. The individuals involved with Suriya include Vijayakumari Murugiah and Prof. Sitralega Mounaguru of the Eastern University.

Financial Logistics:

Account Number :- 0730 07303335 101
Name of the Bank :- Seylan Bank Ltd.
Swift Code :- SEYBLKLX

Contact Information:

Contact Suriya at suriyaw@slt.lk.
20 Dias Lane, Batticaloa, Sri Lanka.
Telephone- + 94-65-23297, Fax- + 94-65-24657

2. Women's Fund for Tsunami Relief and Reconstruction, Sri Lanka

Focus:

This fund will be used for two major projects, The first project will be done as a collective effort with a broad coalition of women's groups. The second project will be carried out by the Association of War Affected Women focusing on "Peace through Reconciliation and coexistence, women taking the leadership" The donors can indicate which project they would like the funds to be utilized.

1. Collective project

- i. To identify needs and priorities for the delivery of relief and assistance in the immediate future
- ii. To ensure the inclusion of women in all processes of decision making in the reconstruction and rehabilitation processes.
- iii. To identify medium-term and long-term programs that can strengthen women's initiatives at the community level, and to ensure the protection and promotion of women's rights in the processes of reconstruction and rehabilitation.

2. AWAW Project

To rebuild a fishing village where all communities can live together as a model village. In addition to rehabilitation and restoration of homes this project will aim to strengthen the peace process and let the women play a vital role in decision making on rebuilding and reconstruction of their village, giving priorities to women.

The exact necessitates and the plan for reconstruction will be posted in the www.awawsl.org official web site of AWAW by 2nd week of January 2005.

Who is doing it:

- Harini Amerasinghe; Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR)
- Nehama Jayewardene; Centre for the Study of Human Rights
- Ananda Galappatti; War Trauma and Psycho-Social Support Group
- Shermal Wijewardene, University of Colombo
- Anberiya Haniffa; Muslim Women's Research and Action Forum

- Visakha Dharmadasa: Association of War Affected Women (AWAW)
- Sunila Abeyssekera: INFORM Human Rights Documentation Centre
- Jayanthi kuru-utumpala, Viola Perera, Rajeshwary Sureshkumar: Women and Media Collective
- Sepali Kottegoda: Women and Media Collective/ Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum

Financial logistics:

Donations can be made through any of the participant groups in this collective effort:

i. Women and Media Collective:

- Bank Name: Standard Chartered Bank
- Bank Address: Standard Chartered Bank, Colombo 01, Sri Lanka
- Account Name: Forum for Tsunami Affected Women
- Account Number: 01 1237314 01
- Swift Code Number: SCBLK LX
- Bank Branch: Rajagiriya Branch

ii. Association of War Affected Women(AWAW):

- Name of Account: Fund for Tsunami Affected Women
- Bank account No: 0004120-1
- Bank: Bank of Ceylon, Pilimathalawa Branch
- Swift code: BECY- LK- LX, 7010/587

Contact Information:

i. Women and Media Collective

Jayanthi Kuru-Utumpala
 Junior Programme Officer, Women and Media Collective
 Phone: + 94 - 11 - 2805127 / 2805579
 Fax: + 94 - 11 - 2805580

ii. Association of War Affected Women (AWAW)

Visakha Dharmadasa
 Chair, Association of War Affected Women (AWAW)
 No 09' Riverdale Rd, Aniwatthe, Kandy 20000, Sri Lanka.
 E-Mail: venuwan@slt.net.lk
 Tel/Fax: 0094 81 2224098

3. Initiative Sunrise Lanka (ISL for Ampara, Eastern Province)

Focus:

This initiative is focused on setting up a people-centred rebuilding initiative in one of the worst-hit districts, Ampara, on Sri Lanka's east coast, looking specifically at villages north of Yala Park, such as Panama (paa-nuh-muh). The aim is to set up a

collaborative initiative with a number of affected families in the area in consultation with them and their own assessment of their needs and priorities. This area was also chosen because it includes remote long-impooverished coastal villages made up of all 3 main communities (Tamil, Muslim, Sinhala) living together for centuries. What makes ISL different from other relief efforts (international, government) is the main stress here is on going directly to the people and 1st finding out exactly what they need, and also on people-to-people continuity, so that the village won't be abandoned after the headlines abandon this tragedy in a couple of weeks. The plan is to support affected communities to ensure they maintain as much control as possible in the process of the rebuilding of their own lives.

