



**International Organization for Migration  
Sri Lanka**

*Tsunami Response Programme*









***Tsunami Response Programme***

***Activity update for the years  
2005 & 2006***



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# *A message from our Chief of Mission...*

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

The 2005-2006 update records the achievements and efforts of IOM Sri Lanka during some of the country's crisis situations. None perhaps is more important than the persistent focus IOM Sri Lanka has had on the Asian tsunami and the post- tsunami reconstruction.

IOM has moved from emergency relief to providing temporary housing to overcoming health challenges and attending to the psychosocial needs of the communities in sites supported by IOM. Providing vocational skills training, supporting livelihood opportunities for survivors, repairing ruined infrastructure in tsunami- affected areas, to countering human trafficking and providing logistical support and transport to government bodies, INGOs and NGOs thus ensuring a swift transportation of aid to tsunami affected areas, have also been key activities. IOM has shouldered an enormous responsibility in the long- term recovery efforts working in collaboration with the Government of Sri Lanka and other local and international organizations over the past two years.

While much has been accomplished by IOM and partners, much still remains to be done. Hence, IOM, intent on bringing back the hope for a better future in the affected districts, will continue to assist beneficiaries to move forward and rebuild the tsunami battered coastal areas.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the donors, local partners and individuals without whose support and contributions this programme would not have been possible.



**Christopher Gascon**  
**Chief of Mission**  
**IOM Sri Lanka**





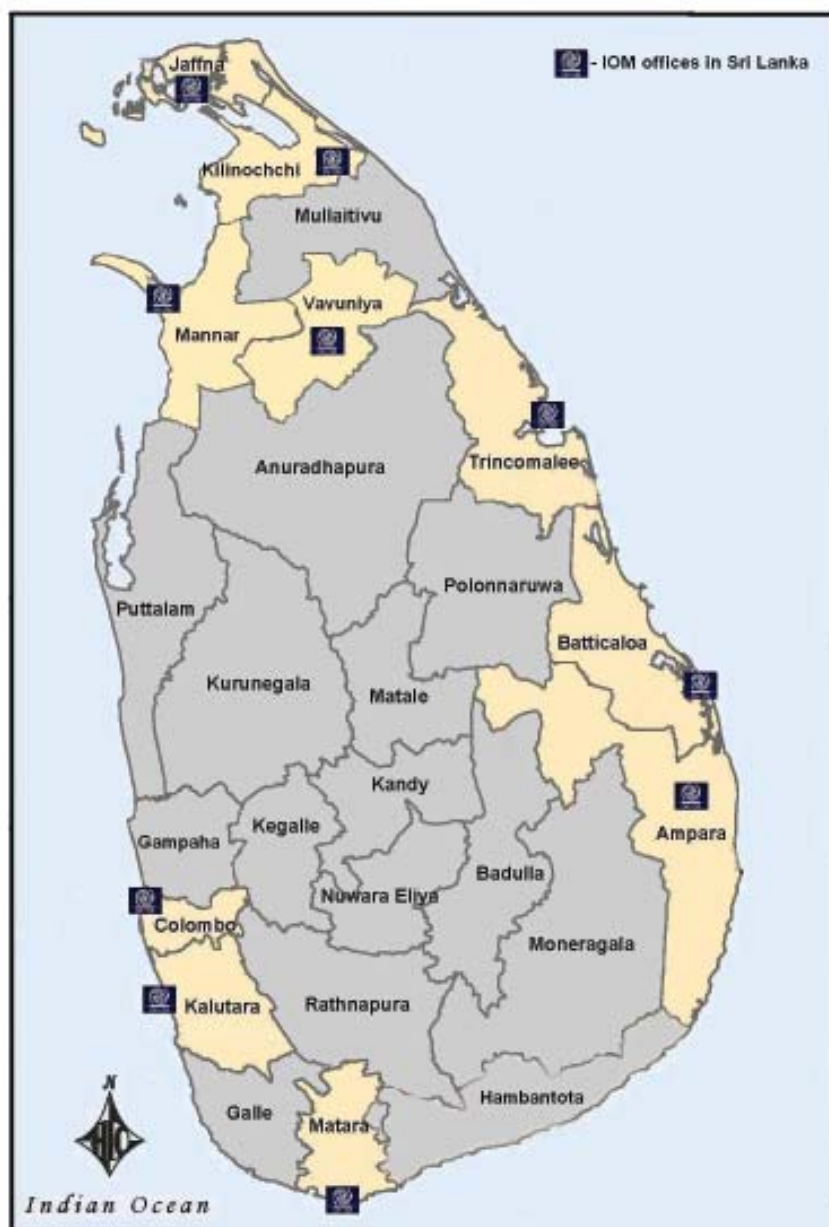
# *International Organization for Migration*

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) works to encourage social and economic development through migration and remains committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society.

