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1 Year after Tsunami

The 2004 tsunami destroyed many communities in Sri Lanka. The southern districts of Galle and Matara were two of those worst hit. Over 120,000 people in these areas were left homeless and without any means of income in the wake of the Tsunami. SOS Malta's project has helped over 600 families by providing immediate recovery assistance and rebuilding their income-generating activities. It has also been engaged in the reconstruction and refurbishment of St Mary's Convent School Matara.

From January 2005 SOS Malta has been on the ground in Sri Lanka implementing various programmes to bring Tsunami affected communities out of dependency and poverty as rapidly as possible. SOS Malta is providing support to revive local economies and rebuild livelihoods. More than 200,000 livelihoods were lost as a direct result of the tsunami, and a further 125,000 jobs were indirectly affected. Overall 10,981 business units were affected by Tsunami:

- Trade 43%
- Other services 23%
- Fishery 13%
- Tourism 6%

The tsunami had a devastating affect on the coastal fisheries industry, leaving 16,919 fishing boats lost or destroyed and a further 7,266 damaged. An estimated one million fishing nets were also lost. Many of the fisheries harbours and landing sites around the coast were also seriously damaged.

Tourism was the third most badly affected industry, with 144 hotels, 65 restaurants, 7 rest-houses and 161 guest-houses damaged. Over 12,000 jobs were directly affected and a further 18,000 jobs indirectly affected as a result.

SOS Malta completed their emergency relief programme during the month of January 2005. A medical team of three doctors and a nurse provided medical care from a clinic set up within St Mary's Convent School in Matara. Over 3,000 men, women and

children received treatment. All medicines and wound care materials were provided free of charge.

St Mary's Convent School Improvement Matara Sri Lanka

SOS Malta has helped in the total refurbishment programme of the damaged school. Work was contracted by the school's rehabilitation coordinator and the principal under the supervision of the School Management board and the Catholic Education Committee.

SOS Malta has gone beyond reconstruction and refurbishment and together with an expert team from the Society of the Sacred Heart in India worked with the principal and staff of St Mary's Convent School, Matara. In house sessions were conducted and observations and initial interactions were used to diagnose the needs of the school. It was decided that special efforts would be made to make the school a better place for pupils to learn with improvements to be considered as a distinct approach to educational change.

The project includes:

- The setting up of a School Development Board
- Teacher Training and group facilitation
- Interpersonal skills
- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Project Management
- Organisational Development

A fully equipped Audio Visual room was set up to be able to offer all training in a professional environment by the visiting experts from Malta & India. The training programme is being offered to the two adjoining public schools in Matara.



**Development Board St Mary's
Convent School, Matara set up in
April 2005**

SOS Malta's Programme in Matara, Sri Lanka



Teaching Aids



Resource Centre set up in
June 2005

Teachers receiving training



Reading corner in the junior school set up in June 2005

Livelihood Recovery Programme

The long-term goal of SOS Malta's programme is to decrease poverty incidence in fishing villages identified as having lost most of the boats. The objective is immediate income-generating opportunities for the fishermen and their families.

Sustainable Livelihood:

SOS Malta is supporting sustainable livelihood activities in about 12 villages of the project area. Livelihood activities include the purchase of traditional canoes and 6 metre fibre glass boats to include 9 hp engine, fishing nets, anchor, rope, buoy, masks, snorkels, flippers and torches. 50 boats have already been delivered to the fishermen of Denuwela in the Matara district and Kalamulla in the Kalutara district.



6 metre fibre glass boats



SOS Malta looked into giving other opportunities to coastal communities, giving them real incentives to build up economic activities that will also offer enhancement and empowerment. SOS Malta initiated micro financing projects for the women in Welligama and Merissa by providing twenty Sewing Machines and all the equipment to set up a



kitchen for outside catering. In Kalamulla a spray painter's compressor and all accessories were purchased as were all the tools for a carpenter's small business which all perished after the Tsunami. A small family run chicken farm which was completely destroyed was also replaced.

Ten Sewing Machines for the women in Merissa

SOS Malta organised some Entrepreneurship Training for the beneficiaries? This included:-

- 1. Starting a business**
- 2. Business planning**
- 3. Market research**
- 4. Bookkeeping and Record keeping**
- 5. Sourcing of products**
- 6. Stock control**

We involved women because they are always there for the family, therefore once they are economically empowered the whole **family stand to benefit.**

The response was excellent and the beneficiaries are already working hard to make a success of their project.

Training session for the women



Carpenter happily using one of his new tool

After several meetings with the various contacts we have made in the south region of Sri Lanka it was decided to use some of the boats delivered in October to help the rebuilding of the tourist industry. We have supplied boats for dive centres, a diving school, leisure cruises and fishing. SOS Malta will assist a diving school to train the fishermen to dive safely and will continue educating them so that they can become professional divers using the highest safety standards. After they obtain several levels of licensing they will be eligible to take other divers on dive tours to local dive sites. Croc Croozes were set up on the river in Matara which offers the community and visitors a wonderful scenic trip which includes observing the crocodiles and birds. The following ventures have now been initiated offering employment and regeneration of the tourist industry:

- 4 boats to provide a means of collectively owned transportation for the fishermen and divers for continued training exercises in diving.
- 6 boats to provide a means of ferrying passengers and equipment out to the dive sites

- 10 boats to provide a means of leisure cruises for eco-tourists along the coastline and down the river in Matara
- 10 boats have been given to the fishermen in Matara to start a fishing cooperative



Trying out the Croc Croozes down the river of Matara. Boats will be fitted with benches, shade, binoculars and life vests



New nets bought by SOS Malta being prepared



One of the boats being used for a Diving Centre

Valletta and Stella Maris to be used for training divers



SOS Malta looks forward to initiating new projects in Sri Lanka in 2006 and help further in reducing poverty.

**Claudia Taylor-East
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SOS Malta
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