Organizations, individuals or groups of individuals may give a one-time donation, or also choose to donate at least \$1000 over the next months (possible in regular instalments) to sponsor one family. We are operating on the principle that 100% of donated funds should go to the affected people themselves. NOTE: ISL is NOT an NGO or established organization, just a group of individuals committed to doing something direct and effective together with affected people themselves. For more information, you can contact May & Kris at: ravan@eureka.lk

Who is doing it:

- May Yee and Kris Bhaggiyadatta, writers/editors, teachers.
- Tilak Jayaratne, communication consultant & media trainer.
- Sunethra Rajukarunayaka, author.
- Broadcasters and others affiliated with the Uva Community Radio working in the east and southeast.
- Other activists, architects/technical experts, & others; esp. those familiar with or close to the area.

Financial logistics:

i. In the USA:

Donations to Initiative Sunrise Lanka (ISL) are also being accepted by DiasporaFlow. DiasporaFlow, a Sri Lankan-run 501(c)3 nonprofit arts organization, has started an initiative called 'The Sri Lanka Relief Fund,' a coalition of Sri Lankans committed to the long-term rebuilding of the lives of all Sri Lankans (Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim) affected by this devastation. You can pay securely online at www.diasporaflow.org/srilanka-relief.html – and then send an email to srilanka-relief@diasporaflow.org with your full name, with subject heading 'ISL' to confirm that your specified donation has been made. If you are sending a check, please state clearly that the money is for the 'ISL' project and make checks out to 'The Sri Lanka Relief Fund.' Checks can be mailed to 'ISL' c/o The Sri Lanka Relief Fund, P.O. Box 14039, Minneapolis, MN 55414. If you would like a receipt of donation for tax purposes, please include a S.A.S.E.

ii. In Canada:

Direct deposits, by cash or cheque, can be made at any TD branch to May Yee's TD-Canada Trust bank account, Branch 1160, Account no. 103801; PLEASE also email ravan@eureka.lk (& cc: mwhyee@yahoo.com), subject: 'donation', giving full details.

iii. In the UK

At the Bank of Ceylon London UK branch, deposits can be made directly into the group's Bank of Ceylon account in the process of being set up in Colombo.

Contact Information:

Email: ravan@eureka.lk

4. Equal Ground, Colombo

Focus:

EQUAL GROUND is raising funds for much needed food, clothing, medicine and other essential items. It is our hope that rather than utilize your donation to arbitrarily buy essential items and ship of to affected areas, we will pick a village or two and concentrate our efforts on relief and rebuilding there.

Sri Lanka will take years to recover from this disaster. Essential services such as schools, hospitals and so on have been wiped out. Our aim is to try and sustainably assist an area and continue to do so as long as we are able to. We are also looking for a reliable local organisation through which to put the money to work most effectively, if this is a more efficient way to do so.

Who is doing it:

Equal Ground's webpage is <http://www.equal-ground.org>. EqualGround is an organization committed to the equitable status for all sexual orientations and gender identities; its executive director is Rosanna Flamer-Caldera.

Financial logistics:

Diverse Communications in Chicago will be the single receiving point in the U.S. on behalf of the EQUAL GROUND Relief and Assistance Program. The Trustees of Equal Ground are looking to increase the effectiveness of any funds donated by personally supervising that it is spent on the needy and not on "administration".