IOM was established in 1951 as an intergovernmental organization to resettle European displaced persons, refugees and migrants but has since grown to encompass a variety of activities that manage and support safe migration throughout the world. With more than 290 field locations, over 1,400 active projects and some 5,400 operational staff members, IOM is active on every continent.

## *IOM in Sri Lanka*

The first IOM office in Sri Lanka was opened in Colombo in May 2002 and today the mission includes nine field offices, nearly 300 staff members and is engaged in a variety of projects to support the Sri Lankan government and Sri Lankans living both abroad and within the country.



The organization works to strengthen the capacity of partners involved in migration, such as the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment and the Department of Immigration and Emigration. Other IOM programmes support the return and sustainable reintegration of refugees returning from India and provide assistance to Sri Lankans displaced internally as a result of the island's civil conflict.

IOM also assists failed asylum seekers and irregular migrants to return and establish a sustainable source of income to support themselves and their families. Another programme assists with third-country repatriation and family unifications abroad. Educational campaigns and awareness-raising projects are implemented regularly to deter irregular migration and human trafficking. Further, in 2006, IOM helped evacuate more than 5,000 Sri Lankan migrants who were stranded in Lebanon after violence erupted.

In December 2004, IOM commenced its Tsunami Response Programme with the aim of supporting the Sri Lankan government in enabling tsunami-affected communities to rebuild their lives.





With a strong presence already established in Sri Lanka, IOM was able to respond promptly to the destruction caused by the tsunami.

The organization supported emergency relief efforts in the aftermath of the disaster, providing food and non-food relief items, transportation and logistical support, emergency shelter and basic water and sanitation facilities while also supporting the displaced persons through various camp management activities. Later, as the emergency phase was drawing to an end, IOM initiated longer-term programmes aimed at supporting the overall reconstruction and recovery process.

Supporting the Government of Sri Lanka's reconstruction efforts, IOM has continuously provided direct assistance to communities affected by the tsunami. IOM also worked with several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) in order to reach a larger beneficiary group and to help build the capacity of local agencies and ensure that projects would be sustainable.

IOM has adopted broad and varied responses, incorporating diverse activities such as construction and maintenance of transitional shelters, water and sanitation services, livelihood and health assistance, counter-trafficking activities, and transportation and logistical support as well as registration of tsunami-affected populations.

This report provides a summary of the major activities carried out under IOM's Tsunami Response Programme in the two years following the disaster.



# Shelters

## *Transitional shelter for the displaced*

Since the tsunami, IOM has taken a lead role in the provision of shelter and has been recognized for its accomplishments through the receipt of several awards, including from the former President of Sri Lanka.

To bridge the gap between emergency shelter and permanent housing IOM constructed transitional shelters for the displaced. The models built in the affected districts depended on local preferences, the availability of materials and the size of land available for construction. However, all models met the standards agreed upon in Sri Lanka, and were developed to suit local conditions and were capable of lasting two to four years until permanent houses were constructed.

IOM completed more than 5,700 transitional shelters for tsunami-affected families in eight districts (approximately ten percent of country totals). Temporary schools/pre-schools and community centres were also provided as well as various administrative offices and children's play areas on the sites.

Further, in the second half of 2006, in order to address issues of equity, IOM started a project to construct 500 transitional shelters for conflict-displaced families who live in sub-standard shelters in tsunami-affected areas.

Through administrative, financial and transport assistance, IOM also supported the implementation of the government's Transitional Accommodation Project (TAP), which was established as the coordinating body for shelter activities.

