

# Post Tsunami Reconstruction



# Rebuilding – a Tough Challenge

On December 26, 2004 large parts of South and southeast Asia were shaken by an enormous tidal wave – the tsunami. The same day, the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) made the decision to provide Swedish support and within a week agreements were signed with UN agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Most analysts agree that despite many problems the initial humanitarian aid was a success. New challenges now await the second phase, that of rebuilding. It's not enough to rebuild the communities that were destroyed. Conditions have fundamentally changed so the focus must now be on achieving something better.

The tsunami hit the coasts of twelve countries around the Indian Ocean. Indonesia and Sri Lanka were the worst hit, but India and Thailand also suffered many deaths and great material damage. At least 226,000 people lost their lives or are reported as missing and more than one million were made homeless\*.

The catastrophe aroused sympathy and commitment the world over. Public collections and pledges from governments reached record levels and the equivalent of USD 125 million was collected in Sweden alone. Up to December 2005, Sida had approved contributions equivalent to USD 75 million for humanitarian aid and rebuilding.

Reconstruction must be long-term and well planned. Moreover, it should not just aim to make copies of the communities that were devastated but should be based on long-term sustainable principles embracing environmental issues, democracy and participation. In tangible terms, this involves both infrastructural and sanitary standards and improving the democratic influence of poorer groups. Swedish policy priorities include participating in co-ordinated efforts, helping to reduce corruption and helping to create environmentally sustainable communities.

Gender issues and the situation of children in the devastated communities require special consideration. This has

been widely discussed in Sri Lanka and Indonesia, mainly in collaboration with other donors.

## **Rapid Swedish contribution**

The first Swedish support included contributions through UN agencies. Support was also given to the Swedish Rescue Services Agency and international organisations with experience in disaster relief work. Swedish NGOs active in the affected regions and other partner organisations were also crucial with their invaluable knowledge of local conditions. Meetings were held at an early stage with Swedish NGOs regarding humanitarian aid and with the private sector regarding reconstruction.

Local actors and military forces played a crucial role in the acute humanitarian crisis that arose immediately following the disaster. The UN system was also quick to react; joint efforts ensured that those affected were provided with food, clean water, latrines and a temporary roof over their heads. Some damaged health centres and schools could be repaired. No epidemics or widespread famine followed in the wake of the tsunami, a sure sign that the humanitarian aid met the most acute needs.

New challenges now await the second phase, that of rebuilding. One year after the tsunami, thousands of survivors still live in tents and temporary accommodation. Many have no

means of supporting themselves. Reconstruction is estimated at USD 6 billion for Sri Lanka and Indonesia alone. Significant financial resources have for once been made available, particularly through the large contribution mobilised by the NGOs. The governments concerned, a number of other countries, the UN, development banks and the private sector are also playing a crucial role in financing.

The process of reconstruction requires speed while at the same time ensuring that planning and implementation create long-term sustainable solutions. Housing must also be designed to provide better protection against future natural disasters.

## **Local ownership is vital**

Studies show that sustainability is closely linked to the level of participation by those affected in the planning and implementation. Sweden must ensure that vulnerable people in the countries affected are given the opportunity to participate in building a better future. Reconstruction in Indonesia and Sri Lanka is mainly under the central control of special reconstruction authorities offering few opportunities for those affected to influence the process. In Indonesia the BRR authority has been placed in Banda Aceh, with staff reporting directly to the country's president. The Swedish policy document states that it should be possible to

\* Source: Tsunami Evaluation Committee



Rebuilding has begun in earnest in Banda Aceh. Many families have just moved into new homes built by Oxfam in the completely destroyed areas near the harbour.

PHOTO: JOHAN BERGQVIST

make decisions at the local level in consultation with those affected, but this has not always been the case. Reconstruction has been delayed, people have not been able to influence planning and they have not received information about the decisions reached, which has caused frustration.

The buffer zones set up by authorities in several of the affected countries pose another problem. Many vulnerable people have a strong urge to move back to the area where they previously lived and worked, despite the fears that remain. Close proximity to the sea is a prerequisite for a fishing community. The buffer zone decision provoked criticism and protests and the authorities are now modifying it to facilitate urgent requirements. General confusion has delayed reconstruction and has also led to bad investments.