Cheques must be made out to "Diverse Communications" (a 501 (c) (3) approved organisation), marked "Sri Lanka" or "Sri Lanka Fund" and mailed to: Diverse Communications, 1146 S Taylor Ave, Oak Park, IL 60304, Tel: 312-804-1647, Contact Person: Alan Amberg

Contact Information

i. You can reach us by phone/fax at:

Telephone / Fax International Callers: +94 11 2682278

Telephone / Fax Local Callers: 2682278

Mobile International Callers: +94 7722 254348

Mobile Local Callers: 07722 254348

ii. You can also reach us by e-mail at:

General usage: info@equal-ground.org or equalground@gmail.com

Donations: donate@equal-ground.org

5. Shanthiham, Jaffna

Focus:

The Mental Health Task Force in Disaster was set up to co-ordinate mental health interventions in response to the natural disaster caused by the tsunami on the 26th December 2004. Shanthiham would provide logistical support, human resources and technical expertise for the publication of manuals and pamphlets. This support in conjunction with other Task Force members enabled an immediate response in the provision of education about normal psychological reactions to trauma thus enabling communities and aid workers to offer appropriate support and identify those with more severe problems. It is hoped that this early intervention will play a preventive role in the development of later psychological problems. In the immediate term the focus is on helping relief workers provide brief psychological first aid and crisis intervention. In the medium to long term, the focus will be on providing more concerted interventions like counselling, group work, relaxation and psychological support to address grief, depression, anxiety and PTSD.

In addition to providing direct psychological relief, there will also be focus on offering training for various categories of relief workers, health staff, governmental and non-governmental workers in basic mental health. Within ten days of the Tsunami, Shanthiham had trained over 130 volunteers, medical / university students/ Training College Teacher trainees and one local NGO's in Crisis Intervention. They have also been able to respond to the request from a local NGO to train their staff on The Psychological Effects of a Disaster. The training provided is in basic mental health and is being referred to as Psychological First Aid as counseling and other therapeutic interventions are not deemed effective immediately after a disaster and should only be undertaken by trained mental health professionals. It is felt that this is a more appropriate intervention in the short term as for many, the psychological symptoms they're experiencing will go away.

Finally, the Task Force is producing a number of publications: pamphlets, manuals and posters will be printed and disseminated in Tamil on how to cope with the disaster situation (what to do and not to do) at two levels (general population, welfare camps and relief workers - INGO's / local NGO's).

Who is doing it:

- a. Shanthiham has worked in the Northern province for many years addressing war trauma and related psychosocial issues.
- b. At present Shanthiham has 15 trained volunteers, 17 PST's and 10 core group members. Shanthiham works with a multidisciplinary team (counselors, social workers, relaxation therapists etc.) counselors and psychosocial workers who have a long record of working with war trauma in the Northern province.
- c. It is headed by Prof. D. J. Somasundaram, MD, MRCPsy, Consultant Psychiatrist at the General (Teaching) Hospital, Jaffna, DH, Tellipalai & BH, Point Pedro; He is also head of the Dept. of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna

Financial logistics

- Bank Account No: 1060012972, Commercial Bank of Ceylon Ltd., Hospital Road, Jaffna, Sri Lanka
- Swift Code: CCEYL KLX

Contact Information

- The Association for Health and Counselling, Shanthiham, No. 15, Kachcheri Nallur Road, Jaffna, Sri Lanka.
- TP& Fax: 021-2223338
- Email: psych@sltnet.lk

6. Jeeva Jothi, Batticaloa

Focus:

- Immediate relief in refugee camps aimed at orphaned and displaced girls in Batticaloa; in addition however, they have also been deluged by requests for relief supplies and other kinds of assistance from many in need so they are also responding to these requests on an ongoing basis.
- They are also exploring the financial and logistical feasibility of expanding their long term capacity to house more orphans in their home.

Who is doing it?

Jeeva Jothi is a girls home. It is a registered NGO with the National NGO Secretariat. It is licensed to work all over the country. The home is registered with the North East Probation and Childcare Department. Its director is Kandiah Ilankovan, who has run the organization for 12 years and started it on his own initiative. The home has 80 girls and is one of the few secular orphanages in the region. All the children attend

school and have taken part in many programs such as the Peace Conferences in Singapore in the years 2003, and 2004.

Financial Logistics

Contact the Director, Kandiah Ilankovan through email: jeevajothy@vinet.lk

Contact Information

Email: jeevajothy@vinet.lk

Phone number: 94-65222457.