***IOM's shelter programme has supported more than 35,000 tsunami- affected people residing in some 200 transitional shelter sites.***



## *Maintenance of sites and shelters*

Maintenance of transitional shelters became increasingly important towards the end of 2005 and in 2006. It is essential that transitional shelters and sites are maintained in a manner that ensures residents have secure and healthy environments in which to undertake normal household activities, rebuild their livelihoods and address their daily needs while waiting for a permanent housing solution. Due to the intrinsic short-term nature of the structures many have required improvements and ongoing maintenance in order to meet basic standards.

In response to the above issues and at the request of the Reconstruction and Development Agency (RADA), in March 2006, IOM assumed the role of Lead Shelter Agency to assist the government in ensuring adequate site care and maintenance (C&M) in transitional settlements. IOM works to ensure that C&M activities are coordinated between all implementing agencies and government authorities at both the national and district levels in order to ensure that services such as garbage collection, water supply, lighting, gully suckers and necessary repairs and improvements are provided and that no shelter sites are left without adequate support.

In addition, IOM provides direct C&M support in tsunami-affected communities. Activities include upgrading of sub-standard shelters; repair of shelters damaged by the elements or which have deteriorated due to natural wear and tear; and provision of tools and materials to shelter sites allowing residents to undertake minor repairs, thus maintaining their temporary homes in a timely manner.

Since commencing the C&M programme, IOM has upgraded nearly 2,000 shelters. Activities have included replacement of roofs, construction of kitchen extensions, improvements to floors and strengthening of timber structures.

Further, IOM decommissions shelter sites as residents relocate to permanent housing. Decommissioning includes dismantling shelters, toilets and bathing areas; removal of concrete foundations; clearing of debris; and land levelling in order to restore the sites to their original conditions. To date, IOM has decommissioned over 2,000 shelters and 350 toilets

## *Water and sanitation*

The construction and upgrading of water and sanitation facilities have been critical areas of intervention in order to ensure safe and healthy living environments for shelter residents.

Nearly 1,000 toilets, 250 wells and 80 bathing areas have been constructed or upgraded by IOM at transitional sites. Water distribution systems have been provided in 25 sites and drainage systems were built or improved in 23 sites. These hardware interventions are reinforced through hygiene promotion programmes, conducted to ensure the proper usage of facilities and to encourage good hygiene practices among beneficiaries.

Since the tsunami, nearly 9,000 people have participated in over 200 hygiene workshops held by IOM in four districts.



*Wells constructed for residents at shelter sites*

*Transitional shelter and water/sanitation projects have been funded by the Government of Japan, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), American Red Cross, the Government of China, Oxfam Australia (timber donation), World Vision and the Government of Greece.*



# Livelihood

## *Recovering and developing livelihoods*

For the past two years IOM has worked to restore and develop the livelihoods of tsunami- affected persons. This has included replacement of tools and materials lost in the tsunami, business development and management support as well as training in new livelihood skills. IOM also placed emphasis on community-based projects as a mean of including a larger beneficiary group and fostering a sense of equity. As many agencies worked towards restoring the fishing industry, IOM primarily focused its livelihood programme on other affected occupations in order to avoid duplication and gaps in assistance.

IOM has provided direct income-generating assistance to more than 4,500 tsunami- affected families. People's livelihoods were restored by providing tools and equipment and through business development and other appropriate training. IOM staff conducted follow-up visits, progress assessments, and assisted the families in identifying further livelihood opportunities in order to increase income levels and to ensure sustainability. Beneficiaries have included 570 seamstresses and tailors, over 500 grain- and vegetable-farmers, nearly 400 paddy cultivators, 380 fish vendors, 300 retail-shop owners, 300 carpenters, over 200 poultry farmers, 160 cattle owners and numerous other occupations.

In collaboration with local training providers, IOM also supported over 1,500 young people in attaining vocational training certificates. When appropriate, participants were given relevant materials and tool-kits upon completion to support their future livelihood activities.

IOM worked in partnership with 14 local NGOs and community-based organizations to assist more than 2,000 tsunami-affected persons in seven districts. Partner projects have covered a variety of activities, including: skills-upgrading and marketing support to female seamstresses, vocational training targeting youths, and community livestock projects such as assistance to dairy and goat farming co-operatives.

