



Tsunami Disaster Relief for Sri Lanka



Supporting Recovery of Small Family Businesses

About Sri Lanka

A beautiful tropical country with diverse human and natural resources, Sri Lanka has struggled for decades in a wasteful civil war. Poverty rates in the densely populated rural and coastal areas are often above 30 percent. In these areas, jobs in traditional cottage industries —fishing, production and processing of coconut meat and fiber, tea, rubber, fruits and vegetables — are low paying but crucial to survival of the poorest. Equally important are the numerous small family businesses in manufacturing, trade and transportation. For many Sri Lankans, these livelihoods are the only realistic alternative to a life in the cities' slums.



Fishermen emptying their nets

After the Tsunami

Tens of thousands of coastal families lost not only family members and homes, but also their livelihoods. Gone or destroyed are tools and supplies, equipment for sewing and spinning yarn, food stands, tuk-tuks, fishing boats and nets. Many of the displaced now live in refugee camps with no way to support themselves. Large aid organizations have provided shelter and staved off starvation and disease. Yet, even months after the tsunami, there is minimal support to help these families and their small businesses to “get on their feet again,” condemning them to an aid-dependent life for the foreseeable future.

This disrupted productivity needlessly extends their suffering and harms their communities, which rely on the goods and services these family businesses provide.

SECONDAID's Background

Several of SECONDAID's team members have worked for years with the Sri Lankan coconut fiber industry, both in business and as part of a USAID-sponsored development project. We have established a network of personal and business relationships and love the country and its people. In the wake of the tsunami, these relationships motivated us to draw upon our experience with small



Weaving coconut fiber mats

businesses to provide direct support to those most affected, yet not effectively reached, by aid efforts.

Our Mission

SECONDAID makes small, effective contributions to the economic recovery of local entrepreneurs and their coastal villages while minimizing bureaucracy and overhead costs. Our operational concept is simple: with funds raised in the U.S. and Germany, we provide in-kind donations and revolving, interest-free loans to repair shops, vendors, fishermen canteens, and other small businesses that

have lost their equipment and have no money or access to credit to replace it. We will also give grants and technical assistance to worthy communal projects. Identification of needs, purchase and distribution of goods, and administration of loans is through trusted individuals and local organizations, such as the Methodist church in Tangalle. As **SECONDAID** grows,



Destroyed coconut fiber extracting machine

we will cooperate with other groups, who are helping tsunami victims.

Our Goal

Our initial goal is to raise \$30,000 for direct aid. With typical needs of businesses in the \$100 to \$500 range, **SECONDAID** will help many businesses to start back up and help families to rebuild their lives. During this initial phase, we donate time and expenses to the project, thus there are no overhead costs. As of March 20, 2005, we have transferred \$10,000 in donations to Sri Lanka and have received pledges for another \$5,000.



Tuk-tuk and grocery stand

Our First Projects

Our local partners have identified needs and purchased items in cooperation with the victims. In February 2005, we assisted all 25 families at a refugee camp in Moratuwa near the capital Colombo with needed equipment and tools. These items have allowed all families to resume their work.

In March, we helped 26 families in a village near the hard hit south coast town of Tangalle with the materials required to go back to work. Another three villages will receive supplies soon.

The list summarizes purchases as of March 15, 2005.

It illustrates the type of businesses in need and how little start-up capital they typically require.



Distribution of goods in Moratuwa

Business	Item	#	Cost /Item	Total Cost
Vendors, tree fellers	Axes, ropes, start capital	3	\$50	\$150
Metal products vendors	Bed frames, racks, stands	5	\$50	\$250
Vendors	Bicycles	9	\$75	\$675
Lagoon fishermen	Casting nets	4	\$50	\$200
Food vendor	Food steamer set	1	\$49	\$49
Lagoon fishermen	Knives	15	\$3	\$45
Plumber	Plumbing equipment	1	\$50	\$50
Tuk-tuk owner	Repair of tuk-tuk (prepared to pay back \$300)	1	\$500	\$500
Canteen	Saucepans, pots	1	\$23	\$23
Seamstresses	Sewing machines	12	\$63	\$756
Mason	Trowels, plumb	1	\$60	\$60
Vendors	Weighing scales, start capital	17	\$15	\$255
Carpenters	Wood planers, drills	5	\$90	\$450
Snack vendor	Wooden cart, supplies	1	\$75	\$75
Total Expenses			\$3,538	

Team Members

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Children in coastal town

Donations:

All donations to our work are tax deductible in the U.S. *Fiber Futures* (www.fiberfutures.org), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, has kindly agreed to act as our "fiscal agent" and allows us to use its tax-exempt status.



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