7. Social Economical & Environmental Developers (SEED)

Focus:

SEED plans to work with a total of 300-400 displaced families from several different villages. The work would be split into 2 phases:

i. PHASE 1 will take place over a 3 month period and will be as follows:

SEED will start in the emergency welfare camps and ensure that all aspects of emergency and relief are being provided for – medical assistance, good drinking water, food, sanitation, mosquito nets, mats, clothes, cooking facilities etc., and psycho-social counselling. During the three months through in-depth needs assessment, discussions with the villagers, local government, LTTE authorities, medical authorities, and other interested parties resettlement locations will be chosen, ideally as close as possible to the original village sites. Once the location is decided the families will be moved into temporary housing on their land as it is imperative that they begin the process of rebuilding their lives and communities.

Activities are listed in point form below:

- Ensure all aspects of emergency and relief are in place – coordinate and provide supplies where and when necessary.
- Provide appropriate psycho-social support.
- Work with the villagers and appropriate officials to determine village site.
- Build relationships with the villagers and between the villages and SEED workers.
- Through discussion and a participatory approach, gradually develop feasible and appropriate plans for the reconstruction of the village, emphasising the full involvement and ownership of the villagers themselves.
- Build temporary accommodation and facilities on the site of the new village.

ii. PHASE 2 will take place over a 2 to 3 year period and will be as follows:

Based on the needs assessment and discussions with the villagers various activities will take place, which are decided and prioritized by the villagers. This will involve permanent housing, community dug wells, a community building, an educational facility and may involve reforestation, a nursery school, a market place etc depending on the needs and size of each community/village. Seed will also work closely with the district medical authority in order for villagers to have good access to medical treatment on a regular basis.

Activities are listed in point form below:

- Implementation of agreed plans. This will involve the gradual replacement of temporary structures with permanent housing.
- Emphasis on the full involvement and participation of the villagers in the construction process and the ongoing transfer of responsibilities to the community.
- Provide training to new SEED staff employed at the local level.
- Provide training to community members to ensure ongoing psycho-social support and establish strong links with broader service networks.
- Provide some income generation funds most specifically in relation to assisting with fishing boats and nets for groups of families as approximately 90% of the villagers on the north and east coast lived off fishing and the sea.
- Ongoing evaluation of project.

Who is doing it:

- SEED has been operational since 1996. SEED's focus has been on the development of local communities primarily in Vavuniya district. Prior to Tsunami, they were involved in three integrated relief and rehabilitation projects for internally displaced people through the 20 year conflict; an "Empowerment Campus" which is a school for children with special needs; Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) a village based program for people with special needs; and an organic farm which is designed to give partner communities the opportunity to learn traditional Sri Lankan organic agricultural practices.
- At present SEED has 47 full-time well-trained local staff and 2 international staff, and we work with an annual budget of over 35 million rupees. They take pride in transparency, use an integrated model of community which is inclusive and participatory and promotes self-sustainability, and develop all our programs through a team based approach.

Financial Logistics:

- For direct deposits: Name of the Bank: Hatton National Bank Ltd; Bank Branch: Vavuniya Branch; Account Name: Social Economical & Environmental Developers (SEED); Account No: C/A :-01-6787901-4; SWIFT CODE: HBLILKLX
- This information is still being confirmed – but our current understanding is that if you from the USA and would like a tax receipt this can be arranged by making a donation through the Virginia based non-profit, Ashoka to SEED - Tsunami Relief Fund. Please mail checks to Ashoka Innovators for the Public, 1700 N. Moore Street, Suite 3000, Arlington, Virginia 22209 -192, USA. Attention Carol Grodzins; Ashoka is involved in several relief efforts so please Indicate that you check is for SEED – Tsunami Relief Fund.