*Through direct assistance, vocational training programmes, NGO partnerships and community based projects IOM's livelihood programme has assisted more than 10,000 tsunami-affected households.*



Further, community-based projects have also been implemented. IOM consulted communities to identify needs, preferences and feasibility of future livelihood projects. Existing community-based organizations were supported while IOM also facilitated the establishment of new ones which were involved in and later responsible for, the projects in order to ensure effectiveness and sustainability. Based on the community consultations, IOM initiated seven projects in the districts of Ampara, Kalutara and Matara. The projects have included restoration of public markets, construction of fishermen's resting and storage areas, access roads and support to fishing and farming cooperatives. More than 2,000 people are directly benefiting from the projects, while it is estimated that twice as many have been supported indirectly.



*Pictures: livelihood assistance was provided to tsunami affected persons through replacement of lost assets, business development and management support.*

*IOM's livelihood activities have been funded by the Australian Red Cross, European Humanitarian Aid Department*





## *Supporting physical and mental well-being*

In the wake of the disaster, IOM conducted assessments of the health situation in temporary settlements. Based on the findings, a Community Health Surveillance Project was initiated where national staff with medical backgrounds were deployed as health surveillance officers in five tsunami-affected districts. The doctors worked continuously to monitor health determinants and ensure that favourable living conditions and adequate access to health facilities were provided for the residents of IOM shelter sites as well as host communities.

Varying across districts and according to the community needs, services provided by IOM's health staff included nutritional awareness and control programmes; vaccination campaigns, registering children and pregnant women and ensuring appropriate immunization; as well as assistance in providing artificial limbs, hearing aids and pregnancy kits.

Street dramas were also arranged as a way of teaching the tsunami-affected population and the wider communities. Eighty dramas were held in Jaffna on issues relating to HIV/AIDS while forty dramas in Ampara focused on topics such as alcoholism, community relations, health and hygiene, site maintenance and the dangers of ignoring symptoms of dengue fever and malaria.

More than fifty workshops and information programmes have been conducted in transitional settlements, covering topics such as infectious and water-borne diseases, environmental health, alcohol and drug abuse, personal hygiene and other health issues. In addition, jointly with the WHO, the Sri Lankan Red Cross Society and St. Johns Ambulance Services, IOM held fifteen first-aid training sessions for IOM beneficiaries, community leaders, NGO staff and other actors working at grass-root level in six tsunami-affected districts.



Mental health trainings have also been conducted for more than 120 health workers, including public health nursing tutors, public health inspectors, midwives and local NGO staff with the aim of strengthening the mental health services available to tsunami-affected populations.

## *IOM's eye care programme*

At the request of the Department of Youth, Elderly, Disabled and Displaced Persons of the Ministry of Health and the Sri Lanka College of Ophthalmologists, IOM launched a pilot project for the provision of ophthalmologic care. The pilot project, which started in May 2005 in Hambantota district, included three eye camps attended by over 1,300 people, training of local eye care workers and the provision of medical equipment to Hambantota Base Hospital.

Based on the pilot project, IOM launched a broader programme in December 2005 focusing on eye care services, including cataract surgery in tsunami-affected communities. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the Sri Lanka College of Ophthalmologists and WHO, IOM organized mobile eye camps for people in tsunami-affected districts, trained local health workers and provided basic medical equipment and supplies to eye care centres.



*Sight screening at eye camps organized in tsunami-affected districts.*

Some 100,000 people attended eye camps in Kalutara, Galle, Matara, Hambantota, Ampara and Batticaloa districts. The beneficiaries were screened and received appropriate care in the form of immediate treatment, provision of spectacles or referral to local hospitals for surgery and further treatment. To date, IOM has provided over 75,000 pairs of spectacles to persons attending the eye camps.

All beneficiaries, as well as friends and relatives accompanying them to the eye screening, received information materials on HIV/AIDS. In addition, hearing tests, dental clinics and awareness campaigns on communicable diseases were often held in conjunction with the eye camps.

Through the programme, nearly 600 local health workers have attended eye care training, including primary eye care workers and some 300 ophthalmologic nurses who received training to develop their skills on handling, maintaining and sterilizing surgical equipment and assisting in cataract surgery.

***Some 100,000 people have attended IOM's eye camps held in tsunami-affected district. More than 75,000 pairs of spectacles have been distributed and training provided to nearly 600 primary eye care workers and ophthalmologic nurses.***

## *Psychosocial community support*

The term 'psychosocial' emphasizes the close connection between people's psychological well-being and their wider social world in terms of relationships, communities and traditions. Throughout the past two years, by providing various forms of community support, trainings and recreational activities, IOM has supported communities in rebuilding their lives emotionally and has helped them cope with the effects of the tsunami and the challenges of being displaced to shelter sites in new locations.