Sri Lanka and Indonesia are both suffering from long-standing conflicts

that greatly affect the conditions for reconstruction. The peace agreement signed by the separatist movement GAM and the Indonesian government in August 2005 has improved conditions for rebuilding Aceh.

### **Lack of coordination**

Low capacity within local authorities and the lack of coordination among donors is also delaying reconstruction efforts. In Indonesia alone, hundreds of international organisations as well as various development agencies from donor countries (bilateral donors) are active. This is to a certain extent an asset, but also entails great risks. Different approaches and agendas create cooperation problems. Good opportunities can easily be lost and those most affected by the tsunami have to pay the price. To improve coordination, a Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) was set up to help in

the rebuilding process. By the end of 2005 the fund had 15 donors and a capital of USD 530 million. The largest amount comes from the EU. Sweden has made an initial contribution of USD 10 million, but this is less than a tenth of the money that has been made available for rebuilding Aceh. Most of the money is spread among a large number of actors who all work according to their own agendas.

Sweden is represented on the fund committee and has taken part in drawing up a fund policy statement with measurable indicators for projects. A Sida administrator has been at the Embassy in Jakarta since August 2005 to take part in the committee work on behalf of Sweden.

### **Self-support**

People in the affected countries live off fish and farming. The tsunami swept their livelihoods away by destroying the



boats and nets, washing away the top soil and salinating wells and soil. Even the tourist trade was affected, at least in the short term.

In order to restore livelihoods, a number of employment projects are underway and family business grants have been made available. Most continue with the work they had before the disaster but support for retraining is available. Livelihoods will gradually replace the food rations from the WFP. The focus is on giving people a choice in being able to contribute to building up their communities. In Indonesia, the UN International Labour Office (ILO) is registering employment applicants and arranging vocational training, chiefly within the building sector. This work is supported by Sida.

Contributions in connection with natural disasters risk being exposed to corruption. Large flows of aid, large-scale purchasing and the pressure to deliver rapid results increase the risk. Sida helped fund a special meeting of experts in April 2005 to discuss corruption problems within disaster relief. The meeting was co-arranged by the Indonesian government, the Asian Development Bank, the Organisation for Economic

Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Transparency International. To follow up, Sida is now funding work against local corruption in Sri Lanka.

### **A better society?**

The large resources available offer a unique opportunity to improve the situation in a number of ways. Good planning can replace sub-standard infrastructures. Improved garbage disposal, clean water, functioning health-care and schools are prerequisites for reducing poverty.

But this requires huge, long-term contributions, and for international actors, under the leadership of the countries affected, to coordinate their aid. Those affected, along with their governments and institutions, must be allowed to take responsibility for a new future in the tsunami-affected regions. We who come from other countries can contribute with money and expert help. Our ability to coordinate and our will to adapt our support to the needs and conditions that exist will be decisive in the effectiveness of our contributions to their efforts.



For the women in the village of Palamunai in eastern Sri Lanka a house is top of their list of priorities.

PHOTO: FREDRIK WESTERHOLM

## Swedish contributions

Sida has allocated the equivalent of SEK 661 million in contributions to the tsunami disaster relief. Sida's support was initially focused on relief work. Since the spring of 2005 this has been supplemented with support to reconstruction efforts.

### SUMMARY OF PLEDGES FOLLOWING THE TSUNAMI DISASTER ON DECEMBER 26, 2004

#### HUMANITARIAN AID

COUNTRY/REGION	PLEDGED CONTRIBUTION FOR 2005-2006 BUDGET YEAR
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SRI LANKA	31.3
INDONESIA	92.7
INDIA	4.2
THAILAND	0.4
REGIONAL – SOUTHERN AND SOUTH-EAST ASIA	86.7
SOMALIA	4.9

TOTAL	220
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#### RECONSTRUCTION

COUNTRY/REGION	PLEDGED CONTRIBUTION FOR 2005-2009 BUDGET YEAR
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INDONESIA	151
SRI LANKA	127
THAILAND	6
REGIONAL	157

TOTAL	441
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ALL TOTALS IN MSEK

## Swedish NGO's

The Swedish people's contributions to the victims of the tsunami reached unprecedented levels. In February 2005 the 22 members of the Swedish Fundraising Council and the Swedish Radio Assistance had collected more than USD 125 million. Many companies also gave generously. Thousands of Swedes who don't usually contribute to charity appeals did so this time. Many took advantage of new technologies (SMS, Internet, etc.).

