

Tsunami

Reconstructing co-operatives after the tsunami – ICA's tactical response

We all remember how killer waves devastated thousands of coastal settlements in the Asia/Pacific area over two years ago. This brief report summarises how the ICA and the co-operative world mobilised its members in

carried out with funds collected from members, as well as on impressions gained from our visits to the tsunami stricken areas.

Although the funds collected by the ICA have now been transferred to the field, the work is far from over. A Rapid Survey was carried out to validate a proposal for the expansion of the Indonesian project, and the UK movement, which has contributed so much to the reconstruction efforts in India

and partners in the field. A needs assessment and action survey identified Indonesia as requiring the most urgent attention. A funding proposal was circulated to all members in the hope of attracting funds to undertake the work.

Early reconstruction activities included restoring primary co-operative infrastructure at the village level to enable the rebuilding of co-operative businesses, and capacity building.

In Indonesia, a relatively small bridge fund made available by ICA members through the ICA head office was used to support the day to day management of DEKOPINWIL and carry out the crucial work of motivating members and keeping the movement functioning. These funds were also used for education and training of board members, supervisors and members of the six model co-operatives chosen for intervention. Each received funding towards activities like the registration of members (a necessary step to take stock of co-operatives that lost members and documents following the tsunami), office rent and income subsidy for staff members for five months as well as the provision of small loans to members. These funds were crucial in ensuring the continuity of these co-operatives in the period immediately following the disaster.

The COPAC report on co-operative development



Stirling Smith, UK College second on left and Rajiv Mehta, on a post tsunami visit to India

the aftermath of the tsunami.

The ICA's pro-active role and its achievements were made possible thanks to the generous contributions of ICA members and partners. The report also examines how the communities that bore the brunt of the devastation have taken charge, rebuilding their own lives and settlements.

Donations that followed the appeals by ICA head office and the regional office in Asia/Pacific (ICA AP) were given directly to the affected co-operatives or channelled through Red Cross and other relief organisations. The money collected was also used to set up a disaster fund for reconstruction.

In previous *Digest* articles we reported on the work

and Indonesia, still hopes to collect more funds to continue this work.

ICA's global response

Recognising that the emergency and relief stages are best left to experienced international and non-governmental organisations, the ICA adopted an approach to support long-term and sustainable livelihoods among the surviving co-operative members and their families.

A COPAC meeting of co-operative development agencies in January 2005 established a forum to exchange information and prioritise the essential reconstruction assistance using ICA as the central platform.

Robby Tulus was appointed special envoy to work alongside ICA Asia-Pacific,

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activities undertaken in the tsunami stricken areas included a proposal for future action and an agreement to improve disaster preparedness by establishing a protocol for co-operative response to disaster reconstruction. A draft protocol prepared by the ICA has been distributed to all CO-PAC members.

The guiding principle for this protocol focuses on reconstruction and support for co-operative empowerment and sustainable development. The signatories to the protocol will pool needs assessments and fact finding and be encouraged to channel relief through strategic partnerships with organisations that recognise co-operatives as long-term reconstruction agents. The autonomy, independence and leadership of local co-operative movements and local cultural practices will be respected and it is hoped that the protocol will serve to increase the preparedness and effectiveness of the co-operative movement to respond when disaster strikes.

ICA head office has, throughout this period, participated in project planning and negotiations with ICA Asia-Pacific and other stakeholders.

Towards the end of 2006, the last of the collected funds were transferred to Indonesia to finance an expansion of the on-going project based on a rapid validation survey. These funds will be used to rehabilitate the co-operative distribution network.

ICA's regional response

ICA's primary concern has been to rebuild long-term and sustainable livelihoods among the surviving co-operative members and families in the communities hit by the tsunami.

ICA's long-term approach rested on the assumption that victims would receive help from their local communities and primary co-operatives before international organisations could arrive in the disaster zones. SANASA -- a member of ICA -- is a perfect example of how its primary member co-operatives took the first initiative to help the tsunami victims in Sri Lanka, and subsequently called on international agencies to provide additional emergency aid. We saw examples of the same in Indonesia and India.

ICA Asia-Pacific carried out a number of fact-finding missions to the affected areas in India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. These missions, financed by movements in the UK (UK co-operative movement); Singapore (NTUC Income); Israel, Negev Institute for Strategies of Peace and Development (NISPED); and other countries, resulted in project proposals that were shared with co-operative development agencies and members. The UK, Singaporean and Israeli movements



A new fishing vessel made possible with co-operative funds

also helped finance and launch a number of reconstruction activities in Indonesia, India and Sri Lanka. This report was co-authored by:

- Jan-Eirik Imbsen, ICA Director of Development
- Robby Tulus, ICA Special Tsunami Envoy
- Rajiv Mehta, ICA Asia-Pacific Office Director
- Suroto Ph



The next issue of the **Digest** will contain a detailed report on the post-tsunami reconstruction work in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India