Working with local community-based organizations (CBO) and NGOs, IOM has provided psychosocial education and awareness training to more than 250 field workers and community leaders. In addition, more than 100 workshops have taken place at IOM shelter sites on topics such as health, hygiene, substance abuse, protection, empowerment, child development and youth issues.



*IOM built playgrounds and pre-schools for young residents at shelter sites.*

Recreational activities such as acrobatic and juggling shows, puppet shows, children's days and festivals, film screenings, concerts, and other performances were provided in tsunami-affected communities and IOM staff also helped the communities to arrange and conduct numerous cultural and religious events.

Further, with the main aim of strengthening community bonds and encouraging social relationships, IOM supported the establishment of youth clubs, camp care committees, playgrounds, sports clubs, pre-schools and other activities at transitional shelter sites over the last two years.

The provision of pre-schools was seen as an important mechanism which helped to re-establish a sense of normality in the lives of tsunami-displaced children. Activities have included constructing and maintaining pre-school areas at the transitional shelter sites, providing pre-school equipment and educational material as well as hiring, training and financially supporting up to 50 pre-school teachers to work at the shelter sites.

As part of the psychosocial programme, from June 2005 to August 2006, IOM also implemented an 'Access to Information' campaign, arranging for daily delivery of newspapers to approximately 40 shelter sites which housed over 10,000 people.

*Approximately 30,000 people have benefited from IOM's health surveillance project and psychosocial activities conducted in tsunami-affected districts.*



*Residents of an IOM shelter site in Kalutara district*

*IOM's eye care project is funded by the Australian Red Cross. Other health activities have been supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Governments of South Korea and Poland, Sasakawa, Lanka Market Research Bureau, the World Health Organization (WHO) and various private donors.*





*A National Data Centre and 13 district data centres have been established and information collected on more than 550,000 tsunami-affected individuals.*

## *Registering the tsunami-affected population*

On 9 September, 2005, IOM signed an MOU with the Presidential Secretariat, officially launching a project to register the Sri Lankans affected by the tsunami. This initiative was the first of its kind, with no other databases ever created on the same scale in the country.

IOM provided financial, technical and administrative support to a National Data Centre established at the Presidential Secretariat. This new entity was especially created to carry out the tsunami registration process but will eventually take on other roles such as supporting the Ministry of Public Administration in its efforts to register the entire Sri Lankan population. Standardized, computerized Data Centres were also established in the 13 tsunami-affected districts.

The system developed by IOM can serve as a core registration and information management system, and can be easily linked with other databases and modified according to needs.