Contact information:

Mr. P. Narasingham

Social and Economical and Enviromental Developers (SEED), Postbox 5, Vavuniya
Sri Lanka
Telephone/Fax: 91-24-2222911
Email: seedva@sltnet.lk

8. Sarvodaya, Moratuwa

Focus:

In addition to general relief work across the country, Sarvodaya has pledged to take in and provide for all children aged 11 and below who have been orphaned by the tsunami disaster. In addition Sarvodaya will care for all women and girls below the age of 19. They have begun drafting plans to build permanent housing and school facilities. Sarvodaya is also mobilizing a group of 30 counsellors and meditation teachers to implement a psycho-spiritual healing program for the Tsunami survivors.

Who is doing it:

Sarvodaya's website is www.sarvodaya.org
Sarvodaya is a Sri Lankan organization with the largest community network in the country and has a 50 year history of decent social development work. In the past they have provided an important avenue for Sinhala people to develop ties with Tamil and Muslim communities in the North and East by contributing to post-conflict reconstruction

Financial logistics:

- To donate to Sarvodaya online by credit card you may donate through the Nonviolent Peaceforce:
<http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/english/help/donatetosarvodaya.asp> Go directly to the Sarvodaya donation page. 100% of the money we collect at this site will go to Sarvodaya.
- To donate via post within the USA, send a tax-deductible check made out to Sarvodaya USA to 5716 Manchester Avenue #3, Los Angeles, CA 90045

Contact Information

Sarvodaya Headquarters
No 98, Rawatawatta Road,
Moratuwa , Sri Lanka
Phone +9411 2647 159, 5550 756, 2655 255
Fax +9411 5557 972
Email: arisar@sltnet.lk

9. Butterfly Garden Tsunami Relief, Batticaloa

Focus:

This project is focused on the needs of the people of Batticaloa town and its environs, in particular the very large refugee settlements set up at by St Michael's College /St. Cecelia's in Batticaloa and nearby Manresa in the countryside. Both these centres currently assist over 2000 people each. There are other such centres at all the Batticaloa schools as well as temples, mosques and churches. Batticaloa has been hard hit by the Tsunami. There are over 280,000 displaced people in this district alone. The situation varies from place to place. Some people have settled in small gatherings but there also some very large camps in the district. It is anticipated that this will be a three stage process

- i. Responding immediately to the emergency addressing needs such as Tarpaulins and plastic sheeting for shelter; bedding; bottled water, food etc.
- ii. Interim re-settling with materials to build small shelters, supplying cooking and household items and basic financial support.
- iii. Resettlement of the people in their home communities.

Who is doing it:

- Father Paul Satkunanayagam SJ, Executive Director, Butterfly Peace Garden
- Paul Hogan, Batticaloa Peace Garden
- Father Miller of St. Michael's who has a long history of involvement with community based networks resisting human rights violations, political violence, communalism and the suppression of dissent in Batticaloa
- Others involved with the Butterfly Peace Garden (focused on children and war trauma) and local secondary schools St. Michael's and St. Cecelias.

Financial logistics:

- Please forward money to Fr. Paul Satkunayagam, Hatton National Bank, Batticaloa, Account Number 02 - 0306001 -3. Please specify the money is for Father Paul and give this address, Jesuit Residence, No.1 Jesuit Street, Batticaloa, Please indicate "Tsunami Relief – Batticaloa" and give your name and address.
- In Canada: If need a tax receipt this can be arranged by making your donation through the Geist Gallery/ Stupid School. The contact there is Laurie Edwards. His numbers are: Stupid School 416-778-1667 / mobile 416- 561- 4856. If you send money directly to Batticaloa there will be no tax receipt.
- In the USA: If need a tax receipt make donations through the Virginia based non-profit, Ashoka to the Butterfly Peace Garden of Batticaloa - Tsunami Relief Fund. Please mail checks to Ashoka Innovators for the Public, 1700 N. Moore Street, Suite 3000, Arlington, Virginia 22209 -192, USA. Attention Carol Grodzins; Ashoka is involved in several relief efforts so please Indicate that you check is for the Butterfly Peace Garden of Batticaloa – Tsunami Relief Fund.

Contact information

Paul Hogan of Butterfly Garden at poho@sierra.lk
Father Paul Satkunanayagam, Jesuit Residence, No.1 Jesuit Street, Batticaloa.