### FRII MEMBERS' TOTAL FUNDRAISING FOR THE VICTIMS OF THE TSUNAMI DISASTER

BARNFONDEN	1
CARITAS SWEDEN	10
CHURCH OF SWEDEN AID	67
DIAKONIA	64
DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS	33
ECPAT SWEDEN	1
ERIKSHJÄLPEN	16
INTERACT	8
LIONS SWEDEN	10
LÄKARMISSIONEN	6
PLAN SWEDEN	7
PMU INTERLIFE	30
SALVATION ARMY SWEDEN	8
SOS CHILDREN VILLAGES SWEDEN	13
STAR OF HOPE	3
SWEDISH COOPERATIVE CENTRE	16
SWEDISH ORGANISATION OF INDIVIDUAL RELIEF	7
SWEDISH RED CROSS	504
SWEDISH SAVE THE CHILDREN	124
SWEDISH TOLERANCE ORGANISATION IOGT-NTO	11
UNICEF SWEDEN	49
YMCA-YWCA	1

TOTAL	989
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ALL TOTALS IN MSEK

THE TOTAL INCLUDES EVENTUAL CONTRIBUTION FROM THE SWEDISH RADIO APPEAL.  
THE FIGURES CONCERN THE SITUATION JUNE 2005  
SOURCE: THE SWEDISH FUNDRAISING COUNCIL – FRIL. PHONE +46 (0)8-677 30 90

# Recycling for the Future

On the large city dump, people are deeply engaged in classifying the garbage. Large amount of junk has been transported to the site, just a few hundred meters away from the sea by Banda Aceh – the town that lost a large part of its population in the tsunami. Shattered houses, concrete blocks, torn car wrecks, giant balls of reinforcement bars, ships, children's sandals are spread all over the city – the devastation stretches several kilometres from the sea line. The remains are still there, as reminders of the disaster, even though much of the junk is now being encircled by the lingering vegetation.

“It still might look messy, with this junk all over the place. But we who live in Banda Aceh see a great difference compared to a couple of months ago. We can hardly understand that the clearing work is moving on so fast. Now the streets are open and many large premises cleared”, says Jamilah Usman at the UNDP.

The workers at the dump wear hats or scarves to protect their heads against the sun. Some detach reinforcement bars from giant concrete blocks. Others carry lumber and planks. Their efforts is an important part of a Sida financed UN-programme to clear up after the devastating tsunami. So far, the project has cleaned up more than 100,000 cubic meters. ”This project has three positive effects. Firstly, to secure that all remains from shattered building and industries are deposited in a way that is environmentally safe. Secondly, the waste that can be recycled is classified to be used in the reconstruction. Thirdly, poor people get an income opportunity”, says Johan Brisman, co-ordinator of the Sida tsunami support.

The project is also a way to improve working conditions for all that on their own behalf were searching for something among the junk that could be used or sold. Now they are inoculated against tetanus, they wear protection clothing and have access to medical care if injured.

A large refuse and four other temporary dumps have been set up in Banda Aceh. A parallel venture is taking place in the town of Meulaboh on the west coast and right now a similar project is starting at the island Nias.

The logistic is the same at all places: People clear up on the city premises and dump their waste on specific collection sites. The junk is then transported to the refuse and classified; wood, bricks and reinforcement bars are piled up, concrete blocks are pulverised.

“Our programme employs 700-800 persons each day. Most of them live in camps as they have lost their houses. Besides their income from the project they can earn money to sell the plastics and scrap iron they find”, says Muhammad Zaki Jamal, director of the programme.



PHOTO: JOHAN BERGQVIST

*Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.*



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