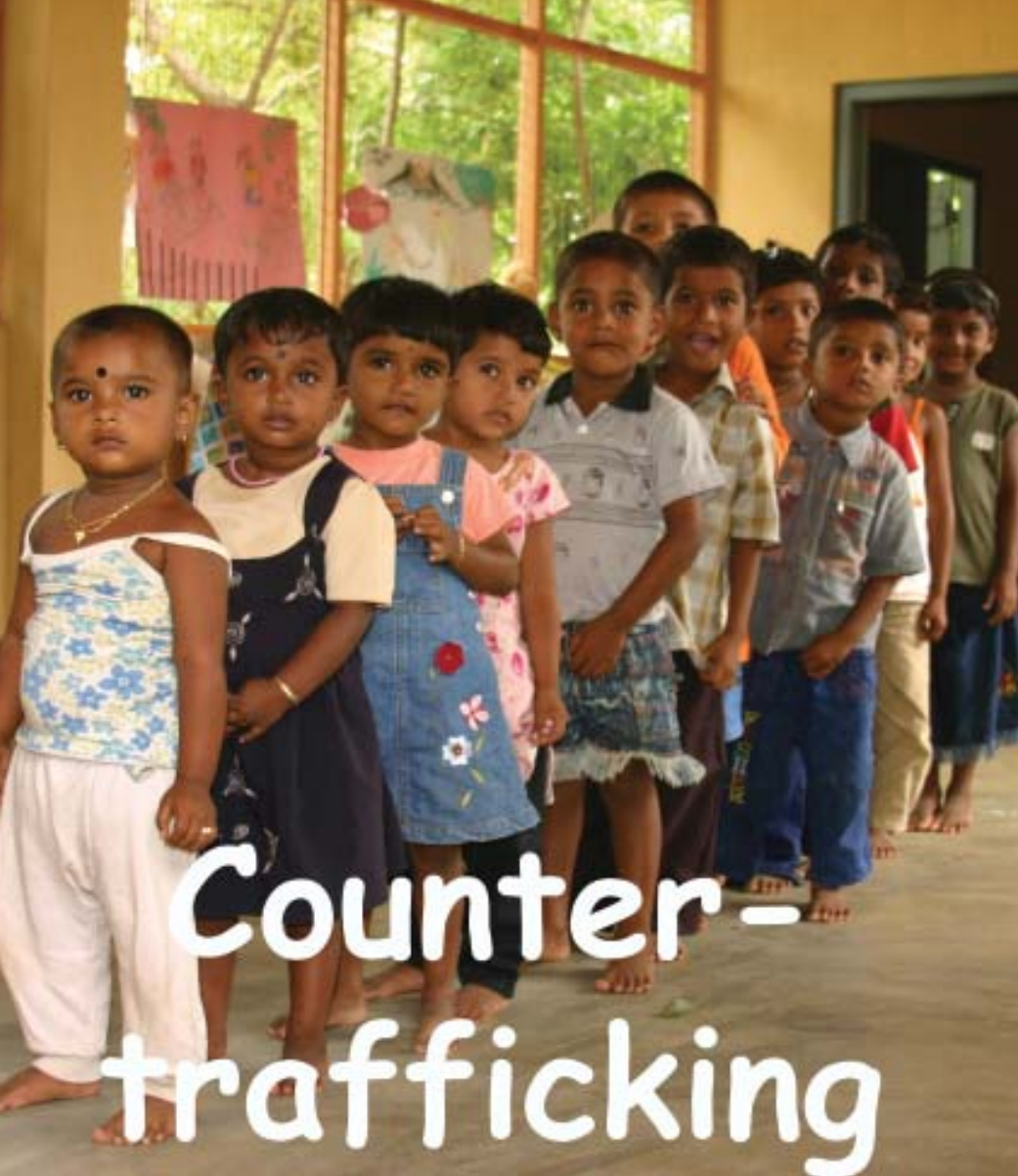
IOM hired over 80 staff to support the process, including technicians to manage the database, data-centre managers and data collectors. Survey forms were designed and registration software developed which could capture the necessary information but which could also be easily converted, modified and further developed to suit different purposes in the future.

Four customized buses acted as mobile data collection hubs, travelling from district to district collecting demographic information on tsunami-affected populations as well as details on the assistance received since the disaster. For this purpose, the buses each accommodating 15 data collectors were equipped with laptops, digital cameras, fingerprint scanners and UPS devices. The bus engine powered the equipment, thus allowing the buses to reach remote affected areas where electricity was available.

Over 140,000 heads of households were registered through the mobile registration process, representing information on more than 550,000 tsunami-affected persons in nine districts. In these districts, information was gathered on nearly eighty percent of the tsunami-affected population. Each head of household has been issued a registration card containing personal information, a photograph and a barcode so that the card can be easily read by the system installed at the district data centers, located in the Government Agent's office.

In the districts of Jaffna, Killinochchi, Mullaitivu and Trincomalee, mobile registration did not take place due to security constraints. However, data centres were established and government agency staff was trained on data entry, data collection and database management, allowing the local authorities to facilitate the registration process on their own.

*The registration programme was funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) and the Government of Japan.*



## Countering human trafficking in tsunami-affected communities

Through an awareness-raising campaign, psychosocial activities and livelihood assistance to extremely vulnerable families, IOM worked to empower individuals and communities to prevent human trafficking in tsunami-affected areas.

Activities have included the production of counter-trafficking posters and brochures in local languages, which were displayed in transitional settlements and surrounding communities. In coordination with UNAIDS, IOM also printed 10,000 packs of playing cards displaying HIV/AIDS educational messages which were distributed to tsunami-affected youths.

*Through the distribution of awareness raising materials, workshops, television dramas and training programmes, tsunami-affected communities were informed about the risks of trafficking, illegal migration and HIV/AIDS.*

Workshops were held for more than 1,000 youths in five tsunami-affected districts. The workshops comprised presentations on vocational training, risks of migration and trafficking, and HIV/AIDS. Further, IOM supported the Centre for Asian Culture and Arts in filming Sinhala- and Tamil-language versions of a short television drama on the risks of trafficking. The television dramas were broadcast on national televisions in July 2006, together with IOM public information spots on safe migration and contact information for IOM's hotline and for Women in Need, a local NGO.

To strengthen community support structure IOM worked with local NGOs to provide psychosocial awareness courses, mental health training and community-building workshops for some 350 NGO workers, community leaders and Ministry of Health staff. Many participants went on to train additional staff, working in tsunami-affected communities.

*Livelihood assistance was provided to 550 vulnerable families, enabling them to generate sustainable incomes in their own communities.*

The project further supported recreational activities, such as puppet and acrobatic shows for thousands of children. In addition, sports and cultural activities were implemented and workshops were held in transitional settlements on issues such as child protection, women's rights and avoiding migration risks.

Livelihood support was provided to 550 households identified as extremely vulnerable. The focus was on ensuring that these families were assisted in a practical way to reduce the need to seek work outside of the community. Some families received direct assistance from IOM while others were supported through NGO partnerships.





### *Driving towards recovery...*

Responding to a request from the Sri Lankan government, IOM has supported the tsunami recovery process by providing transport and logistical assistance.

During the initial relief phase, in addition to transporting materials, IOM arranged for transportation of aid workers and other personnel to tsunami-affected areas, and further provided various logistical support at the Bandaranaike International Airport and Colombo seaport. Throughout the programme, vans have also been provided to transport government personnel from the Transitional Accommodation Project, the Reconstruction and Development Agency, the Commissioner General for Essential Services and other agencies to and within the tsunami-affected districts.

With a flexible fleet of 30 to 80 trucks, IOM has been the principal provider of ground transport assistance in the recovery effort, having continuously supported more than 80 different government agencies, international organizations and NGOs. Since the disaster, IOM trucks have been dispatched nearly 7,000 times, carrying everything from food and non-food relief items to tents, livelihood equipment and construction materials to the tsunami-affected districts.

***IOM trucks have been dispatched nearly 7,000 times, transporting relief and reconstruction items to tsunami-affected districts.***

*The transport programme has been funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO), the Government of Japan and UNICEF.*



## *And the journey continues...*

The rehabilitation and reconstruction of tsunami-battered coastal areas of Sri Lanka will most certainly take years. The devastated shelters, ruined infrastructure and destruction of livelihoods as a result of the disaster have all added to the challenge.

IOM supported the Government of Sri Lanka and other organizations in the rebuilding efforts to regain some semblance of normalcy. However, for sections of survivors who still live in temporary shelters and whose economic uncertainty, ill health and vulnerability are far from resolved, hope for a better life post-tsunami.

IOM believes the best road to recovery is one that is traveled in close coordination with the Sri Lankan Government and organizations working on tsunami recovery. In the years ahead IOM intends to continue working with local partners and affected communities to bring about sustainable and meaningful change in areas such as livelihood development, primary health care, psychosocial support, care and maintenance of shelter sites, building civil society and supporting the reconstruction of damaged infrastructure.

*"IOM's training programme was a turning point in our lives. We have the programme to thank for our success."*

**Sumedha Cooray and Francis Lawrence Cooray, Kalutara (IOM livelihood beneficiaries)**

*"We are all very happy for what IOM and its supporters have done for our community...IOM helped upgrade our shelters and fix the broken toilets, and now they keep coming back!"*

**A. K. Haneefa, Ampara (IOM transitional shelter resident)**

*"With help from IOM I'm back at work and busy and now I really feel that I can put the trauma of the tsunami behind me and begin life anew."*

**I. Sinaumuthu, Batticaloa (IOM transitional shelter resident and livelihood beneficiary)**

*"The IOM programme has not only brought us opportunities to earn an income but also helped us overcome depression after the tsunami... The trainers have become our friends... They consoled us when we were sad and taught us skills too."*

**Sigla, Kalutara (IOM livelihood beneficiary)**





Photos by: David Lang. Keith Bedford, Kate Baumgartner and IOM staff.



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